

Chapter IV Opening of Hostilities and Capture of the Forward Advance Bases Davao and Jolo

1. Capture of Davao (*See Illustrations No. 14 and No. 15*)

The Arrangements Between the Army and Navy as Presented [to the Sakaguchi Detachment]

As previously related, the responsibility for the capture of Davao had been an issue at the time of the Iwakuni Agreement (concluded on 16 November). On 19 November, it had finally been decided to assign this responsibility to the Sixteenth Army, and on the same day the Sakaguchi Detachment had departed from Moji. On arrival in Palau on the 28th, the detachment started planning an operation to take the allied forces by surprise, and immediately began hard training by practicing cutting paths through the dense roots of [tidewater] mangrove forests.⁽⁸⁷⁾ At the end of the month, Vice Chief of Staff [of the Sixteenth Army] Harada flew in,^(37, 39) and on 1 and 2 December, the 5th Cruiser Division, the 2d Destroyer Squadron and other naval units sailed into port.^(114, 117) Vice Chief of Staff Harada passed down the order of the Sixteenth Army, which was based on the Southern Army's order of 20 [November] (in which the capture of Davao was added to the assignments [of the Sixteenth Army]), as well as the revised operation arrangements between the [Navy] Dutch East Indies Unit and the Sixteenth Army. These arrangements provided how the Sakaguchi Detachment and cooperating air and navy units should capture Davao, Jolo, Tarakan, Balikpapan, Samarinda, Banjarmasin and Bali. [The items concerning] the capture of Davao had been modified so that Detachment Commander Sakaguchi would take command of the Miura Detachment in the capture. [Also included] in the arrangements [regarding the capture of Davao] were that the Miura Detachment and the [naval] landing force should take the credit for the capture, and that the strength of the Sakaguchi Detachment should be retained. As for the capture of Tarakan and Balikpapan, a frontal attack was still in the plan, and Davao was also planned to be captured from the direction that the U.S.-Filipino Army seemed to expect.⁽⁸⁸⁾ As will be described later point by point, the Sakaguchi Detachment, which was training to force its way through areas densely covered with mangroves, would drastically change the entire approach of the presented operation outline.

[However,] the outline of the proposed operations in Davao and Jolo was as follows:⁽⁸⁸⁾

1. Davao

The unit [consisting of] the main force of the Sakaguchi Detachment and the Miura Detachment as its core shall leave Palau on day $x + 2$. Before dawn on day $x + 6$, the Miura Detachment shall land around Talomo bay, the main force of the Sakaguchi Detachment

in Santa Cruz, one company on Samal Island, and the naval landing force in Kaganjan (probably the same as Kaganjuan in *Illustration No. 14*), all about the same time, and each of them shall capture key locations and airfields in the neighborhood at one stroke. After mopping up the landing points and their vicinity, an element of the unit shall be dispatched toward Cotabato (160 kilometers west of Davao) and seize its airfield. Once each place has been cleared of the enemy, the Sakaguchi Detachment shall turn over the [task of] guarding to the Miura Detachment and the naval units, assemble in Davao, and instruct and train the troops in preparation for the next operation. The assembly of the third echelon, the departure of the Jolo Detachment, and the water and coal supply to the ships shall depend on the situation. Elements of both of the [naval] land-based attack plane and fighter plane units shall cooperate [in the operations]. The strength of the escort shall be specified separately.

2. Jolo

The detachment [consisting of] the 3d battalion (minus two companies) of the 146th Infantry Regiment under the command of Lt. Col. Matsumoto Tadasu as the core shall make a surprise landing on the coast northeast of the town of Jolo on day $x + 13$ and seize the airfield and the radio station at one stroke. The detachment shall have independent engineers and disembarkation equipment diverted from the Miura Detachment after its capture of Davao and send these back with the ships to Davao after the capture of Jolo. After the capture, it shall turn over the [task of] guarding to the Navy and join the main force of the Sakaguchi Detachment. One light cruiser, four destroyers, and elements of both of the [naval] land-based attack plane and fighter plane units shall cooperate [in the operation].

Postponement of the Date for Capturing Davao

As for the waters east of the Philippines, the Navy Philippines Unit had decided to have the 4th Raid Unit ([consisting of] one light cruiser and eight destroyers) cooperate with the Kimura Detachment scheduled to land in Legaspi on day $x + 4$, and the 5th Raid Unit ([also consisting of] one light cruiser and eight destroyers) with the Sakaguchi Detachment scheduled to land in Davao on day $x + 6$ and, apart from these, deploy the Southern Philippines Area Task Force ([consisting of] three heavy cruisers, one aircraft carrier, two seaplane tenders, and one destroyer), and position its main unit ([consisting of] one heavy cruiser, one light cruiser, and two destroyers) on the waters northwest of Luzon (south of Magong). The Navy Southern Task Force had decided to deploy its main unit ([consisting of] one battleship, two heavy cruisers, and four destroyers) in the South China Sea and the Eastern Support Unit ([consisting of] one battleship, one heavy cruiser, and two destroyers) on the waters east of the Philippines.⁽¹¹⁰⁾ In addition, the naval aviation unit (i.e. the Eleventh Air Fleet) had planned to deploy strong air units in Palau. However, a report came in that the new and powerful British battleships, *HMS Prince of Wales*, *HMS Repulse* and other ships had been brought to Malaya. As previously related, the [Navy] Malaya Unit mainly consisted of [just] five heavy cruisers and one light cruiser. Because of this, on 28 November, the deployment of the Eastern Support Unit [which should have been] on the [sea] east of the Philippines had to be cancelled, and [further] twenty-seven planes of the air unit (i.e. the Eleventh Air Fleet) had to be diverted to the Southern Expeditionary Fleet on 2 December.⁽¹⁰²⁾ About the

same time, another element of the Philippines Unit in the eastern [waters] of the Philippines was also diverted to the west.

V. Adm. Takahashi Ibō, commander of the Philippines Unit had no choice but to give an order to postpone the capture of Davao scheduled on day $x + 6$ to day $x + 14$.^(114, 117)

From a report from the Fourteenth Army, the Southern Army learned on the next day, the 4th [of December], that the [Navy] Philippines Unit intended to postpone the date of the capture of Davao. After consulting with all parties concerned, it sent a telegram on 6 December to central command [i.e. the Army Department of IGHQ], the Fourteenth Army and the Sixteenth Army that “in view of the new disposition of the fleets, the date of landing in Davao shall be changed to day $x + 13$ (order issued on behalf of a higher authority).”^(22, 24)

Opening of Hostilities and Advance of the Date to Capture Davao

Hostilities were opened on 8 December. In the Imperial Rescript on the Declaration of War, war was declared [only] on the United States and Britain, the Netherlands were left out.⁽¹³⁾

The Carrier Task Force succeeded in making a surprise attack on Hawaii on the 8th.

In the Philippines area, the air power of the allied forces was destroyed at a stroke on the 8th. On the 10th, the Tanaka Detachment (under cover of the 5th Destroyer Squadron) and the Kanno Detachment (under cover of the 4th Destroyer Squadron) landed in Aparri and Vigan respectively.^(119, 120) Both the air and landing operations in Malaya also made a good start. On the 10th, *HMS Prince of Wales* and *HMS Repulse* were sunk.⁽¹⁰⁴⁾ It seemed that [the U.S.] warships from the Philippines had withdrawn toward the Dutch East Indies.⁽¹¹⁰⁾

In the east coast area of the Philippines (more precisely, east coast area of the central and southern Philippines), R. Adm. Takagi Takeo, commander of the [Navy] Southern Philippines Area Task Force (and commander of the 5th Cruiser Division), was supposed to carry out air strikes on Davao and support the capture of Legaspi (in conjunction with the Army's Kimura Detachment and the [Navy] 4th Raid Unit under the command of the commander of the [Navy] 1st Base Force), but due to the diversion of the selected force [to the west] and the postponement of the date of capture of Davao, he decided to [alter the plan and] have the 11th Seaplane Tender Division ([consisting of] the seaplane tenders *Chitose* and *Mizuho*) support the unit to capture Legaspi from the beginning, and he left Palau at 1300 on 6 December with the remaining force (i.e. the 5th Cruiser Division ([consisting of] heavy cruisers, the *Myōkō*, the *Haguro*, and the *Nachi*), the 4th Carrier Division ([consisting of] one aircraft carrier, the *Ryūjō*), and the 2d Destroyer Squadron ([consisting of] one light cruiser, the *Jintsū*, the 15th Destroyer Division and the *Amatsukaze* and the *Hatsukaze* of the 16th Destroyer Division), and carried out air strikes on Davao and Malalag Bay on the 8th by launching an attack plane unit from the carrier on the sea, but no aircraft of the allied forces were found.^(102, 114, 117, 124) After the air strikes on Davao, the [Navy] Southern Philippines Area Task Force changed its course and on the early morning of the 9th joined the unit [to support] the capture of Legaspi ([consisting of] one light cruiser, the *Nagara*, and the *Yukikaze* and the *Tokitsukaze* of the 16th Destroyer Division, which had left Palau for the attack on the 8th), and headed for Legaspi.^(114, 117) The landing in Legaspi was scheduled before dawn on the 12th.

In these circumstances, Rear Admiral Takagi had been sounding out the view of R. Adm. Tanaka Raizō, commander of the 2d Destroyer Squadron, since the 11th, and following the success of the landing in Legaspi on the 12th, he proposed to the commander of the Philip-

piners Unit (V. Adm. Takahashi Ibō) to advance the date of the capture of Davao.^(114, 117) Vice Admiral Takahashi consulted V. Adm. Tsukahara Nishizō, commander in chief of the Eleventh Air Fleet, and gave the order “to capture Davao as soon as possible if the situation permitted, regardless of the date specified in the Classified Order of the Philippines Unit No. 1.”⁽¹¹⁷⁾

The Plan to Capture Davao

The 2d Destroyer Squadron ([under] Commander R. Adm. Tanaka Raizō), which returned to Palau on the morning of the 14th after finishing supporting the landing operations in Legaspi, immediately made arrangements with the Sakaguchi Detachment and reported on the 15th that “it had made arrangements with the Army’s Sakaguchi Detachment to advance [the date of] the 5th Raid Unit’s attack on Davao by two days.”⁽¹¹⁷⁾ The 5th Cruiser Division ([under] Commander R. Adm. Takagi Takeo) returned to Palau on the 16th, and reported that, because the enemy’s movements in the areas to the south of Luzon and in the Molucca Sea were unknown, it wanted to continuously use the 4th Carrier Division (the aircraft carrier *Ryūjō*) in these areas up to and including the attack on Jolo, and that it had made arrangements with the Sakaguchi Detachment to tentatively set [the date of] the capture of Jolo on the 25th.^(114, 117) The 4th and the 5th Destroyer Squadrons and the 1st and the 2d Base Forces, which had escorted the advance units and put them ashore in northern Luzon, were on their way to [their next duty of] escorting the main force of the Fourteenth Army and the main force of the 16th Division, which should land in Lingayen Gulf on the 22d, and in Lamón Bay on the 24th respectively, while the Malaya Unit was escorting the 5th Division, etc. and the Kawaguchi Detachment, which should land around the Gulf of Thailand and in British Borneo respectively. [This unit] was subsequently scheduled to escort the transport of the main force of the Twenty-fifth Army.⁽¹⁰²⁾

The Sakaguchi Detachment had obtained information that “some twenty thousand Japanese nationals had been confined [in Davao] upon the declaration of war.”⁽⁸⁷⁾ Also, it had obtained information that “the strength of the U.S.-Filipino Army in Davao, which had consisted of only about two companies before, had been gradually reinforced and reached some three thousand troops.”^(87, 50)

As mentioned previously, the Sakaguchi Detachment had made arrangements with its navy counterparts on the 14th–15th to draw up an operation plan. While drafting it, special consideration was given to such points as that [the detachment] would adopt a method which might take the U.S.-Filipino Army by surprise regardless of the proposed outline of attack arranged between the [Navy] Philippines Unit and the Sixteenth Army, that it would try to safely rescue the resident Japanese nationals, that it would let the Miura Detachment of the Fourteenth Army take the credit for the capture, and that it would avoid damage to the Matsumoto Battalion which was assigned to capture Jolo right after the capture of Davao. Adopting the ideas of his staff officer, Yano Tsuneo, the detachment commander [Sakaguchi] drew up a plan in which, regardless of the presented outline of attack, the main force would take a detour all the way around Samal Island and be put ashore at the rear of Davao, while part of the force would be put ashore on the coast of Talomo Bay, and by occupying the airfield at a stroke, [the detachment would] make the U.S.-Filipino Army in Davao beat a hasty retreat, allowing [the detachment] to safely rescue the Japanese nationals as well as to keep

the facilities in Davao intact. He requested the Navy not to directly shell Davao from the sea for the safety of the Japanese nationals. He also planned to let the Miura Detachment and the naval landing force have the honor of the capture of Davao, and [for this purpose,] particularly made sure that the regimental commander would stay with the colors at sea, because especially the movement of the colors would become a news story. Many officers and men of the 146th Infantry Regiment were dissatisfied with this plan because this operation was the opening battle of the war [and they craved the honor], but the detachment commander kept them under control.⁽⁸⁷⁾

The operation plan of the Sakaguchi Detachment was in outline as follows:^(89, 90)

Right Wing Unit:

Commander: Lt. Col. Miura Toshio; consisting of the whole of the Miura Detachment, the 7th Company of the 146th Infantry Regiment, and [1] armored car unit (minus 1 platoon) as the core;

Shall land in the mouth of the Panacan River, attack the Sasa airfield at night, subsequently capture the city of Davao, in hot pursuit chase the U.S.-Filipino Army toward the Davao River, and, in concert with the left wing unit, capture and destroy the defeated enemies on the right bank of the Davao River.

Left Wing Unit:

Commander: Maj. Kanauji Ken'ichi; consisting of the 2d Battalion (minus the 7th Company) of the 146 Infantry Regiment, half of the regimental artillery unit, half of the regiment's antitank gun unit, and 1 armored car platoon as the core;

Shall land on the coast of Talomo Bay, keep guard over the southwest with part of the unit, occupy Talomo and its vicinity with the main force, and, in concert with the right wing unit, capture and destroy the defeated enemies on the right bank of the Davao River. After that, [it] shall conquer Malagos (2 kilometers northwest of Talomo) and Malalag (95 kilometers southwest of Davao). [Editor's note: Malagos is actually 20 km. from Talomo, and Malalag 75 km. from Davao.]

Rear Base Unit:

Commander: Lt. Col. Matsumoto Tadasu; consisting of the 3d Battalion (minus the 10th and the 12th Companies) of the 146th Infantry Regiment and 1 field artillery section as the core;

Shall be positioned at the rear of the right wing unit. After the right wing unit advances into the city of Davao, [it] shall secure key locations and function as a rear base for the right wing unit mopping up the city of Davao and its vicinity.

1st Field Artillery Battalion (minus the 1st and 3d Battery and the battalion supply train):

The main force of the battalion headquarters shall accompany the Miura Detachment and be charged with reconnoitering the enemy's movements and the terrain. If it seems to meet resistance from the U.S.-Filipino Army, it shall put the battalion under single control and cooperate with the right wing unit in its battle.

Headquarters of the Detachment (minus an element):

After landing on the coast of Tibungco, shall advance into the city of Davao.

3d Battery of the 44th Field Antiaircraft Artillery Battalion:

Shall be assigned to the aerial defense around the anchorage, while staying on board.

146th Infantry Regiment (minus the main force of both of the 2d and the 3d Battalion):

Shall remain on board as reserve.

Note: The Miura Detachment consisted of the 1st Battalion of the 33d Infantry Regiment (Battalion commander: Maj. Tsunoda Isamu), 1 engineer platoon and 1 independent engineer platoon as the core and was under the command of Lt. Col. Miura Toshio, who was attached to the 33d Infantry Regiment of the 16th Division.^(89, 90)

Departure, Landing and Occupation

After 1600 on 16 December, the Sakaguchi Detachment and the Miura Detachment left Palau for Davao one after another in respectively eight and four transport ships.⁽¹¹⁷⁾ The convoy was escorted by the 5th Raid Unit (consisting of one light cruiser and six destroyers) commanded by R. Adm. Tanaka Raizō, commander of the 2d Destroyer Squadron. A fleet which included the 5th Cruiser Division (consisting of three heavy cruisers), the 4th Carrier Division (consisting of one aircraft carrier, the *Ryūjō*, and a destroyer, the *Shiokaze*), and the 11th Seaplane Tender Division (consisting of the seaplane tenders *Chitose* and *Mizuho*) and others, under the command of R. Adm. Takagi Takeo, commander of the 5th Cruiser Division was assigned to give direct support.^(102, 114, 117)

Although the convoy came under a torpedo attack by an allied submarine on the morning of the 17th, it sustained no damage.^(102, 117) Coming under no further attacks after that, it entered anchorage on the night of the 19th. A very strict blackout had been enforced over the city of Davao, its vicinity and the areas to the south of the city, while many lookout posts had been set up as well. However, there were scattered lights along the coast where the main force of the Sakaguchi Detachment came to anchor after taking a detour around Samal Island, [which meant that] it had taken the enemy by complete surprise.⁽⁸⁷⁾

The Miura Detachment, assigned to seize the airfield in a night attack and then capture the city of Davao, and the naval landing force, assigned to capture the oil storage facilities at Lanang in a night attack, each reported that they had successfully made surprise landings at 0400.^(87, 89, 90) When Detachment Commander Sakaguchi came ashore in the second transport and advanced toward the airfield believing that the airfield had been secured in the night attack by the Miura Detachment, he only found that the Miura Detachment had not been able to launch a predawn attack, that some fifty soldiers had been killed when our naval planes mistakenly bombed them while they were preparing for an attack after daybreak, and that this had put the detachment in a difficult position for carrying out the attack. He also found that the naval landing force, which should have captured the oil storage facilities at Lanang in a night attack, had not been able to carry that out either and was moving toward the airfield.⁽⁸⁷⁾

Detachment Commander Sakaguchi had hoped to quickly seize the airfield as well as Davao City and rescue the resident Japanese nationals before sunset, so he had been pressing the Miura Detachment to attack. However, when he found the detachment in a situation too difficult from which to launch an attack, he at last decided to bring the Matsumoto Battalion into play. He had intended to deploy it in the capture of Jolo planned right after [this operation], which was one of the reasons why he wished to avoid committing the battalion [in Davao], but there was no other option.⁽⁸⁷⁾ Around 1000, he ordered the Matsumoto Battalion to capture Davao from the direction of the coast.^(87, 89, 90) The battalion immediately attacked and advanced, defeated the U.S.-Filipino Army, and stormed into Davao around 1500. After the advance of the Matsumoto Battalion, the Miura Detachment moved into the airfield and then into Davao. The U.S.-Filipino Army on the airfield and in and around Davao fled to the mountains in the west.⁽⁸⁷⁾

Earlier, the left wing unit had landed near Talomo at 0500 without meeting with resistance from the U.S.-Filipino Army and immediately advanced towards the line of the Davao River. [However,] the U.S.-Filipino Army put up considerable resistance at the line of the Talomo River. Finally after daybreak, the left wing unit succeeded in beating back the U.S.-Filipino

Army and advanced eastward. However, its advance was difficult because the U.S.-Filipino Army had set up several lines of permanent positions on Matina Hill, where the sources of the [city's] water supply were located, and counterattacked from there using these positions as strongholds.⁽⁸⁷⁾

Detachment Commander Sakaguchi, who had moved into Davao just after 1500, learned that a considerable number of the U.S.-Filipino Army troops were on the other side of the Davao River and that the left wing unit was engaged in a hard battle. He had ordered the Miura Detachment to cross the river and attack [the enemy], but then, in view of the condition of the detachment, he newly ordered the Ezaki Engineer Company to cross the Davao River and attack the enemy. The company immediately started its advance and together with the left wing unit made a frontal attack on the U.S.-Filipino Army from both sides. The U.S.-Filipino Army retreated northwestwards along the Davao River valley. The Ezaki Company and the left wing unit were able to make contact after sunset.⁽⁸⁷⁾

As soon as the Sakaguchi Detachment had entered Davao, it had started the operation to rescue resident Japanese nationals. They were detained in a junior high school in the northwest end of the city, at the wharf of Davao, in Mintal (six kilometers west of Davao), in Daliao (six kilometers west-southwest of Davao), and other places on the eastern coast opposite Davao, and in the area in the north of Davao in groups of some two thousand people each. Influential people were detained in a prison in Beruna Colony, located fifty kilometers northwest of Davao.^(50, 87) [Editor's note: the distances and directions are not all correct; "Beruna" Colony is probably a corruption of "(Davao) Penal Colony."] The detachment was able to successfully rescue the Japanese nationals detained in warehouse(s) at the Davao wharf by breaking down the walls [of the building(s)] just before raging fires (which had been caused by the shelling of the Navy) spread to the warehouse(s). After rescuing the Japanese nationals in Davao, the Sakaguchi Detachment rushed in all directions to rescue Japanese nationals in various places throughout the area where the defeated enemy was still rampant.⁽⁸⁷⁾ It was on the morning of the 24th that the detachment rescued the Japanese residents detained in 'Beruna' Colony. Dramatic scenes abounded: a [Japanese] elementary school principal got on top of an armored car of the Sakaguchi Detachment on its way to rescue [Japanese residents] to lead the way; a Japanese civilian jumped on a machine gunner of the U.S.-Filipino Army who was firing at the officer and men of the Sakaguchi Detachment when they approached the detention camp, etc.^(50, 87)

Upon the capture of Davao, the Miura Detachment started constructing defensive works by piling sandbags. The Sakaguchi Detachment had the unit charged with the capture of Jolo under the command of Lieutenant Colonel Matsumoto prepare for the subsequent operation and, with the rest of its troops, he mopped up the remaining enemies in and around Davao. A number of the resident Japanese formed a volunteer corps to cooperate in this operation.⁽⁸⁷⁾

It had been agreed that the Navy would not shell the city from its ships when capturing Davao.⁽⁸⁷⁾ However, on the early morning of the 20th, when a motor launch of the destroyer *Amatsukaze* guarding the anchorage in Talomo Bay approached the Davao wharf to capture small boats and came under fire of the U.S.-Filipino Army, the *Amatsukaze* opened a protective bombardment at 0715. Some shells hit the oil tanks in Davao City and caused a big fire.

The 4th Carrier Division (consisting of the aircraft carrier *Ryūjō* and a destroyer, the *Shio-kaze*) had conducted reconnoitering attacks on Davao with six carrier-based attack planes on the 19th. On the next day, the 20th, it provided cover for the landing, and after that until the

22d, it took charge of direct air support over the anchorage. The 5th Cruiser Division (consisting of the heavy cruisers *Myōkō*, *Haguro* and *Nachi*) acted practically in concert with the 4th Carrier Division. The 11th Seaplane Tender Division (with only the seaplane carrier the *Chitose*) moved westward on the waters north of the [Army] attack units. On the 20th, it co-operated in their landing attacks with its on-board reconnaissance seaplanes, set up a floating air base in Talomo Bay as early as the same evening, and started conducting aerial patrols and reconnoitering attacks on [enemy] bases on Mindanao. On the 20th, R. Adm. Irifune Naosaburō, commander of the 32d [Special] Base Force, hoisted his standard in Davao.⁽¹⁰²⁾

The losses of the 146 Infantry Regiment (formed in Ōmura, Kyūshū) consisted of twenty-two men (amongst whom were four officers, four noncommissioned officers, and fourteen soldiers), including those killed in the Jolo operations which will be described later.⁽⁵³⁾ This shows that the officers led from the front and fought bravely, but at the same time, it raises a question as to what the previously mentioned visit of Takashima, senior staff of Section 1 of the Sixteenth Army, to IGHQ on the 22d and his request that the Davao unit be promptly replenished because of the serious damage incurred, was all about. In fact, it shows that the damage to the Miura Detachment, when our naval planes mistakenly bombed it, was really serious. At the time of landing, Detachment Commander Miura deployed the main force of the 1st Battalion of the 33d Infantry Regiment (with Maj. Tsunoda Isamu as the battalion commander) in the front line, and put [other] elements of it and the 7th Company of the 146th Infantry Regiment under his direct control. The battle of the Tsunoda Battalion went as follows:^(89, 90)

Arrival at the shore at 0400. With no beach / underwater obstacles nor shore-side pillboxes found, we made a successful landing, straightaway gathered near the Panacan Bridge, and cut the telephone lines above the roads. The left front line company reached the southern end of the airfield around 0630. Then our naval air units unleashed a fierce aerial bombardment. Sunrise was at 0640. Battalion Commander Tsunoda had reinforcements of one platoon of the 1st Company and the 7th Company of the 146th Infantry Regiment (minus one squad) sent by Detachment Commander Miura, and decided "to advance towards the barracks and launch a frontal attack on the enemy."

Although Detachment Commander Sakaguchi had intended to let the Miura Detachment take the credit for the capture of Davao, he regretted the unexpected turn of events. He had no other choice but to order the Matsumoto Detachment, assigned to the capture of Jolo, to charge [into Davao] at short notice, because the Miura Detachment had incurred [too much] unforeseen damage, and the large fires that had broken out in the city made him concerned about the imminent danger to which the Japanese residents were exposed.

2. Capture of Jolo Island (See Illustration No. 15)

As previously explained, the main points of the operation for the capture of Jolo were presented in the Iwakuni Agreement and in the subsequent arrangement between the [Navy] Dutch East Indies Unit and the Sixteenth Army (which was brought by its Vice Chief of Staff Harada [to Palau]); they were further adjusted in the arrangement between Detachment Commander Sakaguchi and R. Adm. Tanaka Raizō, commander of the [Navy] 5th Raid Unit

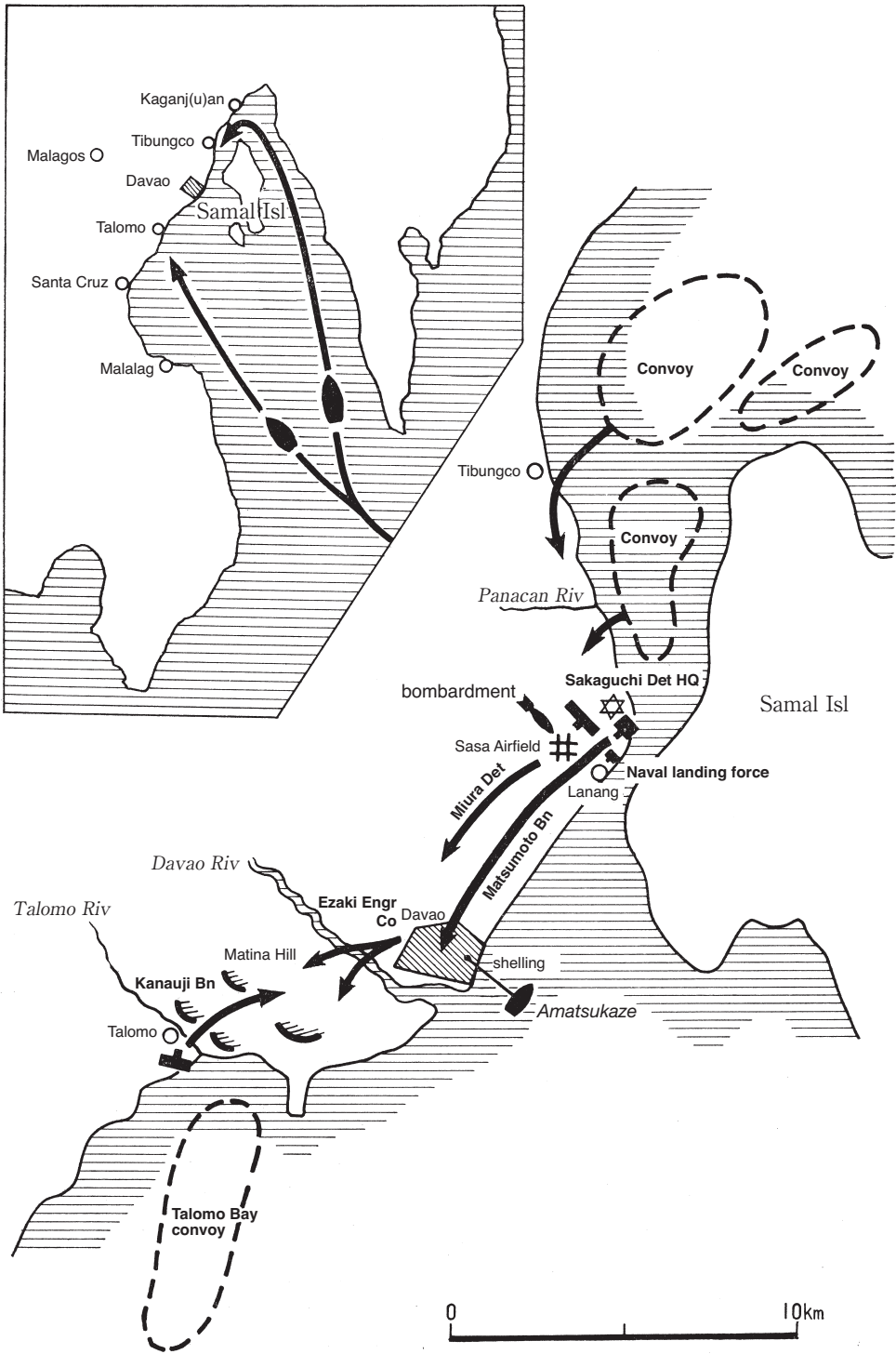


Illustration No.14—The Capture of Davao

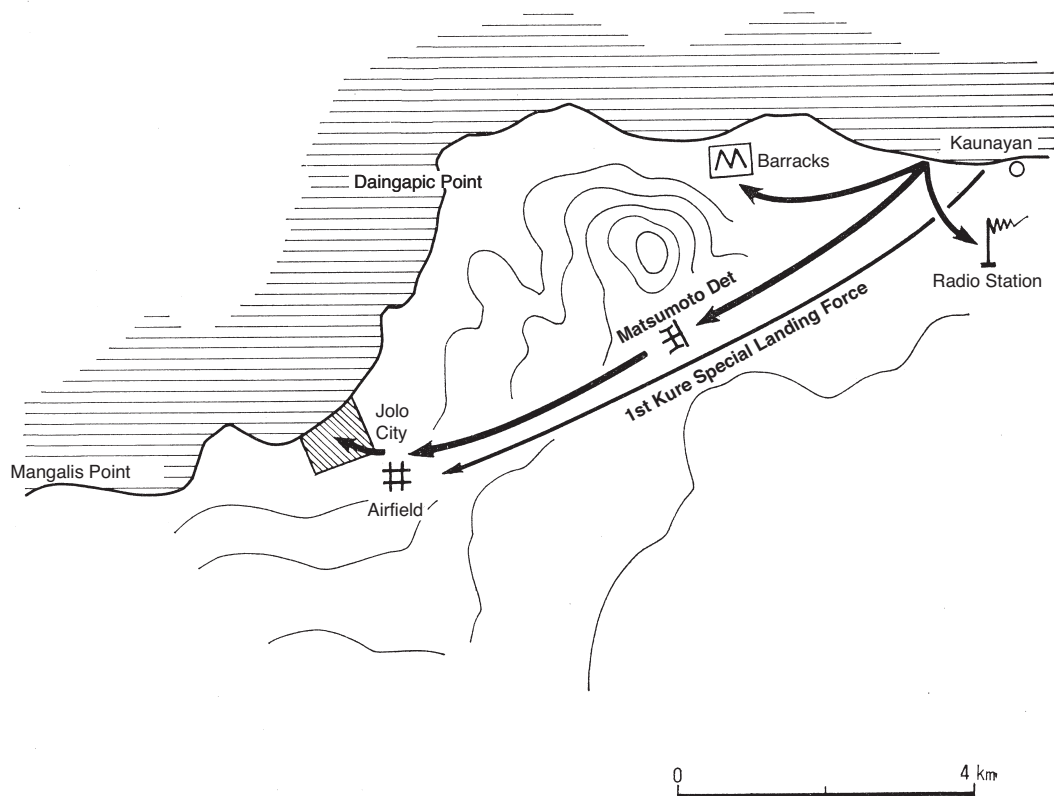
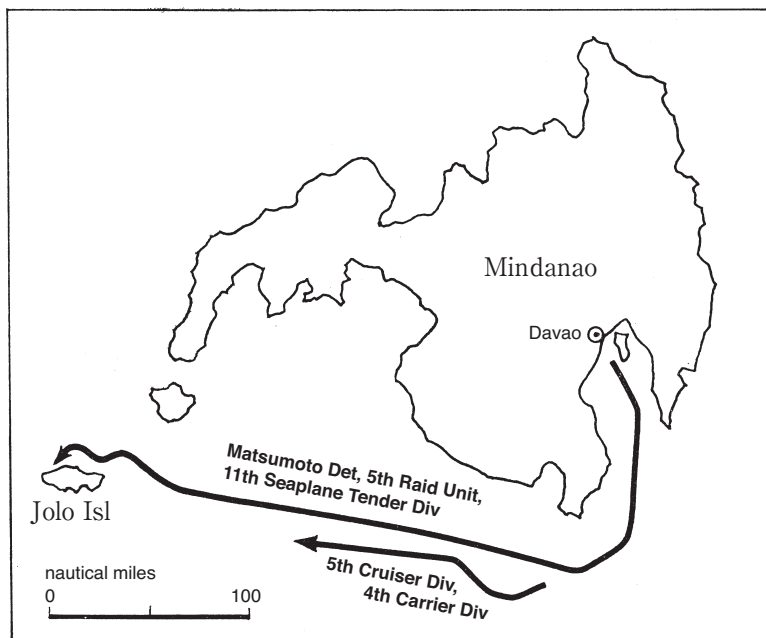


Illustration No. 15—The Capture of Jolo

(and commander of the 2d Destroyer Squadron) in Palau on 15 December, along with the main points of the operation for the capture of Davao.

In the above-mentioned arrangement of 15 December, it was specified that the landing [on Jolo] should be around 25 December; that the [Jolo] unit should sail along with the unit for the capture of Davao [up to Davao], from where it should separately advance [toward Jolo]; that the Army Jolo Detachment, consisting of the 3d Battalion of the 146th Infantry Regiment (minus two companies) and one field artillery section as the core, under the command of the battalion commander, Lt. Col. Matsumoto Tadasu, should board the *Yamazuki-maru* [*Yamatsuki-maru*]; that two [naval] ships with a naval construction unit on board should go along with it; that they should be directly escorted by the [Navy] 5th Raid Unit (consisting of the *Jintsū* and the 15th Destroyer Division as the core under the command of Rear Admiral Tanaka, commander of the 2d Destroyer Squadron); that the Jolo Detachment should land on the coast to the west of Kaunayan (depending on the situation, on the coast between Daingapic Point and Mangalis Point), and first seize the airfield, the radio station, and the center of [Jolo] town; that naval bombardments should be conducted [only] on request; that emptied ships and the [Navy] 5th Raid Unit should return to Davao after completion of the disembarkation; that the [Navy] Southern Philippines Area Task Force (made up of the 5th Cruiser Division (consisting of three heavy cruisers), the 4th Carrier Division (consisting of one aircraft carrier and one destroyer) and the 11th Seaplane Tender Division (consisting of one seaplane carrier)) should support [the operation], etc.^(114, 117)

The headquarters of the 21st Air Flotilla, a land-based [naval] air unit, advanced [its base] to Palau on 19 December, and an element of the land-based air flotilla advanced [its base] to Davao from the 22d.⁽¹⁰²⁾

On 22 December, it was decided that the landing on Jolo would be conducted on the 25th.⁽¹¹⁷⁾ As mentioned previously, the Matsumoto Battalion (i.e. the Jolo Detachment), which had been dragged into unexpected battles in Davao on the 20th, rapidly made preparations after that, embarked on the *Yamazuki-maru* [*Yamatsuki-maru*], and left Davao at 1200 on the 23d. Two naval transport ships and ships of the [Navy] 5th Raid Unit and the Southern Philippines Area Task Force left Davao from the evening of the 22d to the 23d.^(114, 117) On the 23d in the morning, a heavy bomber of the allied forces raided Davao, and in the afternoon, a flying boat of the allied forces came reconnoitering the convoy. On the 24th, there was a report that “an enemy light cruiser was seen,” but it did not result in any engagement,⁽¹¹⁷⁾ and there were no raids [either] by allied planes on this day.⁽¹¹⁷⁾

The Matsumoto Detachment began landing [operations] at 0040 on the 25th and reached the coast west of Kaunayan at 0120.⁽¹¹⁷⁾ Although it succeeded in landing secretly as scheduled, it could not launch a night attack mainly due to the inaccuracy of its maps and its unfamiliarity with the terrain.^(15, 87) After dawn, it eliminated some slight resistance from the U.S.-Filipino Army and seized the airfield around 0600, the barracks around 0700, the town of Jolo around 0800, and the radio station around 1030.⁽¹¹⁷⁾ The airfield was fit for immediate use, and four land-based aircraft were advanced from Taiwan to Jolo airfield as early as the [same] afternoon.⁽¹⁰²⁾

After occupying the whole area of the town of Jolo, the Matsumoto Detachment started mopping up the U.S.-Filipino Army (about three hundred troops), which had fled toward the mountain forests on the eastern coast. Not understanding the intention [of the Detachment], the [local] Moro people put up stubborn resistance with bamboo spears and hunting

guns. However, once the Matsumoto Detachment had succeeded in winning over the chief of the tribe to its side, they began to cooperate with the detachment, which made the capture of the remaining defeated troops in the island so easy that it completed clearing the island in a few days.^(15, 87) The losses that the Matsumoto Detachment incurred in the battle for Jolo were only two men.⁽⁵³⁾

[In the meantime,] only one allied plane came flying over on the 25th, and not a plane came to raid on the 26th.⁽¹⁰²⁾

The 4th Carrier Division ([consisting of] one aircraft carrier, the *Ryūjō*, and one destroyer, the *Shiokaze*), which had provided direct air cover until the 24th, returned to Palau on the 26th. The 11th Seaplane Tender Division (the seaplane carrier *Chitose*), which had taken charge of the direct air cover until the fighter planes of air units (i.e. the Eleventh Air Fleet) advanced to the Jolo base on the 26th, returned to Davao on the 28th.^(102, 103) The 5th Cruiser Division (consisting of the heavy cruisers *Myōkō*, *Haguro*, and *Nachi*) advanced to a spot one hundred nautical miles southeast of Jolo and turned around to return to Palau on the 28th.⁽¹¹⁴⁾

The air unit (i.e. the Eleventh Air Fleet) advanced the whole force of its Tainan Air Group (about fifty fighter planes) to Jolo by 2 January.⁽¹⁰²⁾ The Matsumoto Detachment turned over the guarding of Jolo to the Navy, departed from Jolo at 1200 on 13 January, and arrived in Tarakan on the morning of the next day as will be described later.