

Chapter V The Forward Push of the Air Bases

(See Attached Illustrations No. 1, No. 2 and No. 3) [Omitted]

1. Outline of the Progress of the Operation

The Launch of the Dutch East Indies Operation

Having concluded that with the successful landing of the main force of the Army in the Philippines and the capture of key locations in the southern Philippines the stage-one, phase-one operations were more or less completed, Combined Fleet Commander in Chief Admiral Yamamoto Isoroku issued an order to shift to the phase-two disposition of forces at 1200 on 26 December.

The land-based air unit advanced its force to Davao and Jolo from late December till early January and launched its air campaign against eastern Borneo and Celebes. However, contrary to expectations, the condition of the Davao and Jolo airfields was bad, and since only a part of the force could be advanced, [the operation to] gain command of the air did not progress as scheduled. In the meantime, the surface unit had assembled in Davao from the end of December till early January and was making preparations for the operation. Because of his concern about gaining command of the air, Dutch East Indies Unit Commander V. Adm. Takahashi Ibō decided on 7 January, after consulting all sections, to conduct the attack on Menado and Tarakan on 11 January, one day later than the date stipulated in the Cam Ranh Agreement. Meanwhile, as described previously, the *Myōkō*, the flagship of the 5th Cruiser Division, having sustained damage in the air raid by enemy heavy bombers on 4 January, had left the line of battle.

On 7 January the Dutch East Indies Unit launched the operation against the Dutch East Indies with the sailing of the Tarakan invasion unit from Davao. On 11 January, the landings on both Menado and Tarakan were launched, and after quite fierce fighting, the airfields [in both places] were seized. In the attack on Menado, the 1st Yokosuka Special Landing Force carried out a paratroop operation for the first time in Japanese [military history] and achieved great success. However, in Tarakan, two minesweepers were sunk, and this, as well as the fact that the sweeping of the sea for mines required an enormous amount of time, pointed to the many difficulties in the way of the invasion operations.

Although the advance of the Air Unit was behind schedule due to the delay in the minesweeping and the inadequate condition of the seized airfields, by 15 and 16 January it had pushed forward its bases to Menado and Tarakan and expanded its air campaign to Samarinda, Balikpapan, Kendari, Makassar and Ambon. Furthermore, on 23 January, in parallel with the Kendari and the Balikpapan invasion operations, the carrier-based air unit ([consisting of] two aircraft carriers, one heavy cruiser and six destroyers) with the 2d Carrier

Division as its core, which had been incorporated to the Southern Task Force on 8 January, attacked Ambon, a place of strategic importance north of Australia, scarcely meeting with any counterattacks worth mentioning.

Although the launch of the operations to seize Kendari and Balikpapan was slightly delayed, the respective invasion units, which had started from Menado and Tarakan, seized Kendari and Balikpapan on 24 January. While the resistance on land at these [locations] was not very serious, at Balikpapan, the unit came under quite a fierce counterattack that included raids by enemy aircraft, a night raid on the anchorage by enemy destroyers and torpedo attacks by [enemy] submarines, and it sustained the loss of some transport ships that were sunk or caught fire and of one patrol boat that was badly damaged. Nonetheless, the counterattack did not greatly affect the progress of the operation. Whereas the airfields that had been seized until then were poor, the Kendari [airfield] was a remarkably excellent and large airfield that could be used without hardly any improvements and that was suitable for use by large units.

As of early January, the main body of the Southern Task Force wound up its support for the operations in the Malaya area, left Cam Ranh Bay and advanced via Magong to Palau on 18 January, shifting to a position of support for the operation of the main force of the Dutch East Indies Unit.

The Invasion of Malaya Makes Progress

From the very opening of hostilities, the Southern Army had nurtured a plan to swiftly disembark one unit on the east coast of Malaya to accelerate the operation to neutralize Singapore. So, in concert with the rapid advance of the units [charging southward] along the west coast of Malaya, the army decided to put this plan into action in late December as Operation Q (Kuantan landing [operation]) and discussed arrangements with the [Navy] Malaya Unit. The Malaya Unit at first did not agree to the plan, saying that the plan was a dangerous operation [because it meant] rushing into an area where the enemy had command of the air, but in the end, [it agreed on the condition that] the implementation would be somewhat delayed, and it was decided that an operation unit, which would standby in Singora, should land in Kuantan at a favorable opportunity after 31 December. However, because in late December the Takumi Detachment, which was heading south from Kota Bharu, got close to a point north and within a short distance of Kuantan, operation [Q] was called off. The Operation Q unit, which had advanced to Singora on the 27th under the escort of one half of the 3d Destroyer Squadron, was put ashore in Kota Bharu, and the escort unit returned to Cam Ranh Bay on 31 December. [Meanwhile,] on 26 December, about one half of the air unit of the Malaya Unit had advanced to Kota Bharu.

Then the Malaya Unit had a unit, consisting of the 5th Destroyer Squadron and one half of the 3d Destroyer Squadron as the core, escort the convoy of more than fifty ships in total of the main force of the Twenty-fifth Army and one element of the Fifteenth Army. They left Magong on 31 December; on 8 January the major part was put ashore in Singora and one element in Bangkok. On completing this operation, the 5th Destroyer Squadron was immediately transferred to the Dutch East Indies Unit. In the meantime, the other half of the 3d Destroyer Squadron, which had returned from [the cancelled] Operation Q, sailed to Guangdong, from where it escorted the main force of the 18th Division, which was to participate in

the Malaya operation; it arrived in Cam Ranh Bay on 10 January. The next operations of the Malaya Unit were those to disembark the 18th Division on the east coast of the Malaya and to capture the Anambas Islands. That is to say, the Southern Army had a plan, called Operation S, which was to disembark the main force of the 18th Division in Endau and vicinity on the east coast of Malaya to envelop and destroy the enemy forces in the Malay Peninsula, while swiftly advancing air bases to southern Malaya in preparation for the coming Sumatra operation. The [Navy] Malaya Unit currently used Cam Ranh Bay as its [main] supply base and Cap Saint Jacques and Puolo Condore as advance supply bases for its rapid units, but as the war situation developed smoothly, it was decided to move forward the advance supply base to the Anambas Islands in order take an even more active part in the operations. Although Operation S was clearly defined in the Cam Ranh Agreement and particulars had been arranged between the [Navy] Malaya Unit and the [Army] 18th Division on 11 January, the operation became unnecessary because on 18 January the Army Koba Detachment had already closed in on Endau while the 5th Division was charging [southwards] through Gemas west [of Endau], so in the end it was cancelled. Accordingly, [the plan] was changed in such a way that the 18th Division should be disembarked at Singora. The 3d Destroyer Squadron escorted the division, leaving Cam Ranh Bay on the 20th of January, and arrived in Singora on the 22d. However, a prompt disembarkation of aviation fuel and ammunition at Endau [became] necessary for the conduct of the subsequent air operations, and it was decided to send two transport ships there. The 3d Destroyer Squadron, escorting these ships, left Singora, entered the anchorage [at Endau] on the afternoon of the 26th and began the disembarkation. During this period, they came under attack of as many as several dozen enemy aircraft, but the counterattacks by army fighter plane units drove back every wave of attack, and the [disembarkation] work was continued without incurring much damage. Around 0430 on the 27th, two enemy destroyers raided the anchorage, one of which was sunk in the counterattack of the 3d Destroyer Squadron and another sustained damage and escaped. In the meantime, [the operation to] seize the Anambas [islands] was carried out by the 9th Base Force; it seized the islands on the morning of 26 January, meeting no resistance at all.

Capture of Ledo and Southern Malaya

Earlier, the preparation of the Kuching airfield in northern Borneo, which was seized on 25 December, had contrary to the huge expectations of the Navy made no progress [at all] because of such unfavorable conditions as the wet ground of the airfield and the rainy season [which made it worse]; the plans for conducting the air campaign after advancing to the Kuching airfield seemed to become thoroughly upset. Therefore, the Navy greatly placed its hopes on the newly spotted large airfield in Ledo about fifty nautical miles southwest of Kuching and changed its plans so as to make to the fullest extent use of this airfield.

Since the Navy had expressed at the Cam Ranh Agreement [conference] its hope that Ledo be seized, General Terauchi Hisaichi, commander in chief of the Southern Army, issued an order to the Kawaguchi Detachment on 6 January to seize the Bengkayang area in western Borneo. The detachment was somewhat tardy in its preparations, but it launched the action from Kuching in late January, and seized Ledo and Pontianak respectively on 27 and 29 January.

As for the overland [advance] in the Malaya area, the leading unit of the 5th Division, which had reached Ipoh on 26 December, continued its southward advance, completely destroyed a large enemy unit near Slim on 7 January, and captured Kuala Lumpur, a place of strategic importance, on 11 January. By around that time, the Imperial Guard Division, which had entered into Thailand from French Indochina at the time of the opening of hostilities, was catching up [with the units ahead] by land, started charging [southward] along the west coast of Malaya in parallel with the 5th Division, and partly by maneuvering in small craft along the shore. This shifted the battlefield to southern Malaya; Malacca was seized on the 14th of January, Gemas and Batu Pahat on the 16th, and Kluang on the 25th. On 31 January, the leading units of both divisions charged into Johor Bahru, [from where] Singapore was visible within hailing distance.

The Koba Detachment, which was heading southward along the east coast of the Malay Peninsula, broke through Endau and Mersing respectively on the 20th and the 26th of January, and rendezvoused with one unit of the 5th Division, which was heading eastward from Kluang on the 28th. [With this], communication between [the units heading southward along the] east and west [coasts] was [finally] established.

The Engagements of the Submarine Units

During phase-one operations, the submarine units [in the southwestern region] were mostly concentrated in the Malaya area to attend to the British Fleet in the East. However, in phase-two operations, only the 4th Submarine Squadron remained in the Malaya area to participate in the operations around Java, whereas the 5th Submarine Squadron and the 6th Submarine Squadron respectively took charge of [the operations in] the Indian Ocean, and [those in] the Celebes area and the area north of Australia, as the submarine unit of the Southern Task Force.

The 4th Submarine Squadron, which remained in the Malaya area, engaged with Cam Ranh Bay as its base in the attack on enemy naval vessels as well as in the disruption of [enemy] shipping lanes in the waters south of Singapore, the east coast of Sumatra and around Java from late December through mid and late January, and sank five or six [enemy] merchantmen.

Having returned to Cam Ranh Bay after completing its support of the northern Borneo operation in late December, the 5th Submarine Squadron carried out the operations in the Indian Ocean by shifting its base to Penang after the seizure of the location in late December and after the 11th Submarine Base Unit had been assigned [to the base]. The submarines of the squadron departed from Cam Ranh Bay in early and mid January (one element joined from the mainland of Japan via Davao), and engaged in the disruption of [enemy] shipping lanes around Java. After carrying out operations as far as around the island of Ceylon with one element, it advanced [its base] to Penang from late January to early February. During these operations, the squadron sank more than a dozen enemy ships, but it [also] lost one of its submarines (the *I-60*). The 6th Submarine Squadron, which had laid mines in the Philippines area at the opening of hostilities and returned to Cam Ranh Bay, [again] left the bay in the middle of December for surveilling and patrolling [around] the Philippines and with one element the strategic area of Surabaya; it returned to Davao at the end of December. [Then] in early January, all submarines [of the 6th Submarine Squadron] left Davao for northern

Australia to take on a mission of laying mines in [the waters of] Port Darwin and the Torres Strait and keeping a watch on the enemy fleet in the Arafura Sea; it returned to Davao in late January. During these operations, the squadron spotted the U.S. heavy cruiser *USS. Houston* in the Banda Sea on 14 January and chased her, but they let her slip away. The squadron lost one submarine (the *I-24 [I-124]*) outside the port of Port Darwin.

The Manila Conference

Although at the Cam Ranh Agreement [conference] on 29 December it was decided, as described previously, to drastically move up the operation schedule, not a few in the Navy units on site from that moment onwards commented that on the operational level the [new] schedule was impossible. After the launch of the Dutch East Indies operation, unfavorable conditions had developed one after another just as had been feared, and the opinion that the operation schedule should be postponed grew stronger. The grounds [for the opinion] included the poor condition of the seized airfields, the counterattacks by enemy aircraft, the delay in the minesweeping operations, the fatigue of the crews of the escort ships, and the issue of the maintenance of the ships. Because the Army stubbornly opposed the Navy's opinion to postpone [the operation], the staff personnel concerned gathered in Manila on 21 January and discussed the matter, which resulted in the following changes in the contents of the Cam Ranh Agreement.

1. Invasion schedule: To be postponed for four to nine days.
2. The air operation to destroy the enemy air power on Java shall be carried out from Balikpapan and Makassar, and Banjarmasin will not be used. Instead, if possible, Bali should be seized right before the landing on Java, and air units should be advanced [there], so as to have a hold upon Java.
3. One requirement for the operations against southern Sumatra and western Java was the availability of the airfields in Western Borneo for the Navy, such as those in Kuching or Ledo. However, if they could not be readied in time, the Navy should use the airfields on the Malay Peninsula.

Having concluded that the disembarkation of the main force of the Army units for the Malaya region had been completed, Commander in Chief of the Combined Fleet Admiral Yamamoto issued on 24 January the order to shift to the phase-three disposition of forces. The aim of the Southern Task Force in phase-three [operations] was the invasion of Java, for which the forces of the Southern Task Force were roughly disposed as follows:

1. The Dutch East Indies Unit shall continue [its operation] to seize key areas in the eastern part of the Dutch East Indies, such as Makassar, Ambon, and Timor.
2. As a preparatory operation for the invasion of Java, air operations to destroy the enemy air power in eastern Java shall be carried out by land-based air units from Balikpapan and Kendari.
3. The Malaya Unit shall seize key areas in southern Sumatra, [from where] land-based air units shall conduct air operations to destroy the enemy air power in western Java.
4. Before the landing on Java, Bali shall be seized, and air units shall be advanced [there].
5. The Dutch East Indies Unit shall put ashore the main force of the Sixteenth Army simultaneously in eastern and western Java.
6. The Submarine Unit shall be deployed around Java to support the operations.

7. Almost simultaneously with the landing [operation] on Java, mobile operations shall be conducted on the waters south of Java with the main body of the Southern Task Force as well as the newly added 2d Carrier Division and 2d Submarine Squadron, in order to attack Java from all sides as well as to cut off the escape routes of the enemy.
8. The [newly] attached 2d Carrier Division shall in the first place make an attack on Port Darwin, a strategic location in northern Australia, in concert with [the operation to] seize Timor.
9. The Malay Unit shall prepare for the operations in northern Sumatra, the Andaman Islands, the Nicobar Islands, and the Burma area, so that it will be able to start [those operations] after the seizure of Singapore.

Completion of the Forward Push of the Bases in the Direction of Eastern Java

In the eastern part of the Dutch East Indies, conform to the [above] plan, the Ambon invasion unit, which had left Davao on 27 January and had been joined on the way by naval escort vessels from Menado and Kendari, started the landing [operation] on Ambon on 31 January. The unit captured the place on 3 February, which led to the advance of Navy fighter planes to the Ambon airfield as early as on the 5th. Then, [another] unit, which had left Kendari on 6 February, seized Makassar on 9 February. In this operation [against Makassar], one destroyer was sunk by an enemy torpedo attack.

In the meantime, on 31 January, the Sakaguchi Detachment of the Army in Balikpapan launched the Banjarmasin operation, starting its advance toward Banjarmasin by land (and for one element by maneuvering small craft along the shore) and seized it on 10 February.

The main force of the land-based air unit advanced to Kendari and Balikpapan in late January and carried out an air operation from 3 to 5 February to destroy the enemy air power in eastern Java. On the 4th, it spotted a powerful enemy fleet on the sea east of Java and attacked it with its full force. The result was seen as having utterly destroyed the main force of the enemy. When it was further reported that more than one hundred enemy aircraft had been destroyed, it was judged that the major part of the enemy air force in the area had been destroyed. It was followed by the first air raid on Kupang from Kendari on 6 February.

On 8 February, the main force of the Carrier Task Force (minus the 5th Carrier Division and the 2d Section of the 18th Destroyer Division) was newly incorporated into the Southern Task Force and advanced from the mainland of Japan [on p. 212: from the Marshall Islands] to Palau. After joining there the 2d Carrier Division, which had completed the attack on Ambon, they left Palau on the 15th of February and attacked Port Darwin on the 19th. In concert with this [operation], the land-based air unit also made a sortie from Ambon and Kendari, attacked Port Darwin and caused serious damage to enemy aircraft, numerous naval vessels and facilities on land.

The unit to capture Bali left Makassar on 18 February, landed on Bali on 19 February, and seized the airfield [there]. However, that night a powerful enemy fleet attacked the anchorage. The 8th Destroyer Division (four destroyers) on site engaged it in a fierce night engagement, and reported the military gain of sinking several enemy warships, while sustaining some damage to two destroyers.

Earlier, at the Manila Conference on 21 January, the invasion of [Dutch] Timor had been fixed on 20 February. Almost concurrently, an invasion against Portuguese Timor (Portugal being a neutral state) was discussed at IGHQ, and it was decided to invade [the territory] on the grounds that allied forces had after all been deployed in Portuguese territory and because

of the importance of an air base in Dili. The invasion unit left Ambon on 17 and 18 February, conducted a simultaneous landing in Kupang and Dili on 20 February, drove back the enemy there and seized the airfield on the 21st. The 3d Yokosuka Special Landing Force carried out a paratroop operation on Kupang. The land-based air unit advanced to Bali on the 20th of February and Kupang on the 24th, from where it immediately launched a search and attack [operation] for the enemy in eastern Java and northern Australia from the air; the preparations for the invasion of eastern Java were [now] for the most part completed.

Completion of the Forward Push of the [Air] Bases in the Malaya Area

With the operation at Endau in late January, the Malaya Unit finished for the time being its task of putting Army units ashore in Malaya and was subsequently supposed to engage upon the southern Sumatra operation.

The plan for the southern Sumatra invasion operation was to advance land-based air units to western Borneo, conduct an air campaign against southern Sumatra and western Java that also served to cut off the escape routes from Singapore and to neutralize the enemy [there], and after extending the search range for the enemy as far as the Java Sea, capture those areas in conjunction with the Army. In order to realize that, the Navy put all its energy into accelerating the preparation of the Kuching airfield, while at the same time trying to rapidly transport air base matériel to the seized Ledo airfield. However, the Ledo airfield was situated far inland, and moreover, the roads and bridges [to the airfield] had been thoroughly destroyed, which made it difficult to transport the fuel and ammunition. On top of that, it was learned that airfield itself was not very good, which meant that it could not be ready in time for the southern Sumatra operation.

Having no other choice, Malaya Unit Commander V. Adm. Ozawa Jisaburō decided to advance one half of the force of the land-based air unit to Kuantan and the other half to Kuching, and proposed to the Southern Army a two-day postponement of the operation, which was supposed to be implemented on 4 February.

On 5 February, [part of] the air force was advanced to the Kuching base at last, which enabled [the unit] to launch the air operation against Bangka [Island] and western Java. However, due to the poor condition of the airfield, aircraft were allowed to load only half of the loading capacity of ammunition and fuel, and [the operation] to gain command of the air did not make as much progress as one had wished. Meanwhile, when an advance unit went to the Kuantan airfield, to where it had been hastily decided to advance [part of the unit], it found that [the airfield] was not suitable for immediate use by land-based attack plane units, because giant trees obstructed the extension of the runway. It was estimated that felling these trees would take several days. The Navy had not made a survey of the Kuantan [airfield] until that time. On 6 February, Malaya Unit Commander Vice Admiral Ozawa proposed to the Southern Army a further four-day postponement of [the launch of] the operation. As the Southern Army headquarters was in favor of invading [area after area] in one go on the concept of a strategic pursuit, they were extremely displeased with the postponement of the operations and the Navy's lack of preparation. However, as long as the Navy did not put the operations in motion, the Army could not launch them [on its own], and the Army impatiently passed the days. In the end, on 9 February, the prospect became clear that the [Kuantan] airfield would be ready for use (though [limiting] the fuel and ammunition [for the

aircraft] to half), and the southern Sumatra invasion unit left Cam Ranh Bay on the evening of the 9th, in order to definitely carry out [the operation] on 15 February (five days later than planned in the Manila Agreement).*

The Navy land-based air unit advanced to the Kuantan airfield on 11 February and launched the attack on the Bangka [island] area, while the Army Third Air Force launched air raids on the Palembang area on consecutive days from 6 February onwards. In the meantime, the main force of the Twenty-fifth Army, which had reached the southern tip of the Malay Peninsula on 31 January, launched the operation to land in the face of the enemy on the island of Singapore on 9 February.

Capture of Southern Sumatra; the Preparations to Invade Western Java More or Less Completed

Before dawn on 15 February, [one of] the advance units of the southern Sumatra invasion unit landed in Mentok on Bangka Island, while the other units started sailing upriver toward Palembang by operating [landing] craft. That morning, reconnaissance seaplane(s) searching for the enemy spotted a large enemy unit sailing northward through the Gasper Strait. [At that time] Malaya Unit Commander Vice Admiral Ozawa was on the waters north of Bangka Island, leading the main force of the surface unit in order to cover the main convoy of the [southern Sumatra] invasion unit (with the 38th Division on board). He judged that the enemy force was a powerful unit including one battleship, and decided to destroy [the enemy] with the surface unit, after first attacking them with the air unit. Although the air attack was carried out for as much as six hours by the force of the land-based unit, which flew from Saigon, Kuching and Kuantan, etc., as well as by aircraft of the carrier (*Ryūjō*) of the surface unit, the enemy reversed course and [the unit] let the latter escape before dealing it a major blow.

On 14 February, the Army paratrooper unit was dropped on the airfield and the oil refineries of Palembang and seized them, while the unit that had sailed upstream the Musi River in [landing] craft also reached Palembang on the evening of the 15th. After the river was cleared of mines, the main force of the Army southern Sumatra invasion corps also sailed upstream the Musi River and reached Palembang on the 17th.

Two days earlier, on 15 February, Singapore surrendered. The surface unit of the Malaya Unit caught up with the naval vessels escaping from Singapore, and caught or sank more than a dozen small ones.

Malaya Unit Commander Ozawa concluded that the southern Sumatra invasion operation was more or less completed as of 18 February, pulled the major part of the surface unit back to the Anambas Islands in order to shift to the preparations for the coming operations ([that is] the clearing [of mines in] the waterways of Singapore and the Malacca Strait).

As the operations in the Malaya area were largely completed, Southern Task Force Commander V. Adm. Kondō Nobutake as of 21 February removed one element of the 3d Destroyer Squadron and some other forces from the Malaya Unit and incorporated them into the Dutch East Indies Unit for the operation against western Java. The main force of the 22d Air Flotilla was also removed from the Malaya Unit and incorporated into the land-based

* According to Vol. 3, pp. 302, 310, only the amount of fuel was halved and the planes made a stopover at Kahang to top up their fuel tanks.

air unit of the Southern Task Force to conduct operations under the command of Eleventh Air Fleet Commander V. Adm. Tsukahara Nishizō. With these [redeployments], the preparations for the invasion of western Java were also by and large completed.

2. The Capture of Tarakan (See Illustration No. 7)

The capture of Tarakan was carried out by the Western Attack Unit with the support of the Air Unit of the Southern Task Force. The disposition of forces of the Western Attack Unit was as shown in the following table.⁽⁴⁷⁾

Disposition		Commander		Forces	Assignments
Western Attack Unit	1st Escort Unit	Cdr in Chief, 3d Fleet	4th Destroyer Sqdn Cdr	The <i>Naka</i> , 24th Destroyer Div, 9th Destroyer Div (minus the <i>Yamagumo</i>), 2d Destroyer Div (minus the <i>Murasame</i>), 11th and 30th Minesweeper Divs, 31st Subchaser Div, Patrol Boats Nos. 36, 37, and 38, 2d Kure SLF (minus 1 plt), 5th Construction Squad, and 2d Defense Detail	1. To provide direct escort for the convoy of the Army Sakaguchi Det and the 2d Kure SLF 2. In conjunction with the Army, to seize Tarakan and secure its air base
	2d Base Unit		2d Base Force Cdr	2d Base Force (minus 11th and 30th Minesweeper Divs, 31st Subchaser Div, Minesweeper No. 20, and the <i>Sanuki-maru</i>), and the <i>Itsukushima</i>	1. To cooperate with the 1st Escort Unit (by providing forces) 2. To defend key locations and provide protection for shipping lanes
	1st Air Unit		Capt, the <i>San'yō-maru</i>	The <i>San'yō-maru</i> , the <i>Sanuki-maru</i> , Patrol Boat No. 39, <i>Kureha-maru</i> No. 3, 2d Kure SLF 1st Plt, and fishing boats	To provide the 1st Escort Unit with guard against submarines, as well as to support the landings

Notes:

- Although the commander in chief of the Third Fleet commanded the Western Attack Unit, the invasion operation was virtually directed by 1st Escort Unit Commander and 4th Destroyer Squadron Commander R. Adm. Nishimura Shōji.
- 24th Destroyer Division: the *Umikaze*, the *Kawakaze*, the *Yamakaze*, and the *Suzukaze*
2d Destroyer Division: the *Yūdachi*, the *Samidare*, the *Harusame*, and the *Murasame*
9th Destroyer Division: the *Asagumo*, the *Minegumo*, the *Natsugumo* and the *Yamagumo*
31st Subchaser Division: three submarine chasers
11th Minesweeper Division: four minesweepers
30th Minesweeper Division: two minesweepers

Plan of Operations, etc.

The Arrangements Between the 1st Escort Unit and the [Army] Sakaguchi Detachment

On 5 January, 1st Escort Unit Commander R. Adm. Nishimura Shōji and Maj. Gen. Sakaguchi Shizuo concluded the arrangements concerning capture of Tarakan, which were in outline as follows:



4th Destroyer Squadron
Commander R. Adm.
Nishimura Shōji

1. Disposition of Forces for the Landing Operation

Force	Coast to land on	Tasks
Main force of the Sakaguchi Det (1½ bns)	Central part, east coast of Tarakan	To seize the oil fields and Lingkas
One element of the Sakaguchi Det (1 bn)	Southeastern end of Tarakan	To seize the Mengacu Battery
2d Kure SLF (1 bn)	Central part, east coast of Tarakan	To seize the airfield

Note: It had been specified in the Iwakuni Agreement that the 2d Kure Special Landing Force should come under the command of Detachment Commander Sakaguchi from the time of landing on Tarakan till the conclusion of operations in the most important areas.

2. Landing Actions and Disembarkation Operations

- (1) It is principally intended to conduct surprise landings.
- (2) Gunfire by Naval vessels to cover the landings shall be provided at the request of Detachment Commander Sakaguchi.
- (3) Transport ships shall change anchorage to the Lingkas anchorage one after another when ordered. At that time, depending on the circumstances, naval vessels shall guide them along the waterway.
- (4) The preparations for the subsequent operations shall be made at the Lingkas anchorage.

The Plan of Operations of the 1st Escort Unit

On 4 January, 1st Escort Unit Commander Rear Admiral Nishimura issued 1st Escort Unit Order No. 1 in Malalag Bay, and disclosed the outline of the operation to capture Tarakan, the main points of which were as follows:⁽⁵⁶⁾

1. Distribution of transport ships

1st Section: 1) the *Tsuruga-maru*, 2) the *Liverpool-maru*, 3) the *Hiteru-maru*, 4) the *Hankow-maru*, 5) the *Ehime-maru*, 6) the *Kunikawa-maru*, and 7) the *Kano-maru* (with the right wing unit of the Sakaguchi Detachment and the 2d Kure Special Landing Force on board)

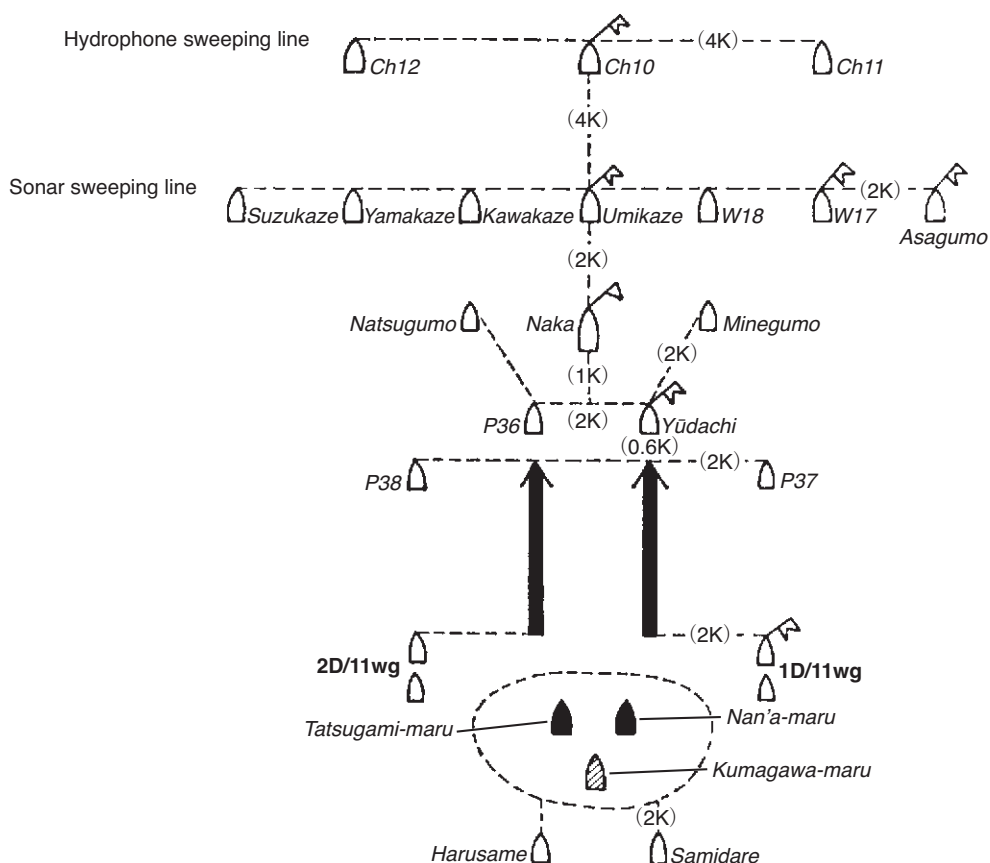


Illustration No. 6 — The Sailing Formation of the 1st Escort Unit on First Alert

2d Section: 1) the *Havana-maru*, 2) the *Teiryū-maru*, 3) the *Kuretake-maru*, 4) the *Nichiai-maru*, 5) the *Kagu-maru*, 6) the *Kunitsu-maru*, and 7) the *Rakutō-maru* (with the left wing unit of the Sakaguchi Detachment, the [Navy] 5th Construction Squad and the 2d Defense Detail on board)

2. Outline of the sortie from Davao

- (1) The 24th Destroyer Division and the 9th Destroyer Division (minus the *Yamagumo*) shall leave Malalag Bay at 0800 on 7 January as the clearing unit, and clear enemy submarines ahead of the sailing route of the transport fleet, after which they shall join the transport fleet on the evening of that day.
- (2) The 2d Destroyer Division (minus the *Murasame*), Patrol Boats Nos. 36, 37 and 38 shall sail to the sea off Davao, leaving Malalag Bay on the morning of 7 January. [Then] they shall depart from [Davao] at 1100, guiding and escorting the transport fleet.

3. Escort during sail

- (1) Planned sailing route: as shown in the Separate Illustration No. 11 (Omitted by the author)
- (2) Sailing speed: 8 knots at normal speed, 6 knots at slow speed
- (3) Protective sailing formation: as shown in the Separate Illustration No. 10 (Illustration No. 6)

4. Entering into the anchorage areas

At 0700 on 10 January, the 9th Destroyer Division, 31st Subchaser Division and the 11th and the 30th Minesweeper Divisions shall leave the line without [separate] orders to form a security unit (commander: 9th Destroyer Division commander), sail to the anchorage areas ahead [of the fleet] and sweep for mines at the 1st anchorage as shown in the Separate Illustration No. 12 (*Illustration No. 7*). After sunset, the unit shall search [for mines] and clear them at the 2d anchorage, while trying to detect enemy submarines in the waters nearby. Also, [the unit] shall have two submarine chasers take up the positions shown in the Separate Illustration No. 12 (*Illustration No. 7*) to act as markers.

The times for anchoring the transport ships and launching the landing [operations] shall be set as follows:

1st anchorage: anchoring at 1930 on the 10th; launch of the landing [operation] at 2130.

2d anchorage: anchoring at 0000 on the 11th; launch of the landing [operation] at 0200.

5. Guarding of the anchorages (one light cruiser, ten destroyers, one submarine chaser, three patrol boats, and six minesweepers)

The 24th Destroyer Division and the 31st Subchaser Division (minus the marker vessels):

Direct guarding around the 1st anchorage

The 2d Destroyer Division (minus the *Murasame*) and Patrol Boat No. 36:

Direct guarding around the 2d anchorage

The *Naka*, the 9th Destroyer Division (minus the *Yamagumo* and the *Natsugumo*), the 11th and the 30th Minesweeper Divisions and Patrol Boats Nos. 37 and 38:

Guarding of outer [areas] of the anchorages

The *Natsugumo* (leaving the line at 0700 on the 11th):

Guarding of the waterway north of Tarakan

6. Sweeping the Lingkas anchorage for mines

The 11th and the 30th Minesweeper Divisions (led by the 11th Minesweeper Division commander) shall sweep the areas A and B in the Separate Illustration No. 12 (*Illustration No. 7*) for mines by separate orders.

7. Special Landing Forces and others

The 2d Kure Special Landing Force, the 5th Construction Squad and the 2d Defense Detail shall, in cooperation with the Sakaguchi Detachment, land on the island of Tarakan, seize, ready and secure the air base and [also] secure important resource areas.

The Plan of Operations of the Sakaguchi Detachment⁽⁵⁶⁾

1. Mission

[The detachment] shall land on the east coast of Tarakan Island, cut through the jungle area and seize the Tarakan oil fields in one go, while attacking the enemy strongholds from their rear and destroying them. Following that, it shall seize the airfield and the oil fields in the north. Once the operations on the island are concluded, it shall hand over the guarding [duties] to the Naval unit, assemble the main force around the town [of Tarakan], embark on the ship(s) in succession and make preparation for the subsequent operations.

2. Disposition of forces

Right Wing Unit

Commander: 146th Infantry Regiment Commander Col. Yamamoto Kyōhei

(1) Forces: the 146th Infantry Regiment (minus 2 battalions), one battery, one engineer company, and one battalion of the 2d Kure Special Landing Force

(2) Action: As the main force, the Yamamoto Regiment shall make a forced landing at the mouth of the Amal River, and after clearing the enemy around the place, swiftly cut through the jungle, seize the Pamusian oil field area north of the town of Tarakan, and advance to Lingkas

before sunrise. The 2d Kure Special Landing Force shall go ashore about thirty minutes after [the landing of] the main force, charging at the rear of the latter. While the main force is seizing the town of Tarakan], it shall overtake the main force and seize the airfield.

Left Wing Unit

Commander: 146th Infantry Regiment 2d Battalion Commander Maj. Kanauji Ken'ichi

- (1) Forces: the 2d Battalion of the 146th Infantry Regiment and one engineer platoon
- (2) Action: The unit shall go ashore in a southeastern part of Tarakan Island almost simultaneously with [the landing of] the right wing unit, charge through the jungle, attack and seize the batteries of Mengacu and Karungan from the rear. [After that,] by way of Lingkas, and also passing by the 2d Kure Special Landing Force at the airfield, it shall attack and seize the Gunung Cangkol and Juwata oil fields and the Juwata battery.

The unit under the direct control of the detachment

- (1) Forces: the 3d Battalion of the 146th Infantry Regiment, armored vehicle unit, one artillery battalion, antiaircraft artillery battalion, independent engineer company, etc.
- (2) Action: Following the landing of the right wing unit, the unit shall advance in the rear of the former, and reach the town of Tarakan.



23d Air Flotilla
Commander R. Adm.
Takenaka Ryōzō



2d Base Force
Commander R. Adm.
Hirose Suétō

The Plan of Operations of the Air Unit of the Southern Task Force

As of 7 January, the Air Unit of the Southern Task Force was deployed in the following way:

Davao base: Eleventh Air Fleet headquarters, 21st Air Flotilla headquarters, 27 Type-1 land-based attack planes of the Kanoya Air Group Detachment, 28 transport planes of the 1st Air Group, 54 Type-0 fighter planes of the 3d Air Group, 7 land-based reconnaissance planes, 20 Type-97 flying boats of the Tōkō Air Group

Jolo base: 23d Air Flotilla headquarters, 12 Type-1 land-based attack planes of the Takao Air Group, 41 Type-0 fighter planes of the Tainan Air Group, 5 land-based reconnaissance planes

On 2 January, Air Unit Commander Vice Admiral Tsukahara disclosed the outline of the support [the unit was to provide] for the invasion operation by Telegraphic Operation Order No. 19, the main contents of which were as follows:⁽⁵⁴⁾

1. Antiaircraft guarding

- (1) [Guarding against enemy aircraft] shall be provided for all invasion units continuously during daylight hours, except for the period from the entering of the units into the anchorages at Menado, Kendari and Ambon until the advance of fighter planes to the seized bases [there].
 - (2) The 1st Air Raid Unit shall be in charge of guarding for the Tarakan invasion unit against enemy aircraft in [the zone] east of 123°30'E.
2. As for the reconnaissance of the landing points, photoreconnaissance of each landing point shall be conducted as quickly as possible and sent to the units concerned.

On 7 January, in conformity with the above Telegraphic Operation Order No. 19, 2d Air Raid Unit Commander R. Adm. Takenaka Ryōzō decided on the following outline of support for the 1st Escort Unit:⁽⁶²⁾

1. Antiaircraft guarding: 3 Type-0 fighter planes and 1 land-based reconnaissance planes per shift
 - 8 January: 1400-1600
 - 9 January: 0800-1800
 - 10 January: 0800-1630
2. Search for enemy surface vessels and guarding against them
 - Shall be carried out, leaving the base at 0800 on 9 and 10 January, [in an area] within a radius of 300 nautical miles of the range between 135° and 220° with the Jolo airfield as its center, ([to be conducted with] 6 land-based attack planes).



12th Seaplane Tender
Division Commander
R. Adm. Imamura
Osamu

As mentioned previously, since gaining command of the air [in the areas to capture] was delayed, Dutch East Indies Unit Commander Vice Admiral Takahashi on the 7th changed the date to launch [the operation to] seize Tarakan and Menado from the 10th to the 11th. Accordingly, the operation schedule of all units was postponed by one day.⁽⁶²⁾

The Plan of Operations of the 2d Base Unit^(68, 72)

1. The commander, on board of the *Wakataka*, shall leave Davao on 9 January, leading the main force of the 2d Base Force, follow in the rear of the 1st Escort Unit and reach Tarakan on 11 January.
2. After the main force reaches Tarakan, the 11th and the 30th Minesweeper Divisions and the *Kumagawa-maru* shall be returned to the command [of the 2d Base Unit] and charged with sweeping for mines inside the port of Tarakan.
3. After sweeping for mines in the port of Tarakan and seizing [areas] around the port, the unit shall take charge of preparing, operating and administering the facilities of the port, while [also] carrying out the guarding and defense of the anchorages, relieving the 1st Escort Unit.

The Plan of Operations of the 1st Air Unit

R. Adm. Imamura Osamu, commander of the 1st Air Unit (a seaplane unit), by order No. 1 of the unit, assigned [his unit] to support the 1st Escort Unit and escort the Sakaguchi Detachment under sail. He [also] disclosed the outline of the support [the unit was to provide] during the landing operations on Tarakan. The outline of the actions of the ships and the allotment of the air operation were as follows:⁽⁷⁶⁾

The outline of the actions of each ship

Ship	Date	Action
<i>San'yō-maru</i>	7 January	[The unit shall] conduct flying missions around the anchorages. At 1700, it shall depart from Davao.
	9 January	Around 0800, [it shall be] [on the waters] southwest of Tawi-tawi (or the waters near the convoy when required), and carry out its duties.
	10 January	[It shall] join the <i>Sanuki-maru</i> at the point 119°E and 4°N at 0700; after that [it shall] act appropriately on the waters north of the convoy; and advance toward Tarakan while carrying out the air operation.
	11 January	[It is] scheduled to enter the port of Tarakan in the afternoon.

<i>Sanuki-maru</i>	7 January	[The unit shall] conduct flying missions around the anchorages. At 1830 it shall depart from Davao.
	8 January	[It shall] act appropriately in Sarangani Bay or in the near waters and carry out air operations.
	10 January	After that, by 0700, [it shall] join the <i>San'yō-maru</i> at the point 119°E* and 4°N; afterwards [it shall] act appropriately near the <i>San'yō-maru</i> ; advance toward Tarakan while conducting air operations.
Patrol Boat No. 35**	7 January	[The unit shall] replenish and prepare for a sortie in the morning; leave Davao at 1700, after which [it shall] advance toward Tarakan, while guarding the 1st Air Unit against [enemy] submarines.

The allotment for the air campaign

Date	Tasks	Time of Departure (and Return)	Type, number of aircraft to be employed per shift/launching ship	Outline of Action
7 January	Direct defense of the transport convoy against [enemy] aircraft	1100 (1800)	2 Type-0 observation seaplanes / <i>Sanuki-maru</i>	As designated by the captain of the ship.
	Guarding of the anchorage ([of] Davao) against [enemy] aircraft	1100 (1500)	3 Type-0 observation seaplanes / <i>San'yō-maru</i>	1st shift 1100 (1300) 2d shift 1300 (1500)
8 January	Direct defense of the transport convoy against [enemy] submarines	0630 (1830)	2 Type-0 observation seaplanes / <i>Sanuki-maru</i>	As designated by the captain of the ship.
9 January	Ditto	0650 (1900)	2 Type-0 observation seaplanes / <i>San'yō-maru</i>	1st shift 0650 (0900) 2d shift 0845 (1100) 3d shift 1045 (1300) 4th shift 1245 (1500) 5th shift 1445 (1700) 6th shift 1645 (1900)
	Search for the enemy	1400 (1700)	1 Type-0 [reconnaissance] seaplane / <i>San'yō-maru</i>	Around the Sibutu Passage
10 January	Direct defense of the transport convoy against [enemy] submarines	0650 (0930)	2 Type-0 observation seaplanes / <i>San'yō-maru</i>	Each ship can increase the number of aircraft, depending on the situation.
		0900 (1230)	2 Type-0 observation seaplanes / <i>Sanuki-maru</i>	
		1200 (1430)	2 Type-0 observation seaplanes / <i>San'yō-maru</i>	
		1400 (1630)	2 Type-0 observation seaplanes / <i>Sanuki-maru</i>	
		1600 (1910)	2 Type-0 observation seaplanes / <i>San'yō-maru</i>	
	Search for the enemy	0700 (1000)	2 Type-0 [reconnaissance] seaplanes / <i>San'yō-maru</i>	Search area: around the Sibutu Passage, southwestern part of the Sulu Sea.

* The text mistakenly has 111°

** In the tables on pp. 96 and 126: *Patrol Boat No. 39*. She was in January replaced by *Patrol Boat No. 35*.

11 January	Support for the ground operation Guarding of the anchorage against [enemy] submarines	0630 (0830)	2 Type-0 observation sea-planes / <i>San'yō-maru</i> 2 Type-0 observation sea-planes / <i>Sanuki-maru</i> 2 Type-0 observation sea-planes / <i>San'yō-maru</i>	1. Support for the ground operations shall be carried out in close communication with the ground units 2. Attack targets: (1) [Enemy] positions and batteries that are resisting (2) Enemy troops and vessels escaping from Tarakan (3) Targets designated by ground units (4) Enemy forces in the outer areas of Tarakan Island
		0730 (1000)	2 Type-0 observation sea-planes / <i>San'yō-maru</i>	
		0730 (1000)	2 Type-0 observation sea-planes / <i>Sanuki-maru</i>	
		0900 (1130)	2 Type-0 observation sea-planes / <i>San'yō-maru</i>	
The execution of subsequent air operations shall be ordered depending on the war situation by separate orders.				

Note by the editor: According to note 76, the above table is based on the records of the *Sanuki-maru*. These records could not be traced in the archives. The records of the *Sanyō-maru* could be traced, but they differ in several places from the table above.

Assessment of the Enemy Situation Centering on Tarakan

First Escort Unit Commander Rear Admiral Nishimura's judgment about the enemy situation in the Tarakan area right before the sortie from Davao was in outline as follows:⁽⁵⁶⁾

1. No enemy aircraft were spotted on the Tarakan airfield.
2. It seems that one or two submarines are staying in the port of Tarakan; it is also reported that a naval vessel that looked like a submarine tender was [also] there.
3. Enemy naval surface vessels are not likely to appear on the waters between Davao and Tarakan.
4. It seems that there are a few enemy naval surface vessels in the Balikpapan area.
5. Although [Japanese] air operations are to be carried out with Jolo as the base, the tardiness in the improvement of the base caused a delay in the advance of land-based attack planes. [Because of this], attacks on Tarakan were conducted only about two times by fighter planes, and these have not yet produced adequate results.
6. As we are advancing toward the Borneo area from now on, the appearance of many enemy aircraft is expected.
7. Enemy submarines are gradually assembling at the mouth of Davao Gulf and in the Celebes Sea; this situation requires the highest state of alert.

The Launch of the Invasion Operation

Preliminary Neutralization of the Enemy Air Power Completed

The air attack on Tarakan was launched first of all by the Mihoro Air Group of the Malaya Unit. That is to say, in view of enemy aircraft coming toward Miri and Kuching, the Malaya Unit was keenly aware of the necessity to neutralize Tarakan, and attacked Tarakan on the

26th of December with seven land-based attack planes, and again on the 28th with seven land-based attack planes and four fighter planes of the Mihoro Air Group.⁽⁷¹⁾ However, each time only one aircraft was spotted on the ground in these attacks, and they were destroyed. As described previously, on the same day, the 28th, the 3d Air Group of the 1st Air Raid Unit attacked Tarakan with seven Type-0 fighter planes and one land-based reconnaissance plane, and reported that the unit had caught up with nine enemy fighter planes and had brought down four planes for sure, almost certainly brought down two, but was not sure about the results of the other two or three.⁽⁷¹⁾

It was not until 30 December when the 2d Air Raid Unit, which was [supposed to be] mainly in charge of the attack [on the areas including Tarakan], made its first attack on Tarakan.⁽⁷¹⁾ From that time on, the unit conducted reconnaissance attacks over the area of Tarakan with fighter planes and land-based reconnaissance planes on 31 [December] and 3, 4, and 5 January, but no enemy was spotted other than one auxiliary aircraft carrier, which was seen at Balikpapan on the 31st by a land-based reconnaissance plane.⁽⁷⁾ Meanwhile, by the 7th [of January] the long-awaited advance of twelve land-based attack planes of the Takao Air Group from Gaoxiong to the Jolo base was [finally] effected.⁽⁶²⁾



Type-0 Fighter Plane



Type-98 Land-based Reconnaissance Plane

The Sailing of the Convoy

At 0800 on 7 January, the convoy of about forty ships left Davao as scheduled. Receiving a report that a reconnaissance seaplane of the *San'yō-maru* had spotted two objects at about 4°55'N 124°E, which looked like enemy submarines, but that it had lost sight of them in a short while, the convoy [once] altered course to avoid [enemy submarines]. However, other than that, the convoy calmly approached the anchorage.⁽⁵⁶⁾ During the sailing, reconnaissance seaplanes of the 1st Air Unit and fighter planes of the 1st and the 2d Air Raid Units provided direct defense above the convoy, while the land-based attack planes of the units made a reconnaissance attack on Tarakan as well as searched for the enemy in the Makassar Strait. The outline of the results of the air reconnaissance reported by the 2d Air Raid Unit as of the afternoon of the 9th was as follows:⁽⁷¹⁾

1. On the 9th, [the unit] attacked one merchantman and one gunboat ([of] 200 tons), which were moored alongside the pier at the port of Lingkas. Two bombs directly hit them, and [the ships] are expected to catch flames and sink.
2. It seems that the enemy does not expect that they will come under attack of the Japanese forces soon.
3. Although there is considerably fierce antiaircraft fire, no enemy aircraft were spotted.

The destroyer division and the minesweeper divisions, which had sailed ahead as planned from 0000 on the 10th onward, reached the lightship outside the port of Tarakan around 1000 of the same day, seized a 1,000t-class Dutch merchantman loaded with one aircraft, which had set out from the port just then, led it to the area near the 1st anchorage and had it drop anchor. In the meantime, around 1130, the *Natsugumo* reached the lightship and seized it. Around that time, the *Sanuki-maru*, ([which sailed] in the rear out of sight of the transport fleet) was bombed by large enemy planes, but sustained no damage. By 1500 the convoy was approached for about thirty minutes by two large enemy aircraft, and it was considered that the full picture of the Tarakan invasion unit was more or less known [to the enemy].

Around 1600, the security unit, which had sailed ahead, completed the clearing [of mines] of the 1st anchorage and reported no mines [left]. At 1750 when the convoy reached right in front of the anchorage, three twin-engine bombers, and two fighter planes of the enemy came for an attack, dropped bombs near the convoy and immediately escaped. Again at 1818 two twin-engine planes came for an attack and dropped bombs, but fortunately the Japanese forces sustained no damage. At 1900, separating into the 1st and the 2d Sections, the convoy dropped anchor at the 1st anchorage thirty minutes earlier than scheduled. Earlier at 1805, a reconnaissance seaplane of the *San'yō-maru* had spotted an enemy submarine afloat one nautical mile off Tarakan, but let her slip away. The security unit cleared the sea of mines at the 2d anchorage between 1935 and 2115, and reported that no mines were snagged.⁽⁵⁶⁾

The Landings and the Land Combat (See Illustration No. 7)

The 1st Section, i.e. the right wing unit of the Sakaguchi Detachment and the 2d Kure Special Landing Force ([the latter] under the command of Cdr. Makiuchi Tadao), dropped anchor at the 1st anchorage at 1900 and immediately started their preparations for the landings. At 2130, the first landing unit of the right wing unit of the Sakaguchi Detachment left the anchorage, which was followed by the 2d Kure Special Landing Force, leaving the anchorage

thirty minutes later at 2200. Around 2100, flames from fires that had apparently been set were observed from the sea rising up at two locations on Tarakan. At 2215, the 2d Section set sail and headed for the 2d anchorage. At 2325, the *Yamakaze*, which was patrolling the southern side of the 1st anchorage, spotted an enemy submarine that had surfaced, but lost sight of her because she had dived immediately. Four ships of the 2d Section dropped anchor at the 2d anchorage between 0100 and 0120 on the 11th, and the first landing unit of the left wing unit of the Sakaguchi Detachment left the 2d anchorage at 0220. From 0330 onwards, the [ships of the] 1st Section also moved to the 2d anchorage one after another. Around 0700, 1st Escort Unit Commander Rear Admiral Nishimura received a report from Detachment Commander Sakaguchi that “the first landing unit had successfully landed at 0000 on the 11th and the second landing unit at 0400.” [Meanwhile] on the island of Tarakan, where fires had been burning from the previous night onwards, [further] explosions occurred at the oil fields and large fires broke out in the area of Lingkas around 0300, creating a ghastly sight in the dim light of dawn with black smoke covering the entire sky.⁽⁵⁶⁾

Around 0940, the 1st Escort Unit commander received from the Sakaguchi Detachment the first report on the land combat, which was in summary as follows: “(1) The right wing unit mistook [the location of] the Amal [river] and landed on the northeastern end of Tarakan Island; at present it is preparing to transfer to the mouth of the Amal river. (2) The left wing unit is advancing as scheduled. [Reported at] 0900.” Although the seizure of Lingkas and the Mengacu battery was a matter of the utmost urgency, [enemy] machinegun fire from the ground at friendly aircraft flying over these areas indicated that the left wing unit had not yet seized them. [The Navy] had not the slightest idea what had happened to this unit. [Meanwhile,] two enemy four-engine bombers raided the anchorage twice between 1300 and 1340; they dropped bombs around the anchorage, but no damage was sustained. At 1400, the 2d Base Unit, which followed [the 1st Escort Unit], [also] arrived at the anchorage, and the 1st Escort Unit commander returned the minesweeping force to the 2d Base Unit. Finally at 1700, he received from the Sakaguchi Detachment the second report on the land combat, which was in outline as follows:

1. The right wing unit and the [naval] special landing force have advanced to the highlands east of [the town of] Tarakan, but blocked by a powerful enemy artillery position, their advance has been delayed. They plan to break through the position tonight by means of a night attack.
2. The situation of the left wing unit is unknown.
3. [We] request bombing of the battery position to the east of the foreign residential area in the town of Tarakan, the Juwata Battery at the northern end of Tarakan, and the antiaircraft battery position on the islet of Sadau west [of Tarakan].

Thus, on 11 January, with sunset at 1916, the second night [on Tarakan] came around while the situation of the land combat failed to work out as expected. About one day had passed since the launch of the Tarakan operation, but the advance of the right wing unit had got stuck whereas the situation of the left wing unit was totally unknown. Moreover, the enemy at the Mengacu Battery was [still] very active, while right in front essential resource materials were being consumed by fire. [The Japanese forces] impatiently greeted sunrise on the 12th. In the meantime, in the middle of night of the 11th, having heard nothing at all from the left wing unit since its landing, Detachment Commander Sakaguchi deployed one infantry company, which was under the direct control of the detachment and led by Lt. Col. Namekata

Shōichi, to land at Cape Batu and advance along the coast to seize the Mengacu Battery. The Namekata Detachment landed on the coast southeast of the battery at 0430 on the 12th, and advanced in front of the battery around dawn. Detachment Commander Sakaguchi was advancing at the rear of the right wing unit after its landing. [According to Vol. 3, *The Invasion of the Dutch East Indies*, p. 179, Detachment Commander Sakaguchi landed at Amal sometime during the day on the 12th, after it had become clear that his landing at the Lingkas pier was impossible.]

The right wing unit, i.e. the Yamamoto Regiment, which had planned to break through the strong enemy position in a night attack, handed over the task of securing the highlands northeast of the town of Tarakan to the [naval] special landing force and carried out the night attack on the enemy position at 2300. However, meeting with extremely fierce resistance of the enemy, the Yamamoto Regiment, which at one time managed to seize part of the enemy barracks, failed to succeed in seizing the entire position and had no choice but to go back to its original position by dawn. At 0820, when the regiment was making preparations to resume the attack, the bearer of a flag of truce of the enemy sent by the enemy garrison commander came to offer a general surrender. Receiving the offer, Regimental Commander Yamamoto wired Detachment Commander Sakaguchi his request that [the detachment commander] swiftly land at the Lingkas pier. Also, while starting disarming the enemy, he strictly instructed them to forbid any resistance by the batteries at the mouth of the port. The special landing force seized the airfield at 1500, but the left wing unit lost its bearings in the dense forest and only reached the rear of the Karungan Battery around noon on the 12th. However, unable to find the battery and due to communication troubles, the unit was not able to seize the said battery on that day. Detachment Commander Sakaguchi learned of the surrender of the enemy at 0900, and advanced into the town of Tarakan [according to Vol. 3, p. 179, at 1930].⁽⁵⁶⁾

The Engagement of Minesweepers No. 13 and No. 14

Having received the report of the surrender of the enemy at 0930, 1st Escort Unit Commander Rear Admiral Nishimura, leading the *Naka*, shifted to [the area] near the 2d anchorage from the outer area of the anchorages, so as to take general command of the clearing of the waterways to the mouth of the port of Tarakan as well as the disembarkation of units and matériel at the port of Tarakan. He took a position from where he could observe the mouth of the port of Tarakan and issued an order to start clearing the waters [of mines] at 1100. According to the “Action Report of the 4th Destroyer Squadron, No. 3,” the details of the engagement of the minesweeper divisions were as follows.

The Engagement of the Minesweeper Divisions at the Mengacu Waterway on 12 January

1. The situation before the engagement

(a) The general situation

- (1) Although the situation of the land combat was not clear, its progress seemed quite different from what had been expected. The enemy battery at Mengacu was still intact; two large-sized motorized [landing] craft, which operated near the mouth of the port on the afternoon of the 11th, came under fierce fire from the enemy battery. Although [the craft] managed to return safely, the power [of the battery] should not be underestimated.

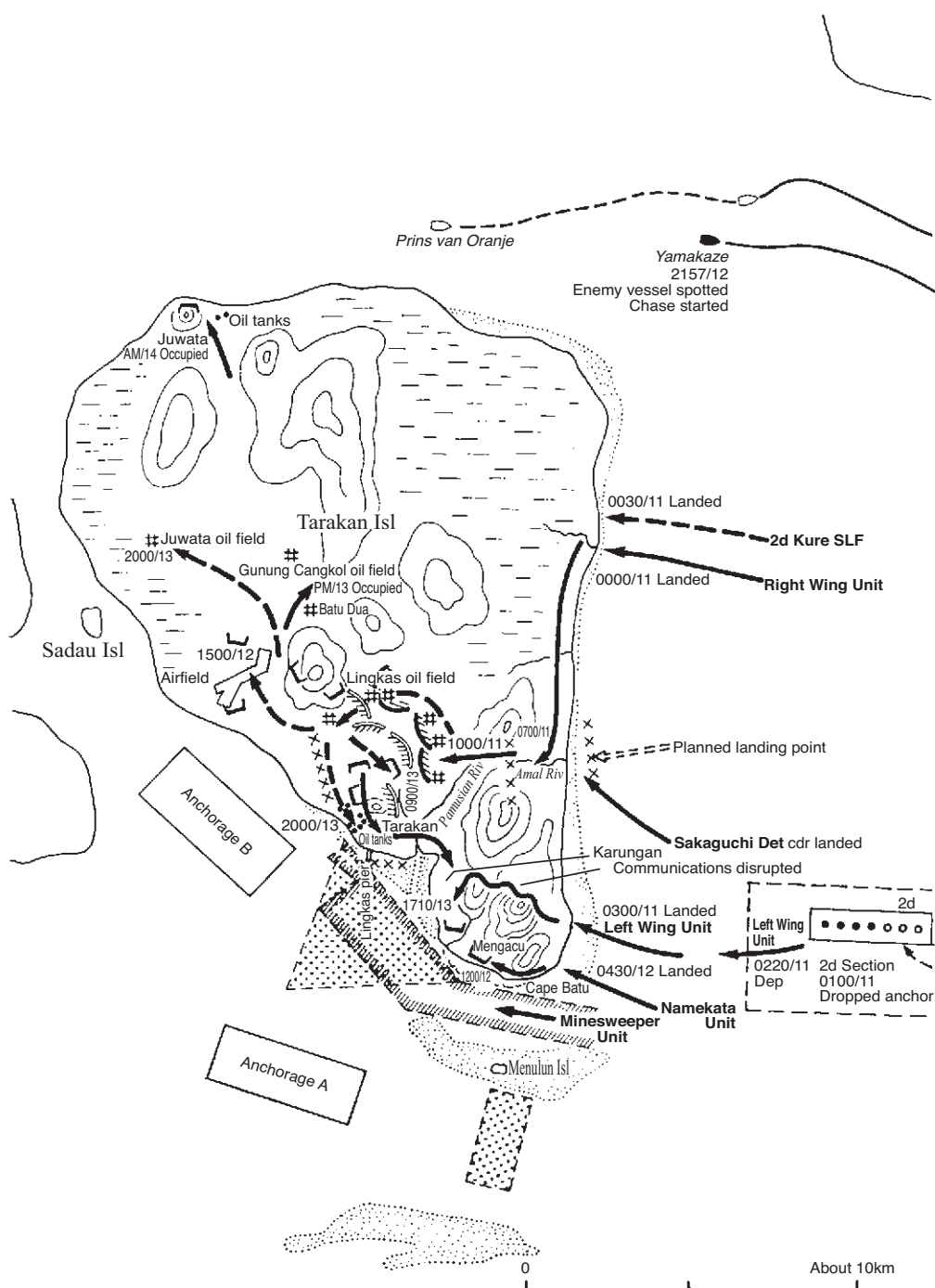
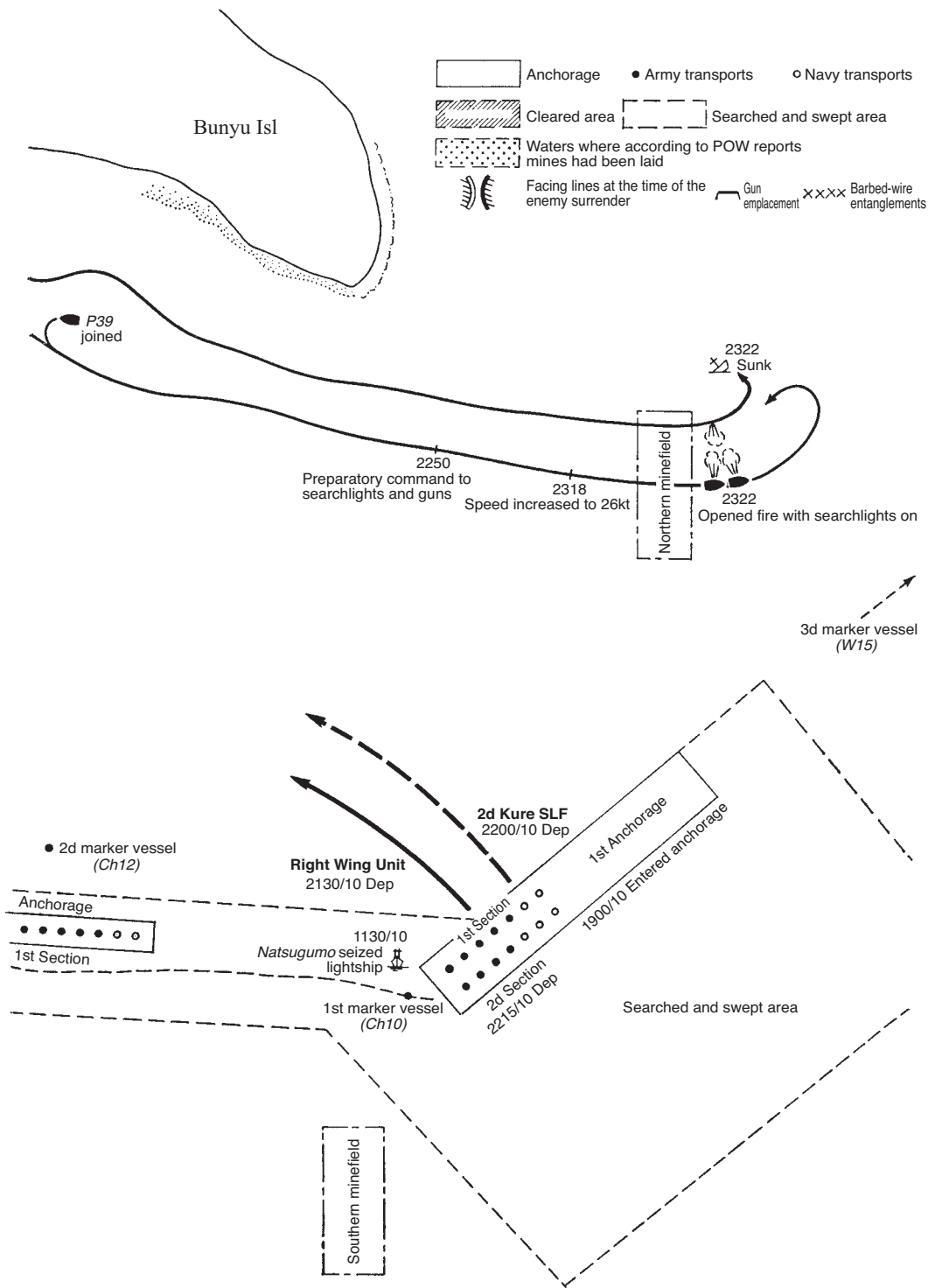


Illustration No. 7 — The Outline of the Capture of Tarakan (10-20 January, 1942)



- (2) The fires at the oil wells and tanks were burning so furiously that a thick black smoke completely covered the sky in the west, consuming the heavy oil resources, about which we could do nothing but watch them [burn] in front of us.
- (3) Because the friendly fighter planes were based on Jolo, which is far away, it was impossible for them to ensure a flawless cover against enemy air raids, due to the time [required to get here] and for meteorological reasons. On the contrary, enemy planes frequently came in for a raid; they sometimes came around sunset after the friendly fighter planes had returned [to their bases].
- (4) In view of the coming operations, the rapid preparation of the airfield [on Tarakan] was one of our greatest concerns.

In these circumstances, wishing to clear the waterway [of mines] as soon as possible following a rapid progress in the land combat, in order to disembark the required personnel and matériel, to ready the airfield (so that friendly aircraft could be deployed), and to secure the heavy oil resources, all of [the units] had been making preparations while awaiting the report of victory in the land combat.

(b) The launch of the minesweeper divisions

Around 0930 on the 12th, a report came from the army that the enemy garrison commander and his men had offered to surrender. Then, as soon as the order to clear the waters [of mines] was issued at 1100, the minesweeper divisions got ready to go into action. It was with such swiftness that it struck one by a “are they going already?” feeling of surprise.

The commander of the 11th Minesweeper Division went into action leading the 11th and the 30th Minesweeper Divisions and already reached the mouth of the port around 1200. The 11th and the 30th Minesweeper Divisions got into formation ready for minesweeping and were followed by several large-sized motorized [landing] craft belonging to the Special Minesweeping Service Unit of the *Kumagawa-maru*. They grandly entered the waterway of Mengacu.

2. The Progress of the Action [Illustration No. 8]

(Although the action report of the minesweeper divisions should [ideally] be referred to for the details, [here] the course of events based on the progress of the action as witnessed from the bridge of the *Naka* is described because it was difficult to learn the details [from the minesweeper division report] due to the loss of those directly involved in the action, i.e. the 11th Minesweeper Division commander, Minesweepers Nos. 13 and 14, and the majority of the crew. However, from the *Naka*, the action was almost throughout observed from distance of twelve to thirteen kilometers.)

The Minesweeper divisions got into formation ready for minesweeping, keeping a strict alert against the Mengacu battery as well as against mines. With all the crew having taken up their positions and geared up, they headed for the port with Minesweeper No. 13 at the head. Around 1200, as soon as [Minesweeper No. 13] changed course north of Menulun Island and headed toward the port, a hidden battery at Karungan (situated at the foot of a mountain and so well camouflaged that it was not easy to spot [even] when after the seizure [of Tarakan] viewed from the pier) and located at a distance of about two kilometers [from the ships], abruptly opened fire, at

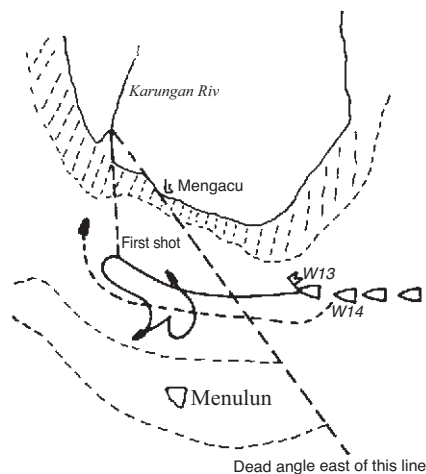


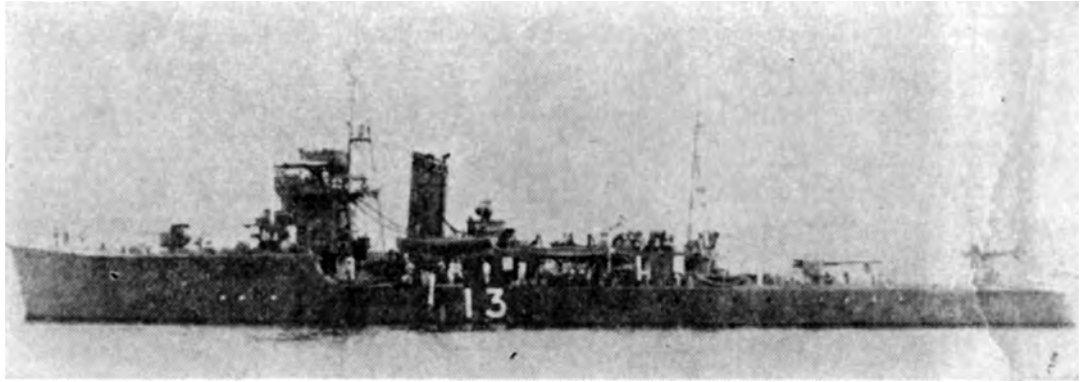
Illustration No. 8 — The Engagement of the Minesweeper Divisions

first at Minesweeper No. 13. Minesweeper No. 13 immediately fired back, but the enemy fire became suddenly accurate from about the third salvo. [Minesweeper No. 13] first of all received a direct hit midships near the waterline. Following Minesweeper No. 13, Minesweeper No. 14 [also] began firing back.

The enemy markedly stepped up its rate of fire, and the artillery duel became extremely fierce. Although hit by enemy shells, Minesweepers Nos. 13 and 14 still continued firing and kept their course toward the port (seemingly gaining speed). [Meanwhile,] Minesweepers Nos. 15 and 16 and other ships, which had followed [them], slowed down and changed course, steering clear of the enemy's firing range.

Following [the first hit], Minesweeper No. 13 received a second hit near the bridge. Despite the blaze and the black smoke furiously rising from the violent explosion, all guns [of the ship] (the gun on the fore in particular) still kept on firing furiously. After a while, [the ship] gradually turned to port. Although hit by some more enemy shells near the stern, catching fires at places, and with steam violently shooting out, she [once] seemed to have successfully taken an evasive course. However, her speed suddenly slowed down, and she stopped for a moment. Then she [tried to] start an evasive action by moving backward, but she seemed unable to control [her movements]. After a while, as she started moving forward again, she [also] started turning to port. That time, for a moment, it looked as if she succeeded in taking evasive action, which made us feel a little relieved. However, the ship kept turning to port and again turned her bow toward the port [of Tarakan]; her rudder seemed out of order. Earlier, Minesweeper No. 14 had followed in the wake of Minesweeper No. 13. But when the latter slowed down and gradually turned port due to a hit [by the enemy], Minesweeper No. 14 came a little ahead of the latter. From around the time when Minesweeper No. 13 [tried to] start evasive action, enemy fire, which until then had been concentrated on Minesweeper No. 13, was [now] directed at Minesweeper No. 14. Almost all enemy shells scored direct hits causing fires at parts of the bridge, midships and stern, and steam shot from the ship. Particularly, the shell that hit her at the stern seemed to have caused an explosion of antisubmarine depth charges; black smoke from the explosions billowed high up into the sky, and the ship looked as if torn near the mizzenmast. Another shell, which hit near the first gun in the fore part, seemed to have blown off the gun, which was absolutely horrifying. Nevertheless, the ship suddenly changed course in such a way that she was heading toward the enemy battery. Also, she must have been set to full speed; suddenly she seemed to gain speed, wildly shooting steam from her side. With the first gun still firing, she was rushing toward the enemy battery. When the ship was finally about to go behind Cape Mengacu [and out of sight] from the bridge of the *Naka*, another large column of water was thrown up from around the waterline. The ship slowed down as if she had struck a mine, and was sinking from the bow, [still] closing in to the shore. After a while and about the time the first gun stopped firing, the ship sank behind Cape Mengacu. It was precisely at 1205.

During this period, Minesweeper No. 13 acted as previously described, temporarily evading enemy fire. However, the moment Minesweeper No. 14 sank, Minesweeper No. 13, which had been trying to retreat by slightly moving backward, [began] moving forward, as if already resolved, ([still] turning to port) and with the rudder out of order, she turned her bow again toward the port [of Tarakan], which caused enemy fire to be again concentrated on her. While the ship gradually slowed down, the enemy fire on the contrary became more and more accurate, and almost all shells scored direct hits and caused fires. Particularly, a hit near the bridge was terribly disastrous. A hit near the gun on the fore part looked as if it had totally destroyed the first gun, but the gun reopened fire after a while. And thus, due to a hit near the waterline, the ship, almost standing still, listed to port, and started gradually sinking from the bow. In a short while, raising her stern, the ship bravely met her end. It was 1215. In the meantime, the other four minesweepers were soon after ordered to retreat. The desperate and courageous fight of Minesweepers Nos. 13 and 14 was so truly heroic that it would have made even a demon weep.



Minesweeper No. 13, Which Engaged with the Enemy Battery and Sank



A Yamakaze-class Destroyer

It was an unexpected engagement that happened in only five or ten minutes, and [believing] that the enemy had surrendered, the *Naka* and the 2d Destroyer Division, which witnessed the engagement from beginning till end, were off guard. Moreover, mines had been laid in the very narrow waters of the engagement, which made it impossible for them to rush to the rescue, leaving them helpless while the two minesweepers were lost. In this engagement, the 11th Minesweeper Division sustained a great loss of 156 men killed, including the commander of the division, Cdr. Yamakuma Wakito (graduate of the 48th class of the Imperial Japanese Naval Academy); (there were [only] 53 survivors).⁽⁵⁶⁾

The Sinking of an Enemy Minelayer

On the night of the 12th, after the tragic engagement of the minesweeper divisions, the Destroyer *Yamakaze* (Capt.: Cdr. Hamanaka Shūichi; graduate of the 51st class), which had been deployed at the northern waterway, spotted an enemy naval vessel trying to escape [from Tarakan] and sank the latter. According to the “Action report No. 3 of the 4th Destroyer Squadron,” the course of the engagement was as follows:

At 2157, the *Yamakaze*, keeping guard on the waterway between the islands of Tarakan and Bunyu, spotted the silhouette of a ship, which looked like an enemy naval vessel. She gradually and secretly followed the latter up to the wider waters near the eastern exit of the waterway and maintained surveillance, while deliberately making such preparations as previously announcing all the [relevant] units the scheduled time of turning on the searchlights. At 2318, increasing her speed to 26 knots, she closed in on the [enemy] ship. At 2322, both ships almost simultaneously started firing, turning searchlights on each other at a distance of about 2 kilometers; the *Yamakaze*, along with Patrol Boat No. 38, which followed the former, sank the [enemy] ship at 2332.

Every salvo of the main gun of the *Yamakaze* scored a direct hit on the ship from the beginning, whereas many of the enemy shells flew over, mostly passing above our heads. And the power of their searchlight was very small; [the enemy] was not a match for us at all. The engagement was one-sided to the end, and the enemy [ship], which tried to escape, sank in the end. The average firing distance was about 1,800 meters. At 2355, we lowered two cutters on the waters near the location of the sinking and rescued five men (including one engineer lieutenant junior grade), after which we immediately continued our patrol. The enemy ship was the *HNLMS Prins van Oranje*.

The enemy ship, which [the *Yamakaze*] sank, was a Dutch minelayer (1,291 ton, with two 3-inch guns and two 40-millimeter machineguns, 15 knots at top speed; built in 1931). This military gain by the *Yamakaze* was enough to lift the morale of all the personnel at the anchorage, who had felt somewhat frustrated because of the sinking of the minesweepers in the afternoon.⁽⁵⁶⁾ This was the first engagement between naval surface vessels in the Philippines and the Dutch East Indies areas.

The Guarding Against [Enemy] Submarines and Aircraft, and the Search for the Enemy

[Illustration No. 9]

The 1st Air Unit and the Air Unit of the Southern Task Force had day after day carried out the guarding of the invasion units against [enemy] submarines and aircraft, while searching for the enemy in the Makassar Strait and conducting attacks on Tarakan. By the 12th, they reported that they had sank or destroyed several [enemy] merchantmen, caused some damage to a submarine that had surfaced and a gunboat; [further] they had brought down one heavy bomber and destroyed another. During these operations, the only loss sustained [by Japanese forces] was one land-based attack plane, which had crashed itself, and one Type-0 fighter plane, which had made an emergency landing (with no loss of crew).

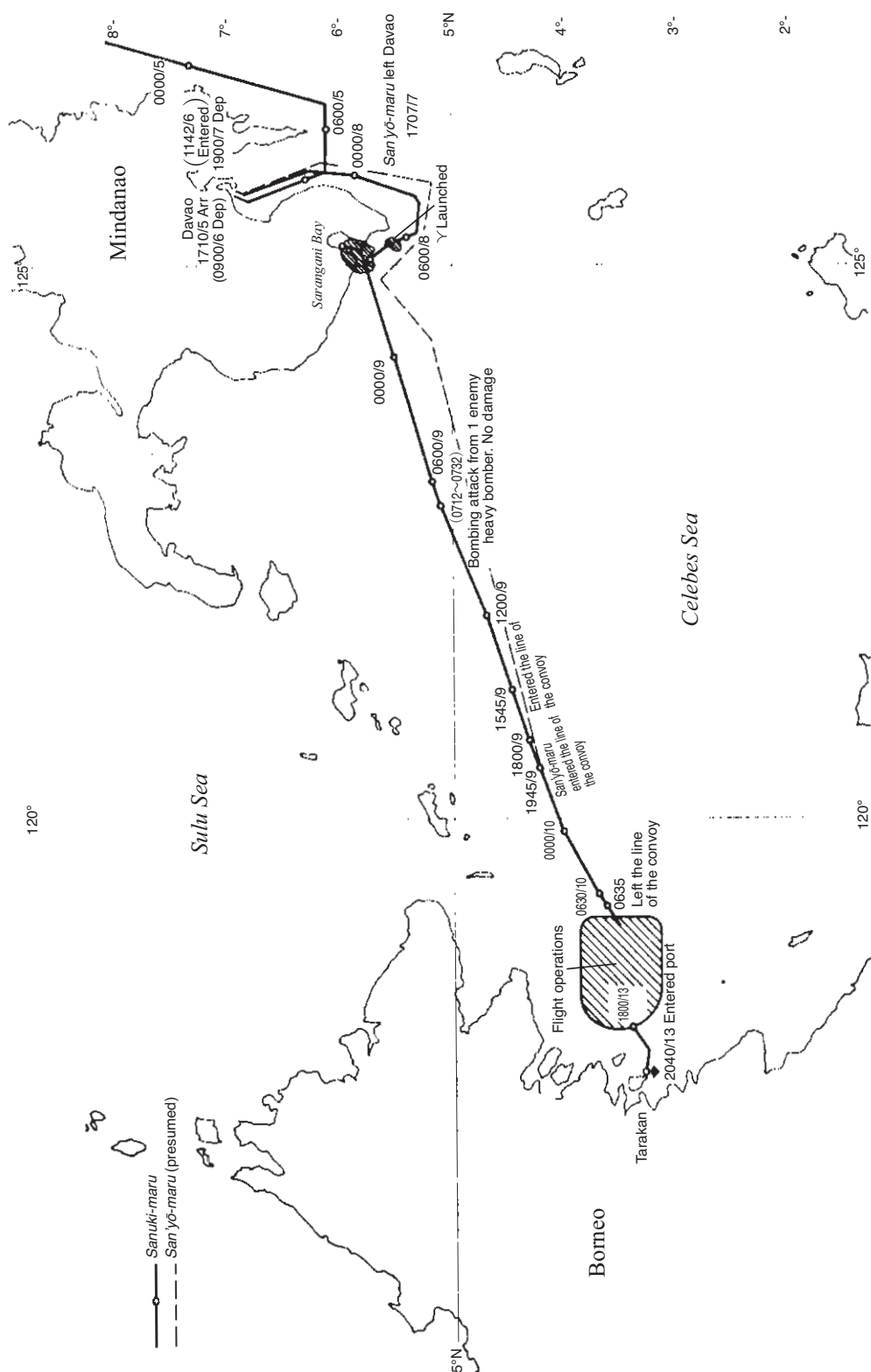


Illustration No. 9 — Actions of the 1st Air Unit from 5 through 20 January 1942

The Launch of Preparations for the Coming Operations

Taking over the Guarding from the Army

After the garrison commander had offered surrender at 0820 on the 12th, the Army units disarmed the garrison one by one, seized the Karungan battery at 1710 on the 13th, and more or less completed the capture of the entire island with the disarmament of the Juwata battery on the morning of the 14th. At 1500 on the 14th, the [Naval] Special Landing Force relieved the Army from the guarding and took charge of the guarding of the entire island. The respective numbers of abandoned enemy bodies as well as those interned with injury and those taken prisoners, known by the 19th, were about 300, about 40, and 871. The major weapons that the 2d Kure Special Landing Force had seized were 40 heavy machineguns, 322 rifles, 24 pistols, 38 500-kg bombs and 48 1000-kg bombs (note by the author: the judgment of the size of the bombs was wrong; they are considered to have been far smaller.) The loss sustained by the Japanese forces in the land combat were 7 killed and about 35 injured of the Sakaguchi Detachment and 3 injured of the 2d Kure Special Landing Force.⁽⁵⁶⁾

The inhabitants generally disliked the Dutch, but were quite obedient to the Japanese Army, warmly welcoming them.⁽⁵⁶⁾

The Minesweeping of the Inner Port Delayed

Although minesweeping the port was a matter of the utmost urgency for the subsequent operations, it was not an easy matter at all. The Dutch minelayer *HNLMS Prins van Oranje*, which had earlier been sunk by the destroyer *Yamakaze*, had laid all the mines she carried



A Battle Site on Tarakan



A Member of the Special Landing Force Guarding the Island of Tarakan

(110 mines) all over the port before her escape. Aerial reconnaissance by a reconnaissance seaplane of the *Naka* with a staff officer of the 2d Base Force and the commander of the Special Minesweeping Service Unit on board revealed that the port was almost totally covered with mines. After the Army had dealt with the Karungan battery at 1710 on the 13th, the Special Minesweeping Service Unit got to work on minesweeping [the port] with large-sized motorized [landing] craft and boats from 0700 on the 14th onwards, and finally by 1330 managed to clear a waterway wide enough (700 meters) for large-sized motorized [landing] craft to reach the Naval wharf. After that and until the 17th, the unit continued sweeping with large-sized motorized [landing] craft and boats, disposed of 77 mines, and cleared a waterway of 1,500 meters wide. It was not until the 18th that the unit for the first time started minesweeping with the minesweepers ([of] the 11th and the 30th Minesweeper Divisions, four ships in total). The unit disposed of 173 mines in total by the 24th. Nevertheless, no transport ships were able to reach the anchorage inside the port before the launch of the operation to seize Balikpapan.⁽⁵⁶⁾

Little Progress in Conditioning the Airfield

The minesweeping of the anchorage became such a serious hindrance that it was impossible to promptly send in the construction force to condition the airfield. Therefore, 1st Escort Unit Commander Rear Admiral Nishimura decided to put ashore on the 13th in the afternoon for the time being a small number of staff officers of the construction [squad] at the mouth of Amal River, dispatch them to the airfield, and ready the airfield as much as possible with the force of the 2d Kure Special Landing Force. However, at 1620 on the same day, three twin-

engine enemy bombers raided [the airfield] and caused a major loss of fifteen men killed and twenty-seven injured of the special landing force, who were preparing it. This [further] held up the preparation of the airfield.⁽⁶²⁾ At 1100 on the 14th, a report came from the 23d Air Flotilla headquarters, which was in outline as follows:⁽⁶²⁾ "Today at 0830 we had a land-based reconnaissance plane conduct a low-altitude reconnaissance [of the airfield]. [According to its report], the airfield is dotted with obstacles, and even a runway [as narrow and short as] 20 meters wide and 700 meters long has not yet been cleared, [which means] it is impossible for Type-0 fighter planes to take off or land. Moreover, no personnel were spotted working on the airfield at all. If the situation remains as it is, it is impossible [for us] to provide guard [against enemy planes] at dawn and dusk, when they are most likely to come for a raid. Therefore, we would like you to attend to the situation as quickly as possible and clear and ready [a runway] of [more than] 100 meters wide and more than 1,000 meters long (which should be able to support a weight of about three tons)." Meanwhile, as soon as a waterway [wide enough for] large-sized motorized [landing] craft was cleared on the afternoon on the 14th, the 1st Escort Unit commander put ashore the members of the construction squad in quick succession to make together with locals pressed into service a start with the expansion of the runway for fighter planes; on the 16th, a minimum runway for fighter planes to land on was mostly completed. Because of this, nine fighter planes and two land-based reconnaissance planes of the Tainan Air Group of the 23d Air Flotilla advanced to the Tarakan [airfield] on the same day.⁽⁶²⁾ However, the airfield at Tarakan was unexpectedly small, and a hill to the east ([of] the runway that stretched from east to west) allowed planes to take off and land only from the west. Moreover, the soil was bad and without improvement, [the airfield] was unsuitable for use by land-based attack planes. Because of this, it was expected that another considerable number of days would be required before [the airfield] would allow the landing of land-based attack plane units. Although at that time bulldozers had also been captured, [the Japanese forces] were not able to handle them.⁽²⁰⁾

The Swift Restoration of the Oil Fields

According to the report of the head of the 2d Defense Detail, the condition of the oil fields after the occupation was as follows:⁽⁵⁶⁾

2d Defense Detail Classified Telegram No. 26 (2210 on the 15th)

A considerable amount of heavy oil is stored, which can be transported in drums. Since it is impossible to examine [the situation] at night, the [amount of] storage and the capacity of transporting it in drums shall be reported as soon as [the results of] the examination become clear tomorrow.

A plan [to install] temporary [oil-] bunkering equipment by using pipelines is under consideration.

2d Defense Detail Classified Telegram No. 9 (1900 on the 16th)

Results of the examination concerning the capacity to supply the remaining oil as well as those concerning the facilities were as follows:

1. The remaining heavy oil in tanks: 12,300 tons (gravity 35 degrees Baumé; the other qualities of the oil are yet unknown) for the tanks in Lingkas only.
2. [There are] 120 drums of heavy oil.

3. [There are] 1,900 empty drums, which are expected to be filled from the heavy oil tanks and transported by naval vessels.
4. Although one of the three oil pipelines between the Lingkas tanks and the new pier was burned and damaged, the other two are usable. All the pipelines at the pier end are not usable for 500 meters. Due to a lack of machine tools and motor power at present, it is considered extremely difficult to temporarily repair [the pipelines], however, we are planning to make temporary repairs using the equipment left.
5. We have removed all seven explosive devices left set at the heavy oil tanks in the Juwata oilfield area.

2d Defense Detail Classified Telegram No. 13 (1446 on the 17th)

The condition of the oil fields is as follows:

1. The heavy oil storage tanks in the Pamusian area with a capacity of 100 to 1,000 tons are all destroyed with no oil remaining. One of the eight [tanks] in the Juwata area with the capacity of about 1,000 tons was blown up but our detail removed the explosive devices left set on the remaining seven tanks. The amount of heavy oil remaining intact is about 3,000 tons, which can be transported in drums.
2. All power-driven pumps of the oil wells ([in] the Pamusian and Juwata areas) were destroyed, and most of the nodding donkey-type pumps were made unusable by dropping the sucker rods into the wells, [only] very few of them were blown up. All rigs were intact. No [naturally] flowing wells were seen.
3. Oil conveying pumps are all destroyed, and most parts of the oil pipelines are unusable; pipes for bunkering are badly damaged and unusable.
4. All generators are destroyed and impossible to repair.
5. Most of the oil fields are supplied with water.
6. Most of the important plans and part of the important documents have been seized and put in safekeeping.

2d Defense Detail Classified Telegram No. 14 (1620 on the 17th)

Observations and matters investigated about the heavy oil of Tarakan:

1. It is judged that the remaining oil may be used in diesel engines as "L 1 [grade oil]."
2. Compared to "L 0" [boiler fuel], this heavy oil is judged to be lower in specific gravity and viscosity, and its flash point is lower [as well]. Therefore, one needs to particularly keep this in mind in handling the oil when using it as boiler fuel. As it is also considered that the [optimal] angle to spray [this oil] must be different from that when using "L 0", it is appropriate to first test the oil before putting it to use.
3. Although ships such as small heavy oil supply ships were not found, one lighter was spotted near the new pier. As our detail was not allotted boats for transportation, the equipment on the ship is unknown. We request to have an appropriate naval vessel examine the ship.
4. As the oil tanks in Lingkas are located upland at a height of about fifty meters and it is difficult to fill drums near the tanks, we are constructing another oil pipeline so that the drums can be filled near the coastal road. The construction will be completed by tonight.

At 1930 on the 18th, 1st Escort Unit Commander Rear Admiral Nishimura reported to his superiors about the condition of the oil fields after the capture of Tarakan as follows.⁽⁵⁶⁾

Although there are about 430 oil wells (about 380 in the Pamusian area and about 50 in the Juwata area), most of the sucker rods were dropped. Also, all power engines are completely de-

stroyed and impossible to repair, but it seems that the oil fields themselves are not destroyed. It is judged that it should not be difficult to restore [them]. The condition of the heavy oil tanks is as already reported.

When finished checking on the damage, the defense detail repaired the wells with incredible speed and started operations from June 1942 onwards, along with the oil fields in Sanga Sanga (located about seventy kilometers northeast of Balikpapan) and the Balikpapan oil refineries. The oil production continued without a hitch until mid-August 1943, when the first air raids started.⁽⁷⁷⁾

The Air Operations

Also from the 13th onwards, the Air Unit continued guarding Tarakan against [enemy] aircraft and submarines as well as searching for the enemy day after day. On the 13th, Type-0 fighter planes brought down in the air above the friendly units two out of three enemy aircraft that had come for a raid, lifting the morale of the entire force [there].⁽⁶²⁾ On the 18th, [the air unit] conducted air strikes on Balikpapan, the next target to capture, with Type-0 fighter planes and land-based reconnaissance planes from the Tarakan base, but no enemy was spotted on the ground as well as in the air. On the 20th, [the unit] conducted an attack on Banjarmasin from the same base with four Type-0 fighter planes and one land-based reconnaissance plane, they spotted one PBV-4 flying boat on the river to the west [of Banjarmasin] and strafed it, setting it ablaze and sinking it. The unit additionally conducted a photoreconnaissance of Balikpapan, Banjarmasin and Makassar by land-based reconnaissance planes.⁽⁷¹⁾

Thus, the operation to capture Tarakan was completed, and all units went on to prepare for the operation to seize Balikpapan. On the 17th, 1st Escort Unit Commander Rear Admiral Nishimura gave the following report on the enemy forces and defense of Tarakan.⁽⁵⁶⁾

1. Army: 400 artillery men, 800 infantry men, 70 engineers, and about 100 others, in total 1,400 men.

Weapons (known so far): 3 12-cm guns, 12 field guns, many 12-mm to 20-mm machineguns, and a few armored cars, etc.

The defense facing the sea was really strong, for example the Lingkas front, which almost looked like a [true] fortress. (Note by the author: Staff Officer Yano Tsuneo of the Sakaguchi Detachment reported that the [Japanese] landing forces would have been totally destroyed if they had landed from that direction as arranged [between the Sixteenth Army and the Navy Dutch East Indies Unit]).

2. Navy: Apart from the *HNLMS Prins van Oranje*, there seems to have been one submarine, but it is thought to have escaped before [we] entered the anchorages.

3. The Capture of Menado (See Illustration No. 11)

The capture of Menado was conducted by the Eastern Attack Unit with the support of the 1st Air Raid Unit. The disposition of forces of the Eastern Attack Unit [participating in the Menado operation] was as shown in the following table.⁽⁷⁸⁾

Disposition		Commander	Forces	Tasks
Eastern Attack Unit	Support Unit	5th Cruiser Div Cdr	5th Cruiser Div (minus the <i>Myōkō</i>), and 2d Section of 6th Destroyer Div	Support for all operations
	2d Escort Unit		The <i>Jintsū</i> (flagship), 15th and 16th Destroyer Divs, 21st Minesweeper Div, 5th [actually: 1st] Subchaser Div, Patrol Boats Nos. 1, 2, and 34, Sasebo Combined SLF (minus 2 plts), and 6th Construction Squad	1. To provide direct escort for the convoy [of the units to] capture Menado and to capture Menado 2. To secure the Menado airfield, and make it ready for use
	1st Base Unit		The <i>Nagara</i> (flagship), 1st Base Force (minus 21st Minesweeper Div, and 1st Subchaser Div)	1. To cooperate with the 2d Escort Unit 2. To defend the Bangka anchorage and provide protection for [friendly] shipping lanes
	2d Air Unit		11th Seaplane Tender Div, Patrol Boat No. 39, 2 plts of Sasebo Combined SLF, and fishing boats	To guard the 2d Escort Unit against [enemy] submarines, and support the landing operation

Notes:

1. The 2d Section of the 6th Destroyer Division: the *Ikazuchi*, the *Inazuma*
The 15th Destroyer Division: the *Kuroshio*, the *Oyashio*, the *Hayashio*, the *Natsushio*
The 16th Destroyer Division: the *Hatsukaze*, the *Yukikaze*, the *Amatsukaze*, the *Tokitsukaze*
The 21st Minesweeper Division: five minesweepers
The 1st Subchaser Division: three submarine chasers
2. The commander of the Eastern Attack Unit was the commander of the 5th Cruiser Division, Rear Admiral Takagi, but he left the details of the capture operation almost completely to the 2d Escort Unit commander, R. Adm. Tanaka Raizō.

The Plan of Operations

The 2d Escort Unit

On 5 January, 2d Escort Unit Commander Rear Admiral Tanaka issued 2d Escort Unit Order No. 1 at Magnaga Bay and disclosed the outline of the operation to capture Menado, while at the same time issuing orders to make preparations for the capture of Ambon. The outline was as follows:⁽⁵⁴⁾



2d Destroyer Squadron Commander R. Adm. Tanaka Raizō

1. Mission

- (1) The enemy garrison is expected to have deployed its main force in the area of the town of Menado. Therefore, [the unit shall] contain the enemy there, rapidly cut off the communication routes between the town and the airfield from the rear, and mutually act in concert with the paratroop operation of the 1st Yokosuka Special Landing Force. The main force of the Sasebo Combined Special Landing Force shall go ashore near Menado city and put one element ashore in the Kema area on the east coast, so as to make a pincer attack on the enemy.
 - (2) The convoy shall be divided into two echelons of faster ships and slower ships, which shall leave Davao at different times so as to enter into the anchorage at the same time.
 - (3) The landing shall be made following a two-stage anchoring system; the first landing [unit] shall be launched as far as possible off the coast.
 - (4) On completion of unloading, the ships shall evacuate to the defended area of the Bangka anchorage (north end of Celebes) one after another.
2. The distribution of the transport ships, the landing points, the escort and the leading naval ships
- (1) Distribution according to echelons

Echelon	Escort vessels	Leading vessel	Transport ships
1st echelon	1st Section of 15th Destroyer Div and 1st Subchaser Div	<i>Hayashio</i>	The <i>Shōka-maru</i> , the <i>Kōshin-maru</i> , the <i>Chōwa-maru</i> (all carrying the 6th Construction Squad)
2d echelon	21st Minesweeper Div, Patrol Boats Nos. 1 and 2	<i>Oyashio</i>	The <i>Nankai-maru</i> (Sasebo Combined SLF), the <i>Kinai-maru</i> (1st Sasebo SLF), the <i>Hokuriku-maru</i> (2d Sasebo SLF), the <i>Amagisan-maru</i> , and the <i>Katsuragi-maru</i> (11th Air Fleet)
Outside the line of sailing			The <i>Oha-maru</i> , and the <i>Shinkō-maru</i> [B] (both carrying the 6th Construction Squad)

(2) Distribution according to landing points

Landing Area	Escort vessels	Transport ships
Menado	15th Destroyer Div, 3 minesweepers of 21st Minesweeper Div, 1st Subchaser Div	The <i>Nankai-maru</i> , the <i>Kinai-maru</i> , the <i>Shōka-maru</i> , the <i>Kōshin-maru</i> , the <i>Chōwa-maru</i> , and the <i>Amagisan-maru</i>
Kema	1st Section of 16th Destroyer Div, 2 minesweepers of 21st Minesweeper Div, Patrol Boats Nos. 1 and 2	The <i>Hokuriku-maru</i> , and the <i>Katsuragi-maru</i> (disembarkation at Grian)

(3) Actions of each unit

- {1} The 1st Echelon Unit and the 2d Echelon Unit shall respectively leave Davao at 0100 and at 1000 on 9 January, sail at standard speeds of respectively 9 knots and 12 knots along

the planned sailing route shown on Separate Map No. 14 (omitted), so as to reach the 5th turning point at 1400 on 10 January.*

- (2) From the 5th turning point onwards, the echelons shall be divided up and sail on [in echelons] distributed according to the landing points. From that time on, the standard speed shall be set at 9 knots.
- (3) The *Jintsū* and the 16th Destroyer Division shall leave Davao at 0600 on 9 January as the main body, catch up with the 1st Echelon while clearing the sailing route ahead of the 2d Echelon, and directly support them.
- (4) Entering into the anchorage(s) and the launch of the landing operations
 - (1) The following schedule shall apply to both Menado and Kema:

Entering into anchorage:	0200	11 January
Launch of [landing] craft:	0300	ditto
Reaching coast	0400	ditto
 - (2) The transport ships with the special landing forces on board (the *Nankai-maru*, the *Kinai-maru*, and the *Hokuriku-maru*) shall launch the first landing unit at the first launching point, after which they shall move on to the second launching point, launch the second landing unit, and then move on to the third launching point.
 - (3) The transport ships other than the above (i.e. [those of] the 6th Construction Squad and the 11th Air Fleet) shall advance [to the anchorages] little by little after sunrise of 11 January and moor to buoys or cast anchor after Menado is captured.
 - (4) The landing points at Menado and Kema shall be the coasts south and north of the town of Menado and the front of Kema.
 - (5) The clearing [of mines in] the routes ahead at the time of entering into the Kema anchorage shall be designated by the 16th Destroyer Division commander.
- (5) The guarding and defense of the anchorages

The deployment of the naval vessels to guard around the anchorage of Menado shall be designated by the 15th Destroyer Division commander, and that of Kema by the 16th Destroyer Division commander. The minesweeper division shall sweep the Bangka anchorage from around 1000 on 11 January onwards, and engage in the task of the 1st Base Force to defend [the anchorage].

The Sasebo Combined Special Landing Force

The plan of the landing operation of the Sasebo Combined Special Landing Force was in outline as follows:⁽⁶⁸⁾

1. The Sasebo Combined Special Landing Force headquarters, the units under the direct command of the headquarters and the 1st Sasebo Special Landing Force shall go ashore at both coasts north and south of the town of Menado, envelop the enemy in the town of Menado and destroy them, after which they shall leave Menado and charge toward the Kakas airfield via Tomohon.
2. The 2d Sasebo Special Landing Force shall land at Kema and charge toward the Tondano lake and the Kakas airfield via Airmadidi.
3. In concert with the 1st Yokosuka Special Landing Force, which shall drop on the airfield, they shall make a pincer attack on the enemy in the area of the airfield from the east and the west.
4. After destroying the enemy in these areas, they shall assemble in Menado city, and prepare for the coming operation to seize Kendari.

* In this plan of 5 January, the departure date from Davao should have been cited as 8 January, because only on 6 January the operation was postponed by one day to 9 January (See p. 158).

The 1st Base Unit

The outline of the plan of operation of the 1st Base Unit was as follows:⁽⁶⁸⁾

1. The main unit (the *Nagara* and the *Chikushi*) shall leave Davao on the morning of 9 January, and reach the Bangka anchorage after taking charge of the direct support of the 2d Echelon of the 2d Escort Unit.
2. The 1st Defense Unit (the *Shirataka*, the *Aotaka*, the *Kimishima-maru*, one half of the 1st Base Force and the 1st Survey Unit) shall leave Davao at 0800 on 10 January and reach the Bangka anchorage early morning on 12 January to take charge of the defense and guarding of the anchorage.
3. The 2d Defense Unit shall remain in Davao Gulf, in charge of the defense of the gulf, while the units attached to it shall take charge of the supply as well as the guarding of the anchorage.

The 2d Air Unit

The plan of operation of the 2d Air Unit was in outline as follows:⁽⁷⁹⁾ the 2d Air Unit shall, in support of the 2d Escort Unit, temporarily anchor at a point west of the Sangihe Islands (islands about 120 nautical miles north of Menado) and provide cover for the 2d Escort Unit with its aircraft. Then, on the 11th, the tender ships shall enter the Bangka anchorage, guard Menado, Kema and the Bangka anchorage against enemy aircraft as well as submarines, and also support the land combat with their aircraft.

Disposition		Commander		Forces	Main tasks
1st Air Raid Unit	Kanoya Air Gp Det	21st Air Flotilla Cdr	Lt Cdr Irisa Toshiie	One half of the strength of the Kanoya Air Gp 27 Type-1 land-based attack planes	1. To destroy the enemy naval vessels and air power 2. To search for the enemy and conduct patrols
	1001 Unit		Cdr Hamada Takeo	28 Transport planes of 1st Air Gp 1st Yokosuka SLF	1. Menado paradrop operation 2. Guarding of the air base
	3d Air Gp		Cdr of 3d Air Group	54 Type-0 fighter planes 7 Land-based reconnaissance planes	1. To destroy the enemy air power 2. To conduct reconnaissance
	Tökō Air Gp		Cdr of Tökō Air Gp	20 Type-97 flying boats	1. To search for the enemy and conduct patrols 2. To attack enemy naval vessels

The 1st Air Raid Unit

The disposition of forces and the actions of each unit of the 1st Air Raid Unit in the operation to capture Menado are on the basis of various documents assumed to have been as follows:^(12, 71, 75)

1. The disposition of forces (as shown in the table below)
2. The Actions of each unit
 - (1) The Kanoya Air Group Detachment shall, in cooperation with the Tōkō Air Group, carry out a night attack on Ambon beforehand, so that actions of enemy naval vessels and air power shall be contained during the [Menado] operation, while at the same time preparing against attacks by enemy naval vessels and air power.
 - (2) The Tōkō Air Group shall take charge of patrol and reconnaissance (attack) over the Celebes Sea, the Gulf of Tomini, the Molucca Sea, the Makassar Strait and the Sulu Sea. It shall also destroy enemy naval vessels and air power by a night attack on Ambon in cooperation with the Kanoya Air Group Detachment.
 - (3) The 3d Air Group shall conduct a local reconnaissance on Menado with its land-based reconnaissance plane(s) beforehand and send the report and the reconnaissance data to the units concerned. Also, it shall totally destroy the enemy air power with Type-0 fighter planes, while guarding the air above bases, anchorages and the convoys.
 - (4) The 1001 Unit shall transport the paratroop units of the 1st Yokosuka Special Landing Force with transport planes from Davao to the Menado land air base (Langoan), where the paratroop units shall swiftly secure the air base and facilitate the operation of the Sasebo Combined Special Landing Force by cutting off the escape routes of the enemy from Menado (a sometimes very rugged road) and Kema.
 - (5) Once the capture of Menado is completed and both the seaplane and land air bases are secured, the Tōkō Air Group, the 3d Air Group, the Kanoya Air Group Detachment and others shall successively be pushed forward in preparation of the coming operations.

The 1st Yokosuka Special Landing Force

The plan of operation of the 1st Yokosuka Special Landing Force, which for the first time in Japanese [military history] was to conduct a paratroop operation, was in outline as follows:⁽⁸⁰⁾

1. The Special Landing Force shall take charge of part of the operation to capture Menado by carrying out a paratroop operation on the enemy airfield at 0930 on 11 January with the support of the fighter plane unit of the 1st Air Raid Unit. They shall attack and drive off the enemy around there and secure the airfield as well as the Kakas seaplane base, so as to facilitate the subsequent air operations.
2. The distribution of tasks and actions of each unit (as shown in the table below)

Distribution	Number of personnel	Tasks and actions
First Drop Unit	Bn HQ: 44 Signal Unit: 14 1st Co: 139 2d Co: 137 Total 334	[The unit] shall carry out a paratroop on the enemy airfield in Langoan on 11 January, attack the enemy it faces and drive them off. Then, the unit shall act in the following way: 1. 1st Company shall seize Langoan. 2. The remaining force shall seize the Kakas seaplane base under the direct command of the commander.

Second Drop Unit	3d Co: 173*	[The unit] shall carry out a paratroop on the enemy airfield in Langoan on 12 January; the subsequent actions shall be separately ordered.
Unit to advance to Kema	1st Co: 74 2d Co: 66 Transport Unit: 13 Medical Unit: 1 Paymaster: 15 Total 169	[The unit] shall leave Davao on the <i>Katsuragi-maru</i> on 6 January, land in Kema and take charge of transporting war supplies. Then, it shall join the main body.
Unit to advance to Tondano Lake	Paymaster: 1 Medical Unit: 11 Antitank Gun Unit: 10 Total 22	[The unit] shall leave Davao on 11 January in flying boats. On landing on the water of Lake Tondano, [the unit] shall quickly join the main body and receive orders.
Unit to advance to Menado	1st Co: 2 2d Co: 6 3d Co: 5 Paymaster 21 Engineer Unit: 12 Transport Unit 16 Medical Unit: 2 Total 64	[The unit] shall leave Davao as separately designated, and transport war supplies. Then, [the unit] shall join the main body and receive orders.

3. The paratroop plan of the First Drop Unit

(1) The formation of the plane units and the paratroop formation

$$\begin{array}{l} \text{1st Squadron} \\ \left\{ \begin{array}{l} f^t \times 5 \\ f^t \times 5 \end{array} \right. \end{array}$$

$$\begin{array}{l} \text{2d Squadron} \\ \left\{ \begin{array}{l} f^t \times 5 \\ f^t \times 5 \end{array} \right. \end{array}$$

$$\begin{array}{l} \text{3d Squadron} \\ \left\{ \begin{array}{l} f^t \times 4 \\ f^t \times 4 \end{array} \right. \end{array}$$

The intervals between the squadrons: 1,500 meters

Note by the author: f^t indicates transport planes.

(2) The number of personnel and weapon packages to be dropped

Number of personnel to be dropped per plane: 12 men

Number of packages hanging from [each] dropping plane: 5

Number of packages loaded on [each] plane: 2 (of which, one is a package of provisions)

(3) The outline of the drop

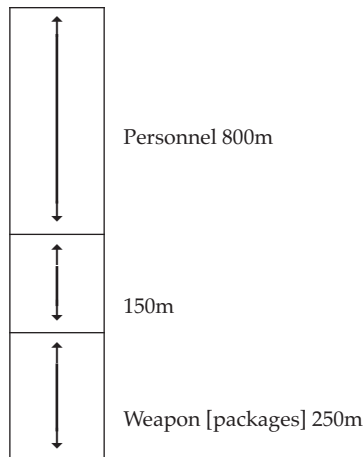
In one flyover weapons and personnel shall be dropped in that order.

The speed of the plane at the time of drop: 100 knots

The altitude at the time of drop: 150 meters

(4) The dispersion plan of the drop (for each group)

* The text mistakenly has 74.



A three-second interval shall be set between the drop of personnel and the weapon [packages] so as to avoid tangles in the air.

4. Communication, etc. (omitted by the author)

5. Weapons and ammunition

(1) Weapons to be carried along right after the drop

Warrant officers and officers of higher rank

Military sword, pistol, binoculars, steel helmet, canteen, provisions, sword belt, flashlight, map case, semaphore flags, small shovel, national flag, mosquito mask, mosquito gloves, first aid package No. 2

Non-commissioned officers and privates (regular infantry)

Rifle (regular infantry), pistol, bayonet, steel helmet, hand grenade, canteen, provision case, semaphore flags, small shovel, national flag, mosquito mask, mosquito gloves, first aid package No. 2

Heavy machine gun, light machine gun, grenade launcher, Type97 portable wireless phone set (for those assigned)

(2) Number of packages

Type of packages	Bn HQ	1st Com	2d Com	Signal Unit
No. 1 packages (Rifles)	4	41	38	7
No. 2 packages (Light machine guns)	1	13	13	0
Ditto (Generator fuel)	0	0	0	2
No. 3 packages (Heavy machine guns)	0	2	2*	0
Ditto (Communication Equipment)	0	0	0	6
No. 4 packages (Ammunition for heavy machine guns)	0	6	6	0
Special package (Generators)	0	0	0	1
Miscellaneous packages (Provisions)	4	12	11	1

* The text mistakenly has 0.

(3) Number of main weapons and ammunition of the paratroop unit

Item	Unit	Bn HQ	1st Com	2d Com	Signal Unit
Browning Pistols		36	109	114	3
Type38 Carbines		36	109	114	3
Ammunition for the above		4,320	11,690	17,690	480
Type96 Light Machineguns		1	13	13	0
Ammunition for the above		2,100	25,235	15,720	0
Type89 Grenade Discharger		0	7	6	0
Grenades for the above		0	194	123	0
Type92 Heavy Machineguns		0	2	2	0
Ammunition for the above		0	5,640	5,400	0
37mm Antitank Guns		0	0	1	0
High explosive shells for the above		0	0	60	0
Fuses for the above shells		0	0	60	0
Armor-piercing shells for the above guns		10	0	40	0
Type89 Hand Grenades		150	278	274	25
Model TM Handy Radio Set		0	0	0	2
Model TM Handy Radio Set with accessories		0	0	0	1
“Kū” Mark 2 Radio Set		0	0	0	1
“Kū” Mark 2 Radio Set with accessories		0	0	0	1
Spare parts for “Kū” Mark 2 Radio Set		0	0	0	1
Type97 Portable Telephone Set		20	0	2	0
Batteries		0	0	0	(12V) 4
Generators		0	0	0	1

Note: The antitank guns and the weapons and ammunition for them containing high explosives in this table shall be airlifted to Lake Tondano by flying boats.

The Launch of the Invasion Operation

Prior Neutralization of the Enemy Air Power

The preliminary reconnaissance attack on the Menado area started with a photoreconnaissance by a land-based reconnaissance plane of the 3d Air Group conducted over the area on 24 December. After that, combinations of land-based reconnaissance planes and several Type-0 fighter planes carried out reconnaissance [missions] over the Menado and Gorontalo areas (west of Menado) day after day. But apart from reporting that they had spotted five flying boats at the Menado seaplane base on 26 December, which they had attacked, strafed and set ablaze, they did not sight the enemy.⁽⁷¹⁾

In the meantime, the Tōkō Air Group carried out reconnaissance (attacks) with flying boats over the Celebes Sea, the Molucca Sea, the Gulf of Tomini, the Makassar Strait, and the Sulu Sea from the 23d onwards, but the group spotted no enemy aircraft or naval vessels, other than one enemy cruiser, one destroyer and one merchantman. On the 5th [of January], [another] seventeen land-based attack planes of the Kanoya Air Group advanced to Davao and, along with the flying boats of the Tōkō Air Group, carried out a night raid on Ambon ([with] fourteen land-based attack planes and three flying boats). The raid caused heavy damage to the enemy, and hindered the latter from using [the airfield] during the [Japanese] operation against Menado (as described previously [p. 117]).^(71, 81) In the wake of the [enemy] air raid on Malalag Bay on the 4th, the patrol in the sky over Davao with Type-0 fighter planes had been intensified, but almost no enemy had been spotted since then, which by the time of the sailing of the invasion convoy led [the Navy on site] to conclude that the neutralization of the enemy air power was on the whole more or less completed.

The Sailing of the Convoy

On the morning of 6 January, the 2d Escort Unit and the convoy of the invasion units completed assembling in Magnaga Bay. On the afternoon of the same day, the *Ashigara* (with the Dutch East Indies Unit commander on board) entered port, and the commanders of the units of the Dutch East Indies Unit assembled on the ship for a last strategy meeting. As the result, the launch of the Dutch East Indies operation was postponed by one day, which changed the sortie of the 2d Escort Unit to the 9th.⁽⁵⁴⁾ [See editor's note p. 152.]

On 9 January, all units left Magnaga Bay as scheduled. On that day, the weather was fine, and the sea was very calm. Around 0730, the *Nagara*, (the flagship of the 1st Base Force) in Malalag Bay reported that three enemy planes had come for a raid and dropped bombs. Following that, the *Murasame*, which was heading for Jolo escorting the *Asama-maru* reported: "0730: One enemy plane closely [flying by] and reconnoitering [us]." The location was about 100 nautical miles west of the Sarangani islands (about 250 nautical miles from Menado). It was fine and quiet that whole day with no enemy air raid until the evening. Around 1830, when the Kema landing unit reached the area north of Bangka Island, three [enemy] PBY-type flying boats came for an attack and dropped bombs, but no damage was sustained.⁽⁵⁴⁾

At 0110 on 11 January, the Menado landing unit reached the first launching point and lowered the [landing] craft. At 0315, the first landing unit left and successfully landed at 0400. On learning the landing of the Japanese forces, the enemy immediately set fire to the heavy oil tanks with the flames and smoke rising high into the sky. In the meantime, the Kema landing unit also reached its first launching point at 0130, departed from the point at 0345, and

successfully landed on the coast of Kema at 0420. Also at Kema the enemy seemed to have set fire to important facilities, and at several places flames were observed rising into the sky. At 0500, the Menado landing unit of the 1st Sasebo Special Landing Force reported that it had [finished] clearing the enemy near the landing point and seized the neighborhood, and that it was going to take up positions to envelop Menado.

On the 11th, the sun rose at 0640. From around that time onward, enemy aircraft came for raids by turns as described below, which kept the anchorage busy dealing with them.⁽⁵⁴⁾



1st Base Force
Commander,
R. Adm. Kubo Kyūji

- 0620 Four enemy twin-engine bombers came for a raid and dropped bombs on the Kema anchorage; no loss sustained.
- 0635 Six enemy heavy bombers came for a raid on the Menado [anchorage]; two of them bombed the *Oha-maru* sailing at the rear; no loss sustained.
- 0650 Six enemy twin-engine Lockheed bombers bombed the *Jintsū* off Menado for one hour. Although the *Jintsū* sustained no damage, taking every time evasive actions, the bombardment caused the ship to evacuate as far as 100 nautical miles to the north of Menado.
- 0700 Three enemy PBY-type flying boats raided Kema, strafing and bombing for one hour and a half; no loss sustained.
- 1430 Five enemy Lockheed bombers raided Kema, strafing and bombing for about forty-five minutes; no loss sustained.
- 1540 Three enemy bombers raided the Menado [anchorage]; the *Amagisan-maru* sustained damage to the hull by a near hit.
- 1628 Four enemy Lockheed bombers raided Kema; no loss sustained.

On that day, the 21st Minesweeper Division started clearing the Bangka anchorage [of mines] and completed clearing of anchorage A (location unknown) by evening, but no mines were snagged.

Meanwhile, 1st Base Unit Commander R. Adm. Kubo Kyūji headed for Menado leading the *Nagara*, leaving Malalag Bay on the 9th. The *Nagara* spotted what seemed to be an enemy periscope at the mouth of Malalag Bay and had the 2d Subchaser Division search [for the enemy], but it could not locate the enemy. Afterwards, the *Nagara* headed southward, mostly sailing along with the 2d Echelon of the 2d Escort Unit. On the 10th, the *Shirataka*, the *Aotaka* and the *Kimishima-maru*, which were to take charge of the defense and guarding of the Bangka anchorage, left Malalag Bay for the anchorage. Also on that day, the *Itsukushima* of the 2d Base Unit* left Davao as well for the Bangka anchorage to build a mine barrier at the east entrance of the anchorage. At 2115 on the 10th, the *Nagara* spotted an enemy submarine afloat at a point about forty nautical miles northwest of Menado and attacked her, but with unknown results. The *Nagara* arrived off Menado on 11 January and took the lead of the base unit.⁽⁷²⁾

The Engagements of the Sasebo Combined Special Landing Force and the Paratroop Unit (See Illustration No. 10)

The main force of the Sasebo Combined Special Landing Force (i.e. the Sasebo Combined SLF headquarters, the units under its direct command and the 1st Sasebo Special Landing

* The text mistakenly has *1st Base Unit* (See p. 99).

Force) landed on the coast north and south of Menado at 0400 on 11 January; their strength consisted of about 1,800 men (led by Capt. Mori Kunizō). After engaging with about 400 enemy troops right after the landing, the unit seized Menado City at 0830. At 0945, the main force headed for Tomohon, leaving one element in Menado City, and advanced southward, while on the way eliminating resistance put up by the enemy, who made use of natural defensive positions as well as [man-made] obstructions. [The main force] seized Tomohon at 1930 and halted there [for the night] on full alert.

In the meantime, about 1,400 men of the 2d Sasebo Special Landing Force (led by Cdr. Hashimoto Uroku) successfully landed at Kema at 0420, engaged with about 70 enemy troops, drove them off, and started to advance toward the mountains in the direction of Airmadidi. At 1300, the unit drove off about 300 enemy troops near Airmadidi and seized the location at 1400. One element of the leading party reached the Tondano front at 2200, and halted there [for the night].^(53, 54)

At 0630 on 11 January, 324 men of the first drop of the 1st Yokosuka Special Landing Force (commander: Cdr. Horiuchi Toyooki) took off from the Davao airfield in 27 transport planes and flew toward the Langoan airfield south of Menado, escorted by the fighter plane unit of the 1st Air Raid Unit.* En route, at the north tip of Celebes, the 5th plane of the 4th team (with 12 paratroopers and 5 crew on board) crashed, having been mistakenly shot down by friendly fire from a reconnaissance seaplane. At 0952, the teams flew into [the airfield area] from the north (the airfield had a runway from north to south). With the support of friendly fighter planes, [the paratroopers] started their drop at the planned drop point and completed the drop at 1020. Simultaneously with the start of the drop, the paratroopers came under fierce machinegun fire from enemy positions on the western side of the airfield, which caused the paratroopers to suffer casualties one after another. On landing, the paratroopers quickly armed themselves and engaged the enemy in a fierce fight, directing their focus of attack to the left wing position of the enemy ([on] the northern side of the airfield) while gradually enveloping the position at 1050. However, at 1055, an enemy armored car rushed in from the northeastern part of the airfield and machine-gunned the [Japanese] right wing company (the 1st Company) from the rear. Undaunted by this, the company first charged into the enemy left wing position and seized it, opening the way for victory. Following this, [the paratroopers also] charged into the [enemy] positions from the front, seized all of them, and captured the entire area of the airfield at 1125. The unit started on clearing [the enemy] from the airfield and vicinity, while sending (one squad of) a reconnaissance team led by an officer to the Kakas area at 1300 to reconnoiter the movements of the enemy. At 1300, the reconnaissance team encountered one [enemy] armored car at the western end of Kakas and seized it. They further [continued] their advance, engaged with another enemy light-armored car in the town of Kakas and put it to flight. The main force, which had completed clearing [the enemy from] around the airfield at 1300, headed toward Kakas, leaving

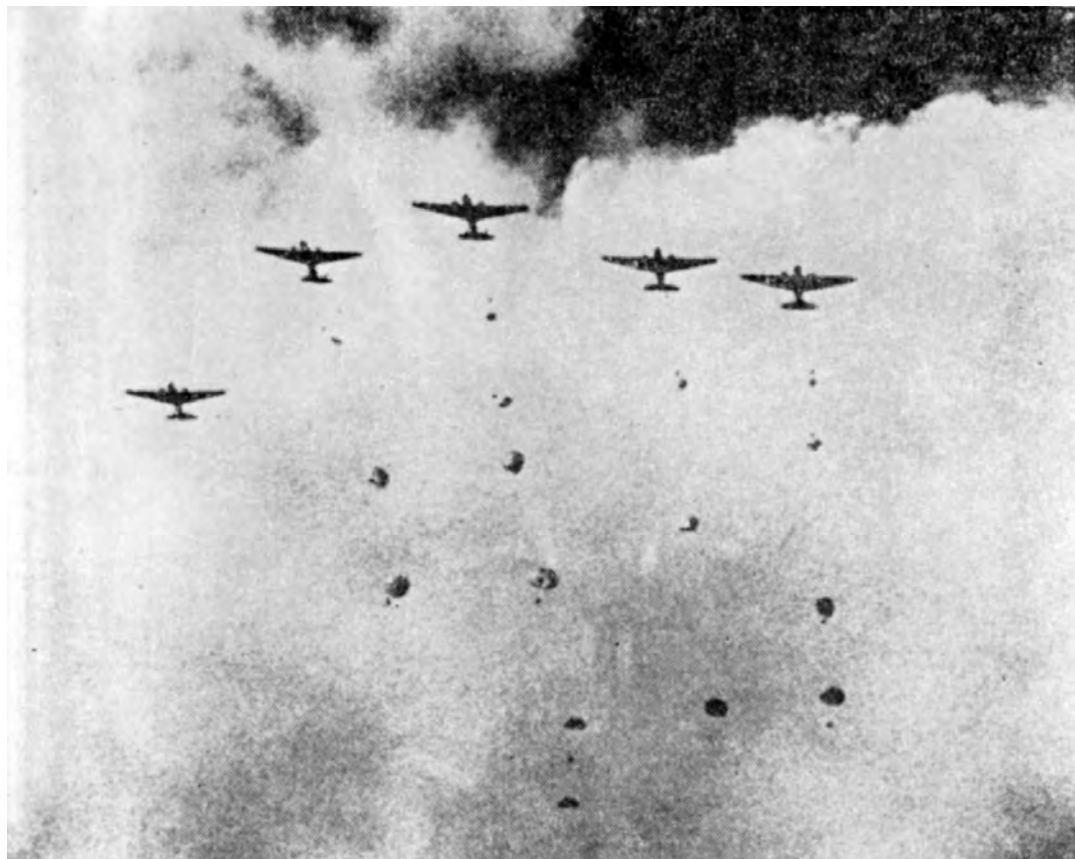


Sasebo Combined
Special Landing Force
Commander Capt.
Mori Kunizō



Paratroop Unit
Commander Cdr.
Horiuchi Toyooki

* The difference between these numbers and those in the table on p. 157 is seemingly caused by the return of one plane to Davao because of engine trouble; those on board seem to have joined the drop on the next day.



The Drop of the Paratrooper Unit

two squads and the signal unit for the defense of the airfield; they engaged with 150 enemy troops with one light-armored car [on the way]. At 1450, [the main force] completely seized the town, after which they launched an attack on the seaplane base there from 1550 onwards and completely seized the base at 1800. After that, the main force returned to the Langoan airfield, leaving the 2d Company to secure Kakas. [The main force] halted [for the night] at the airfield, while making preparations for the attack on the town of Langoan and taking precautions against a counterattack by the enemy.^(54, 71, 80)

The Engagements of the Seaplane Unit

On the morning of the 9th, the *Chitose* and the *Mizuho* of the 2d Air Unit (led by R. Adm. Fujita Ruitarō) respectively left Malalag Bay and Pakiputan Strait for the operation to capture Menado. On that day, [the unit] provided guard on the sailing route ahead of the convoy and conducted searches for the enemy and reconnaissance over the waters south of Mindanao with a total of five Type-94 reconnaissance seaplanes; furthermore, it directly guarded the convoy against [enemy] submarines with a total of sixteen Type-0 observation seaplanes, but no enemy was spotted. At 0900 on the 10th, [the tender ships of] the 2d Air Unit temporarily anchored at a point west off the Sangihe Islands and carried out the following air operations: With one Type-94 reconnaissance seaplane and a total of twenty-six Type-0 ob-

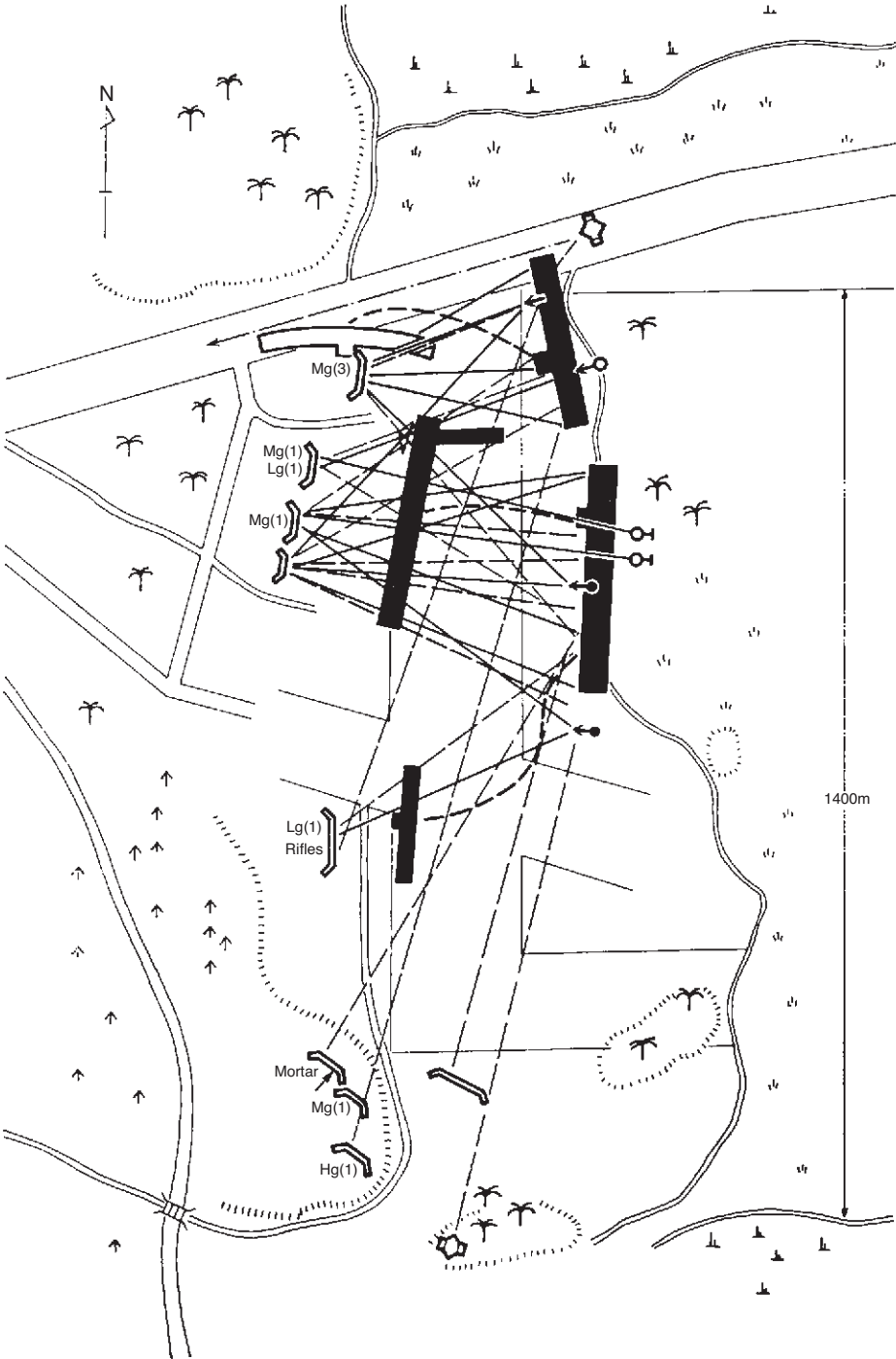


Illustration No. 10 — The Engagement at the Langoan Airfield

servation seaplanes it provided direct escort for the convoy against [enemy] submarines, guarded its own unit against [enemy] submarines, reconnoitered the Sangihe Islands and bombed the [enemy] radiotelegraph station. With three Type-94 reconnaissance seaplanes it provided guard on the sailing route ahead of the convoy and conducted reconnaissance of the area north of Celebes. After the sunset on that day, the 11th Seaplane Tender Division left the anchorage west of the Sangihe Islands and sailed southward toward Menado. At 0540 on the 11th, the division entered the Bangka anchorage and carried out the following air operations from 0630 till 1900: With a total of forty-nine Type-0 observation seaplanes it provided direct escort and guard for the convoy and the Bangka anchorage against [enemy] submarines and aircraft, and supported the land combat, while with a total of four Type-94 reconnaissance seaplanes it searched for the enemy in the vicinity. During this period, [the division] engaged nine large enemy flying boats and four bombers, and reported that it brought down two flying boats. The Japanese losses were one Type-0 observation seaplane, which crashed (but the pilot bailed out unhurt), two Type-0 observation seaplanes, which made emergency landings (one of them sank but its crew was rescued), and several seaplanes, which got hit.



11th Seaplane Tender
Division Commander
R. Adm. Fujita
Ruitarō

The aircraft that shot down one of the transport planes of the 1001 Unit was [part of] the 2d shift of the Type-0 observation seaplanes of the *Mizuho*, which was in the course of directly guarding the Bangka anchorage.⁽⁸²⁾ Concerning this friendly fire incident, the 11th Seaplane Tender Division insisted that the action of the 1001 Unit had not been known and that the latter had not performed a friendly identification maneuver [either],⁽⁸³⁾ while the 1st Air Group retorted that their action had been [shared] at the strategy meeting on 5 January on the flagship of the Third Fleet and [therefore] should have been known; moreover, that right in front of the enemy it is impossible to perform friendly identification maneuvers such as putting down landing gear and lowering altitude.⁽⁸⁴⁾ Concerning this incident, the chief of staff of the Dutch East Indies Unit wired on the 13th the following to [all units of] the Dutch East Indies Unit:⁽⁵³⁾

On 11 January during the operation to seize Menado, an incident has occurred, in which our reconnaissance seaplane(s) shot down one of the transport planes ([of] the 1001 Unit) of the Eleventh Air Fleet. When aircraft units are executing their mission in a combat zone, it may often be difficult for units to apply the currently designated friendly identification methods. Therefore, since it is risky [to identify friends] only by relying on the above friendly identification method, it is requested to strictly keep the following points in mind and be determined to never cause such accidents anymore:

1. To closely communicate with friendly forces and make due arrangements with them prior to the launch of operations, and also to make subordinates thoroughly understand the friendly missions.
2. To communicate well in advance with the units concerned [about the circumstances], particularly those where it is expected that it will be difficult to perform the designated [friendly identification] signals due to the execution of special missions or other reasons.
3. To teach crews in advance how to make proper judgments of situations where a risk of [mistakenly] shooting friendly forces is feared.
4. To make [crews] thoroughly familiar with the models and types of friendly aircraft, and have them [first] identify the model marks as much as possible when carrying out attacks.



A Type-97 Flying Boat, Which Played an Active Role in Patrol and Reconnaissance

5. To pay special attention when giving instructions to crews who easily get agitated in engagements.
6. Converted Type-96 land-based attack planes are used for the transportation of the 1001 Unit, and the standard altitude at the time of the drop is 150 meters above the ground.

The Land-Based Air Units Scarcely Spotted the Enemy

On 9 January, the 1st Air Raid Unit had four flying boats of the Tōkō Air Group search for the enemy; [further] it had the land-based attack plane unit stand by for attacks, twelve transport planes in total of the 1st Air Group patrol the sailing route ahead of the convoy, and two transport planes of the group reconnoiter the Menado airfield (the Langoan airfield) and vicinity, while having eighteen Type-0 fighter planes and two land-based reconnaissance planes of the 3d Air Group provide direct escort in the air above the 2d Escort Unit. However, no enemy was spotted other than two submerged submarines, of which it was unclear whether they were friend or foe, spotted by the flying boats of the Tōkō Air Group. [Meanwhile, the unit] spotted numerous *cheveaux-de-frise* (obstructions to prevent aircraft from landing) on the Menado airfield. On the 10th, four flying boats of the Tōkō Air Group searched for the enemy over the Celebes Sea, the Gulf of Tomini and the Molucca Sea, but spotted no enemy other than two [enemy] merchantmen [on the waters] north of Tarakan and three British[-made?] twin-engine two-seater monoplanes to the east of Menado. The 3d Air Group, which provided direct guard over the Davao base as well as direct escort in the air above the convoy, spotted no enemy either, and neither did the Kanoya Air Group Detachment, which carried out patrol over the sailing routes ahead of the convoy with its sixteen land-based attack planes in total. On the 11th, the plan for the day was that the flying boats of the Tōkō Air Group were to search for the enemy, that the land-based attack planes of the Kanoya Air Group Detachment were to stand by for attacks on [enemy] naval vessels, that the transport planes of the 1st Air Group were to transport the paratrooper unit, and that the fighter planes of the 3d Air Group were to advance to Menado, guided by land-based reconnaissance planes or by land-based attack planes, to provide direct guard in the air from 0700 through 1630. However, due to the bad weather around the base, the fighter planes were only able to directly guard it from 0900 through 1415, so they could not catch enemy aircraft that might come in for a raid in the early morning or evening. No other enemy vessels or aircraft were spotted, and no attacks were carried out. The twenty-seven transport planes of

the 1st Air Group successfully transported the paratrooper unit, but one of them was, as previously told, shot down en route by friendly reconnaissance seaplane(s). Meanwhile, two flying boats (one of which was a transport aircraft) carried the paymaster unit, the medical unit and the antitank gun unit of the paratrooper unit to Lake Tondano and landed on the lake at 1450. At 1750, they successfully established contact with the 1st Yokosuka Special Landing Force, which had seized Kakas, and stayed at anchor on the lake that night.^(12, 81)

The Operations from the 12th till the 20th [of January]

The second airdrop unit of the 1st Yokosuka Special Landing Force took off from Davao in eighteen transport planes at 0630 on the 12th, parachuted down on the Langoan airfield and joined the unit of the first airdrop. The 1st Yokosuka Special Landing Force immediately launched an attack with its main force on Langoan City and the whole neighborhood of Tompaso. With no real will to fight, the enemy retreated, abandoning a large amount of weapons and ammunition. The 1st Yokosuka Special Landing Force seized the urban area of Langoan at 1125 and Tompaso at 1230, while one element advanced to Paso and completely seized the place at 1035.^(71, 81)

In the meantime, the Sasebo Combined Special Landing Force, which [had halted for the night] around Tomohon and Tondano, went into action from the early morning onwards; it rushed into Tondano at 0810, after which the 1st and the 2d Sasebo Special Landing Forces charged toward the airfield area, the former along the road from Tomohon to Kawangkoan, and the latter via the roads along [both] the east and west shores of Tondano Lake. First of all, at 1100 the 2d Sasebo Special Landing Force established contact with the paratrooper unit of the 1st Yokosuka Special Landing Force near Paso and then the 1st Sasebo Special Landing Force established contact near Tompaso at 1230. Both [the 1st and the 2d Sasebo SLFs] arrived at the Langoan and Kakas sector by 1400. The enemy, which seemed to have escaped toward the direction of Amurang in the west, retreated while blowing up bridges and warehouses and made no real attempt to counterattack. The general populace cheered and warmly welcomed the Japanese forces. After the engagements on the 11th and the 12th, 140 abandoned enemy bodies and 48 prisoners were counted; seized weapons amounted to ten 8-mm field guns and a great number of machineguns, rifles, and war supplies. Japanese losses consisted of 12 men killed and 154 men injured of the Sasebo Combined Special Landing Force, and 32 men killed (of whom, 12 killed in the plane crash) and 32 men injured of the 1st Yokosuka Special landing Force.⁽⁸⁰⁾ From the 13th onwards, the Sasebo Combined Special Landing Force switched to a mopping-up operation of the vicinity, completed the operation by the 16th, and assembled in Menado to start preparations for the coming Kendari operation. On 20 January, it again embarked on the transport ships and assembled at the Bangka anchorage.^(54, 57)

Day after day the 2d Air Unit (the *Chitose* and the *Mizuho* of the 11th Seaplane Tender Division) guarded Menado, Kema and the Bangka anchorage against enemy aircraft and submarines; it [also] conducted searches for the enemy as well as reconnaissance [missions] over the Celebes Sea and the Molucca Sea, but it spotted almost no enemies other than the two aircraft coming for a raid on the 12th, which it reported as having brought down. Moreover, since the resistance of the enemy ground forces was not fierce, no support for the land combat was provided. Meanwhile on the 14th, based on a report of a land-based reconnaissance plane of the 3d Air Group of having spotted thirty enemy submarines (which will be explained later), the unit carried out an operation to clear the enemy submarines from the

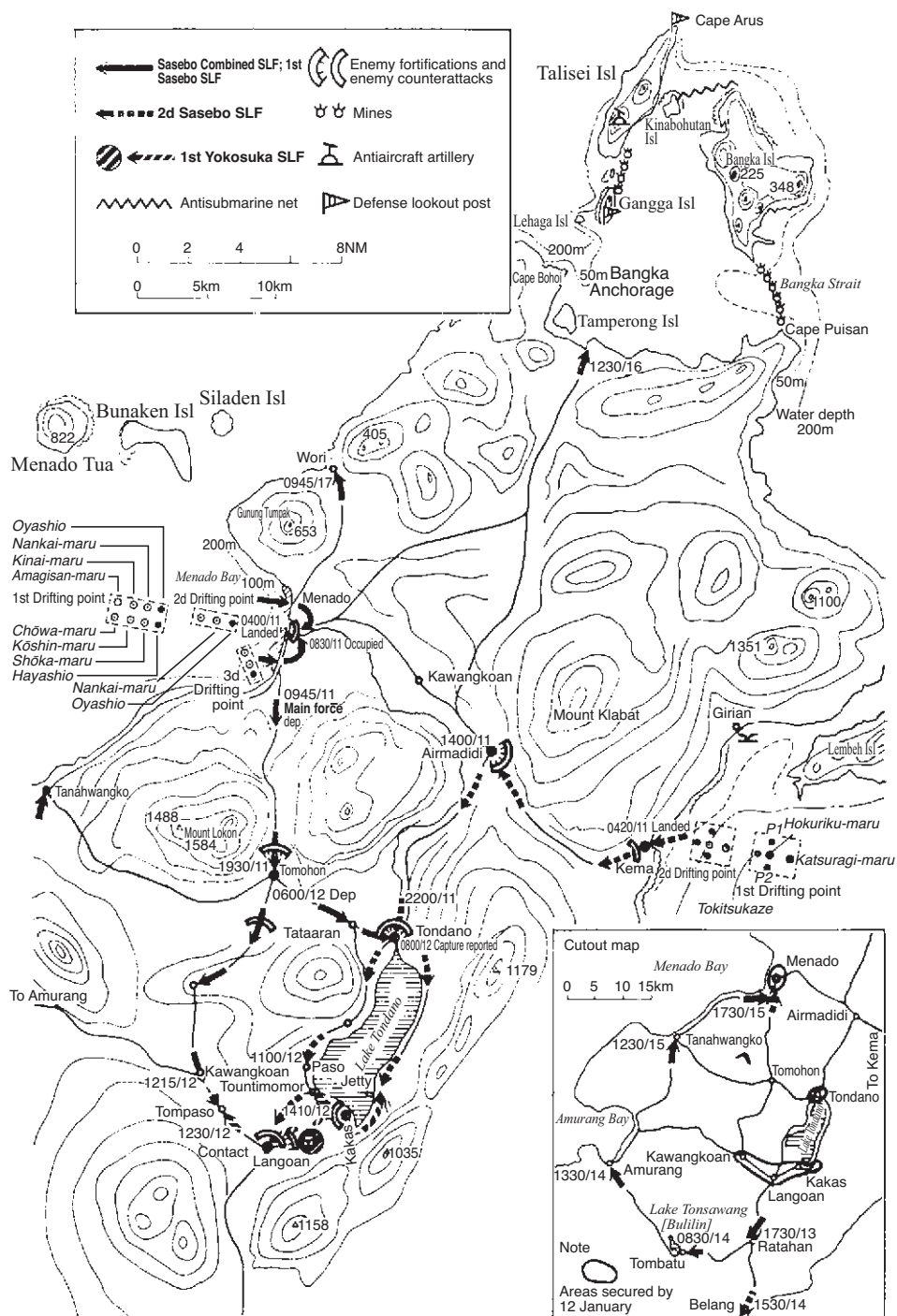
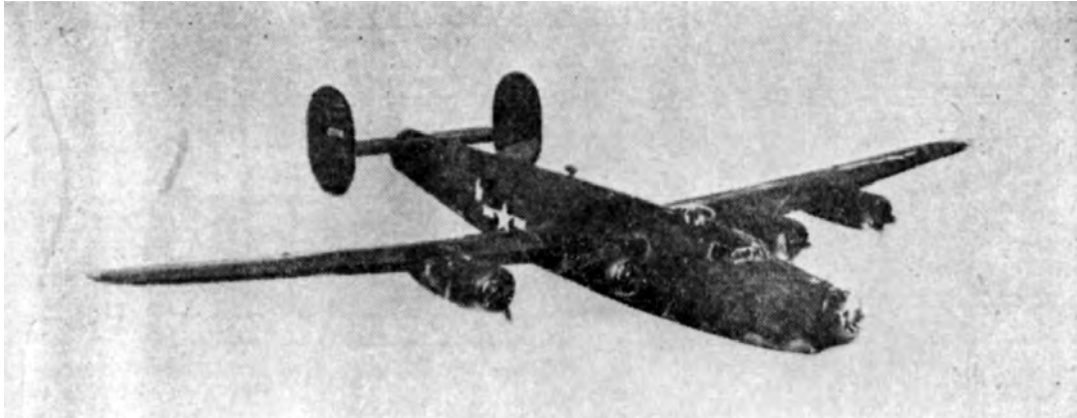
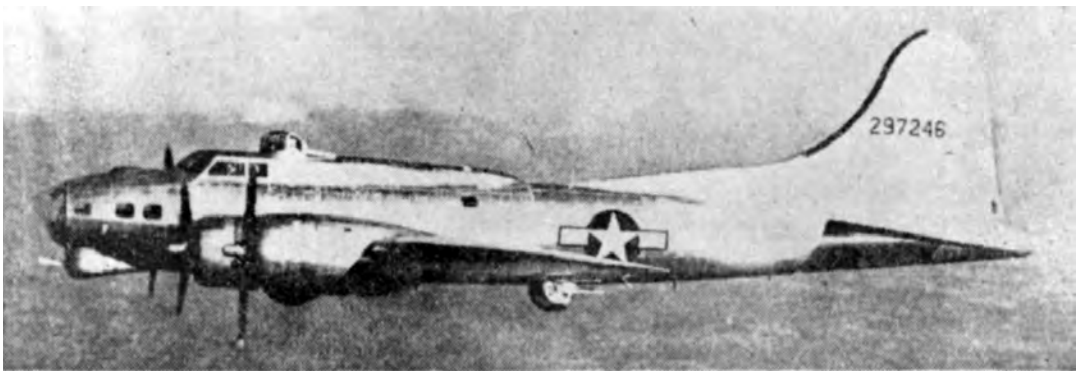


Illustration No. 11 — The Invasion of Menado and the Defense of the Bangka Anchorage

*Consolidated B-24**Boeing B-17*

Celebes Sea from the 15th through the 19th in support of the 2d Escort Unit, but no enemy was spotted.⁽⁷¹⁾

The 1st Air Raid Unit also provided day after day direct guard in the air over Menado and carried out reconnaissance attacks on Ambon and Kendari, while reconnoitering enemy air bases on the west coast of New Guinea, Halmahera and Celebes, searching for the enemy in the Molucca Strait and the Ceram Sea, as well as searching for and attacking the enemy in the Philippines area. During this period, the following military gains were reported: On the 12th, [the unit] brought down three out of four [enemy] Lockheed Hudson-type bombers that raided Menado, and again one out of two on the 20th. On the 17th, [the unit] attacked three B-24 bombers and two B-17D bombers [of the enemy] that had come for a raid, and caused damage to one of the B-17Ds and two of the B-24s; the former spilling gasoline, and three of the engines of one of the B-24s stalling (it later made an emergency landing), and one engine of another [B-24] stalling, but none of the attacks was effectual enough to bring them down. In the attack on Ambon on the 15th, [the unit] brought down two [enemy] fighter planes right after their takeoff, set ablaze one Douglas bomber on the ground and one twin-engine flying boat about to take off and caused serious damage to one twin-engine flying boat as well as to one four-engine flying boat. Also [in the attack] on Ambon on the 16th, [the unit] strafed and sank one twin-engine flying boat, which had just returned [there]. On the

17th, Type-0 fighter planes attacked Kendari and caused serious damage to one [enemy] heavy bomber, which had taken off to escape, but they were not able to bring it down.⁽⁸¹⁾

According to the Summary Report of the Actions of the 1st Air Raid Unit, the state of affairs [on the 17th] in the attacks on the large [enemy] planes had been as follows:



21st Air Flotilla
Commander

R. Adm. Tada Takeo

1. Around 0730, two B-17Ds and three B-24s flew into the skies of the airfield ([at] an altitude of 5,000 meters) from the direction of Tondano. Three B-24s dropped about ten bombs at the southern part of the airfield, [but] we sustained no damage.
 - (1) Two Type-0 fighter planes patrolling the sky pursued the B-17s in formation, engaged them in air combat for about twenty minutes and fired all their bullets, many of which hit [the enemy aircraft]. [The hits] caused the second enemy plane to spill [gasoline] from its tank, but it was not [effective enough to] bring it down, letting [both] escape on an 180° course.
 - (2) Two Type-0 fighter planes, which, on spotting the enemy, immediately took off, caught up with the B-24s in formation and carried out repeated attacks, firing all their bullets. [The hits] caused one of the engines of the second enemy plane to stall while leaking gasoline. They [also] caused the third plane to descend from an altitude of 4,000 meters to 800 meters while giving off black smoke from three of its engines, forcing an emergency landing (note by the author: [at] Kendari), but the other two planes escaped on a 210° course.
2. (Omitted by the author)
3. At 0920, one land-based reconnaissance plane and three Type-0 fighter planes made a sortie to attack "Lk" (note by the author: Kendari), where the [enemy] plane coming for a raid [earlier] this morning had most likely made an emergency landing. At 1415, all [planes] returned.
 - (1) The first and the second planes strafed a twin-engine bomber on the airfield and totally destroyed it.
 - (2) The third plane pursued one B-17D, which had just taken off, and blew off its gun turret after about eight attacks. [The enemy plane] was seen giving off white smoke from a wing, but it was not [so damaged that it was] brought down. [The third plane] returned after using up all its bullets.
4. (Omitted by the author)
5. Damage: four Type-0 fighter planes holed by bullets.

Concerning the large enemy planes, 1st Air Raid Unit Commander R. Adm. Tada Takeo gave his views, which were in summary as follows:^(12, 81)

1. The B-24 and B-17 models that have newly appeared are both very strong in their armored protection. Each Type-0 fighter plane fired all the bullets it had at close range, but failed to bring them down. It is necessary to increase as quickly as possible the power of our fighter planes' armor-piercing ammunition and also to increase the amount of 20-mm bullets loaded [on each aircraft] (60 bullets per gun at that time).
2. It is conceivable that from now on the enemy will fly these models to Australia to reinforce their strength. It is necessary to intensify our operations to cut off [the route].
- 3 The Type-0 fighter planes pursued for 200 nautical miles the large [enemy] planes that had raided Menado; three B-24s escaped on a course of 240° (to the southwestern part of the Gulf of Tomini) (note: [written as] "210°" in the Summary Report of the Actions), and two B-17Ds on a course of 180°. Judging from the reconnoitered condition of the Makassar [airfield] (note: small

with soft ground, and unfit for use by large planes) and the fact that one made an emergency landing in Kendari, it is concluded that the enemy must have used bases near Kupang and on Java.

- 4 In order to avoid “out-[of]-range” (the situation that one side is able to attack, but the other side is not, due to the attacking distance), it is necessary for us to have large attack planes ready.

The 3d Air Group completed its advance to Menado by advancing ten fighter planes on the 12th (along with one land-based reconnaissance plane; at that time the Langoan airfield was half completed, and the western half remained unavailable), advancing a total of twenty-seven planes on the 14th (along with four land-based reconnaissance planes), and a total of fifty-one planes on the 19th (of which forty-one planes could be put to use in combat). As for the Tōkō Air Group, about half of its flying boats had advanced to Menado on the 17th and all of them on the 18th. The 21st Air Flotilla headquarters [also] advanced to Menado on the 16th.^(71, 75) In the meantime, twenty of the Type-96 transport planes of the 1st Air Group, which had been engaged in the Menado paratroop operation, had been pulled back to Gaoxiong on the 13th. On the 14th, through a reconnaissance over Ambon conducted by a land-based reconnaissance plane of the 3d Air Group, twenty-five enemy planes (six large planes and eighteen small ones [on the ground] and one fighter plane in the air) were spotted. [Also] spotted were one ship, which looked like a mid-sized cruiser (note: from the photo reconnaissance on the 15th, it was judged to be more like a minelayer), and two merchantmen, all anchored in the port. Judging that the enemy was gearing up for an all-out counterattack, 1st Air Raid Unit Commander Rear Admiral Tada concentrated all his forces on the attack on Ambon on the 15th and the 16th, and destroyed the enemy.⁽⁸¹⁾ (The reported military gain was six [enemy] planes, which were brought down or set ablaze, and the destruction of the airfield facilities.) In the meantime, at 1620 on the 14th when returning from the reconnaissance of Ambon, the land-based reconnaissance plane of the 3d Air Group spotted one [enemy] submarine at a point about 120 nautical miles, 200° [SW] from Ternate (in the western part of Halmahera) and [also], at 1650, spotted about thirty enemy submarines cruising submerged in loose formation (sometimes showing then hiding their periscopes) along the line connecting the Sula Islands and Labuha (on Halmahera). The 1st Air Raid commander doubted the report, but taking the report as well as the Ambon reconnaissance report into consideration, he had to deal with it just to make sure, and he sent a telegraph, which was in summary as follows:⁽⁸¹⁾

According to a reconnaissance by our land-based reconnaissance plane today, the 14th, about thirty enemy submarines were cruising submerged in loose formation between Labuha and the western tip of the Sula islands around 1650 and may reach the vicinity of Menado tomorrow morning. Since on Ambon about twenty-five enemy planes were concentrated and also an [enemy] mid-sized cruiser was spotted [in the harbor], our unit shall attack Ambon tomorrow, the 15th, with its full force of land-based mid-sized attack planes as well as fighter planes and [also] carry out attacks on the enemy submarines with its full force of flying boats (of which not more than ten are available).

On the 16th, 1st Air Raid Commander Rear Admiral Tada wired the following about the [enemy] submarines spotted by the land-based reconnaissance plane:⁽⁵⁷⁾

The state of affairs at the time when the enemy submarines were spotted by the land-based reconnaissance plane on the 14th and my views on it are as follows:

1. From 1620 through 1650, [in an area] about 50 nautical miles 250° [WSW] from the town of Labuha [and stretching] for about 30 to 50 nautical miles along the 250° line, 15 pairs of something that looked like submarines (each pair keeping a distance of 2 to 3 nautical miles from one another, and each member of the pair a distance of about 500 to 1,000 meters between one another), 30 in total, were spotted cruising submerged. The course of the enemy was more or less 160° [SSE].
2. The first one spotted looked very much like a submarine by its periscope and underwater appearance, whereas the others were oval, black and (illegible characters), which made us have some doubts. However, it was [also] said that the one spotted first looked the same after [the plane] circled to take a [closer] look, and that even then (two characters illegible) high, that it raised its periscope at times, and that it submerged, discharging oil and bubbles, when the plane approached. However, what it really was, was not determined. The reconnaissance was made from an altitude of 300 meters, and the skills of crew were excellent.
3. In the state of affairs of the reconnaissance described above, there are several points that leave much room for doubt, such as the fact that many submarines were cruising submerged in an area of merely 40 nautical miles wide, that they looked oval and black, and that they took a southward course. However, a case where they may have dived at the sight of [our] plane when they were about to turn back is imaginable.
4. As stated in the above, there are still some doubts and it is difficult to conclude that there really were about thirty submarines. However, taking into consideration the steps the enemy might take in the current war situation, along with the information [collected] from the wireless, we concluded that it was necessary [to conduct an operation] to thoroughly neutralize [enemy] traffic in the area for another several days.

From the 15th onwards, the Navy conducted a sweeping [operation] of the Molucca Sea against this pack of [enemy] submarines with a total of forty-one flying boats as well as destroyer divisions and minesweeper divisions (which will be described later), but they found no clues at all. From a case on the 18th, when a large flying boat of the Tōkō Air Group had mistaken whales for [enemy] submarines and other such situations, [the Navy] concluded that the major part of the [enemy] submarines spotted by the land-based reconnaissance plane were whales and called off the search on the 19th.⁽¹²⁾

Lessons from the Operation and Observations

According to the Action Report of the 2d Destroyer Squadron, the lessons and observations drawn from the Menado operation were as follows:

1. It is necessary to execute the invasion operations [only] after the air operations to destroy the enemy air power have been almost completed. Since this [Menado] operation was carried out when our air operations to destroy the enemy air power had not yet produced sufficient results, we suffered fierce counterattacks by enemy aircraft. It was fortunate that [the enemy] caused no [major] damage to us because their attacks were carried out by single planes, and, moreover, their skill was not very great. We observe that our losses must have been disastrous should we have been attacked by a considerable number of [enemy planes] in formation.
2. The enemy aircraft attacked, choosing an appropriate moment when our fighter planes were not in the air. Moreover, they easily carried out their bombings because the speed of our observation planes was slow and inferior.

We observe that it is difficult to stop and destroy the [enemy] high-speed bombers during an antiaircraft guard with observation planes [alone], unless the latter were to be deployed in considerably large numbers.

3. Air defense communications with the land-based air units went not smoothly, and generally took two hours [to be transmitted]. The reason is that these communications depend on the general fleet radio wave, even though insufficient [numbers of] personnel are assigned to this radio wave at advance bases, and this wave gets congested. Quick communications by using this radio wave cannot be expected. The need for a [separate] air defense communications system was keenly felt.
4. The formation of base construction squads is essential in operations to seize [enemy] air bases, therefore their formation and equipment as well as the embarkation and disembarkation [process] on and from transport ships needs to be studied and prepared well ahead. We observe that it is quite inconvenient to send forward temporarily formed [squads of] noncombatants along with front line units and, on top of that, as usual to load equipment and personnel in such a way that it takes as much as one week to unload them.
5. It is also vital to have ready small naval vessels with great mobility, like the ones the U.S. Navy possesses, for the purpose of supplying flying boats, reconnaissance seaplanes and others as well as for use in the construction of bases.
6. From an escort point of view, the requisitioned ships need to be arranged and allotted in advance, so that convoys heading to a same area should be formed with the ships of a similar type with similar speeds. The ships allotted as transport ships for the Sasebo Combined Special Landing Forces for the last Menado operation were ideal indeed.
7. If diesel-powered ships and only coal-burning ships (the next part is partly unclear) are used in the same convoy, it may be difficult to set the speed of the convoy due to the critical speed of the diesel-powered ships.

The Operations of the Main Body and the Base Unit

On 12 January, the main body of the 2d Escort Unit was sailing about 100 nautical miles northwest of Menado. Rear Admiral Tanaka, commander of the 2d Escort Unit, concluded that the operation to capture Menado was for the most part completed by that day and issued one order after another about replenishment, preparations for the next operations, the outline of the subsequent actions and about the guarding of the anchorage. The main orders concerned the preparations for the Kendari and the Ambon operations. Concerning the preparations for the Kendari operation, he designated the forces participating in the operation and those covering the former. He [also] announced that the *Jintsū* (the flagship of the 2d Escort Unit) would head for Davao (the assembly place for the Ambon invasion units), leaving Menado on the 15th, and that the guarding of the sea in the Menado area would be conducted under the command of the 15th Destroyer Division commander until the unit to seize Kendari was formed.⁽⁵⁴⁾ Concerning the preparations for the seizure of Ambon, he announced that the *Jintsū* would arrive in Davao on the 18th, that the Itō Detachment (the Army unit for seizing Ambon) would arrive in Davao on the 19th, that the 1st Kure Special Landing Force and the 6th Construction Squad would arrive at the Bangka anchorage by the 12th, and that the units in Menado should join the main body later en route (time and place to be ordered later), etc. In the meantime, 1st Base Unit Commander Rear Admiral Kubo on board the *Nagara* was operating off Menado, commanding the base unit. The base unit, which had started working on the defense of the Bangka anchorage from the early morning of the 12th, closed the east entrance with mines laid by the *Itsukushima*, set antisubmarine nets at the north en-

trance with the *Shirataka* and the *Aotaka*, while closing the north entrance on the western side with mines as well (See *Illustration No. 11*). The defense work at the Bangka anchorage was completed by the evening of the 12th, and the ships that had completed disembarkation, supply ships, the units for the next operations, and others assembled in succession at the Bangka anchorage. On the 13th, 1st Base Force Commander Rear Admiral Kubo notified the units that were to participate in the seizure of Kendari to assemble in the Bangka anchorage by the 17th and leave the anchorage on the 18th.

Sweeping the Molucca Sea of Whales (See *Illustration No. 12*)

On 15 January, 2d Escort Unit Commander Rear Admiral Tanaka was on his way back to Davao from Menado in order to make preparations for the coming Ambon operation. However, because the land-based reconnaissance plane of the 3d Air Group, as previously told, had spotted thirty submerged [enemy] submarines in the Molucca Sea the day before, he ended up taking care of sweeping the sea by order of the Dutch East Indies Unit commander. In this sweeping operation, the 21st Minesweeper Division of the 1st Base Force also participated. The outline of the sweeping operation is as shown in *Illustration No. 12*.⁽⁵⁴⁾ The sweeping operation was led by the commander of the 15th Destroyer Division. [First of all], on the 15th from 2200 onwards, the 15th and the 16th Destroyer Divisions in a row and keeping a distance of nine nautical miles between each ship, sailed southward from the north at a speed of thirteen knots. Then, on the 16th from 0300 onwards, [following the former] the 21st Minesweeper Division repeated the sweeping operation from the north. On the 16th at 0600, the 15th and the 16th Destroyer Divisions reversed course to sail northwards. At 1030, joined by the 21st Minesweeper Division, they [changed course and] swept the sea northeastward in a row while keeping a distance of five nautical miles between each ship. In the meantime, from 0215 to 0220 on the same day, the Takao Signal Unit had detected two [enemy] submarines with their radio direction finding system as shown in the illustration. The 15th and the 16th Destroyer Divisions and the 21st Minesweeper Division headed to the waters where the enemy submarines were supposed to be hiding. However, apart from two enemy heavy bombers, which passed flying over the sweeping unit at 1150, no enemy movements were detected even by 1800 on the 16th, and the operation was called off by the previously given orders. The 15th Destroyer Division headed for the Menado anchorage, while the 16th Destroyer Division and the 21st Minesweeper Division sailed to the Bangka anchorage. Also the *Jintsū*, which had been supporting the operation as shown in the illustration, broke off the operation and headed for Davao. And also the *Nagara*, which was on the waters east of Menado to support the operation, broke off the operation and entered into the Bangka anchorage on the evening of the 16th.⁽⁵⁴⁾

Most of the [enemy] submarines in this operation, which had been spotted by the land-based reconnaissance plane of the 3d Air Group, were judged to have been whales.

The Operations of the Support Unit and the Dutch East Indies Unit

The Support Unit, i.e. the 5th Cruiser Division left Davao at 1500 on 9 January, and supported the invasion operation by timely deploying in an area about 150 nautical miles northwest of Menado. At 1100 on the 13th, Support Unit Commander Rear Admiral Takagi concluded that the Menado operation was largely completed and left the site at 0000 on the 14th to enter the

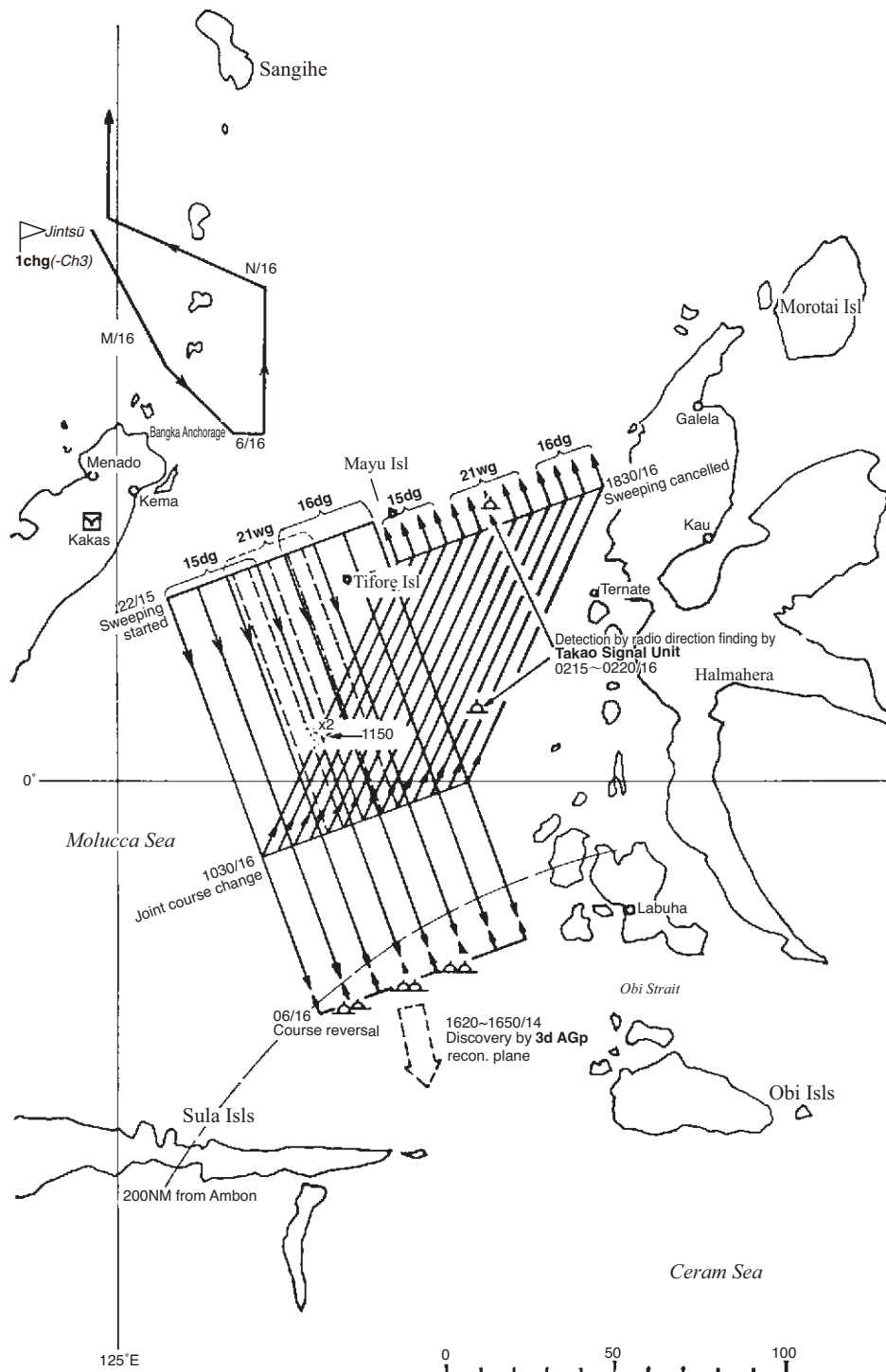


Illustration No. 12 – The Sweeping Operation for Enemy Submarines in the Molucca Sea (15-16 January, 1942)

anchorage north of Pakiputan Strait in Davao Gulf at 1630.⁽⁷⁸⁾ In the meantime, Dutch East Indies Unit Commander Vice Admiral Takahashi was still in charge of directing the entire operation on board the *Ashigara* in Davao Gulf. After the operations against Tarakan and Menado were largely completed, the commander issued orders on the 15th to postpone the schedule of the [operation] to seize Kendari from the 21st of January to the 24th, and that of capturing Ambon from the 25th of January to the 29th, due to the delay in the advance of the construction squad as well as due to the operation to clear the Molucca Sea of enemy submarines. On the 16th, he further issued orders to postpone [the operation against] Balikpapan from the 21st of January to the 24th.⁽⁵⁶⁾

The State of the Allied Forces

1. Air forces

At the time of Japanese invasion of Menado, the allied air forces were deployed in the following way, but no effectual counterattacks were carried out.^(85, 86)

Ambon

Bombers (Martin; Australian Air Force and Dutch Army)	25-30 aircraft
Fighter planes (Curtis; Dutch Army)	about 5 aircraft
Flying Boats (Catalina and Dornier; U.S. and Dutch Navy)	about 15 aircraft

Kendari

Flying Boats (Catalina and Dornier; U.S. and Dutch Navy)	7-10 aircraft
--	---------------

Malang (Eastern Java)

Bombers (B-17; U.S. Army)	10 aircraft, increased by 6 on the 15th
Bombers (LB-30; U.S. Army)	unknown, increased by 4 on the 15th
Note: The aircraft, which raided Menado on 17 January and which the Japanese Navy took for B-24s, were in reality LB-30.*	

2. Surface Forces

Admiral Hart, commander in chief of the U.S. Asiatic Fleet in Surabaya, decided to immediately attack the Japanese convoy in Kema and issued an order that the unit at Port Darwin (the heavy cruiser *USS Houston*, the destroyers *USS Alden*, *USS Edsall*, and *USS Whipple*, the light cruisers *USS Boise* and *USS Marblehead*, the destroyers *USS Stewart*, *USS Bulmer*, *USS Pope*, *USS Parrott*, and *USS Barker*, of which the *USS Boise* and the rest had been escorting a transport ship [the *Bloemfontein*] to Surabaya from Darwin) should make a sortie in full force. On 12 January, the *USS Houston* and the unit in Darwin left the port and sailed northward so as to join the unit escorting the transport ship in the Banda Sea. However, it became known from the intelligence provided by the submarines *USS Pike* and *USS Permit*, which had been stationed off Kema on the 17th, that the Japanese forces were not in Kema, and the operation was cancelled.⁽⁸⁷⁾

3. Ground Forces

Although 1,500 men of a Dutch [East Indies] garrison unit were stationed in Menado, the first-ever paratroop operation of Japanese forces caused confusion among the unit, of which the coastal defense unit was contained. As a result, the garrison abandoned Menado by the evening of the 12th.⁽⁸⁵⁾

* These are actually the same planes. B-24 being the U.S. Army Air Force designation; LB-30 being the factory designation.

According to the Action Report of the 1st Yokosuka Special Landing Force, the state of the enemy, which the 1st Yokosuka Special Landing Force had learned through the interrogation of prisoners, etc. was as follows:

- (1) The enemy in the entire Minahasa province had stationed its headquarters in Tomohon and built strong pillbox positions along the strategic roads that led to the direction of the airfield from the landing points of Menado, Belang, Amurang, and Kema, and drastically increased its strength at the Langoan airfield.

Due to our drop on the Langoan airfield, the enemy, being attacked from the rear, had its plans completely shattered and fled into the mountains. The paradrop had an enormous effect on the Menado invasion operation.

- (2) Deployment [of the enemy] at the Langoan [airfield] and surrounding areas

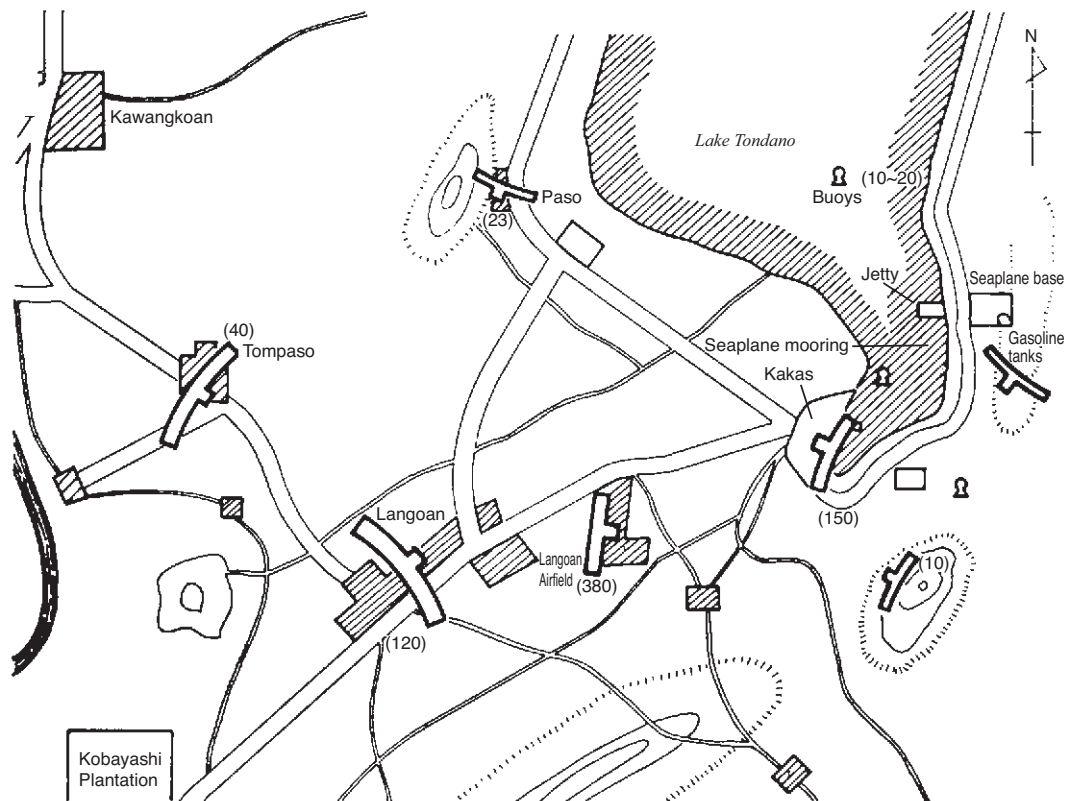
Date	Position	Number of troops	Main armaments	Notes
11 January	Langoan Airfield	400	2 Armored cars 8 Machineguns	More than 300 <i>cheveaux-de-frise</i> and countless bamboo stakes
Ditto	Kakas	150	1 Converted armored car 1 Antitank gun	There were gasoline tanks, barracks, powder magazines, etc.
12 January	Urban area of Langoan	120	Machinegun(s)	Looks like they were the troops who had retreated from the Langoan airfield. There were barracks, powder magazines and arsenals of various weapons
Ditto	Paso	23	Ditto	
Ditto	Tompaso	41	Ditto	

- (3) On the 11th, as if the enemy already knew the Japanese plans, they had strengthened their defenses by placing *cheveaux-de-frise* and constructing trenches at strategic places in every town.

Moreover, the enemy had handed out leaflets against [Japanese] paratrooper units and [also] posted them, so as to give an even stronger warning to watch out for them.

In particular, very tight defenses had been put up at the dropping area, the Langoan airfield, where more than three hundred *cheveaux-de-frise* (of 5 meters long and 1.5 meters wide) had been put all over the place, countless bamboo stakes had been planted and eight pillbox positions and trenches had been constructed in three directions, adjacent to which eight machineguns and two armed cars had been placed at both sides, to make an extremely strong defense system.

Simultaneously with the start of the drop and along with the fire from the armored cars at the rear, the enemy started to rake [our troops] with a fierce fire and tenaciously resisted.



*Illustration No. 13 – Enemy Positions in Langoan and the Whole Surrounding Area
(The numbers in parentheses indicate the number of troops)*

However, at [our] brave charge at their left wing position, the enemy gradually retreated toward Langoan City. In Kakas, with about fifteen men [150 according to the table above] and one antitank gun and one converted armored car deployed, [the enemy] defended [the city] by putting up *cheveaux-de-frise* and constructing trenches at strategic locations in the urban areas. As the main [Japanese] force advanced, the enemy fought back against our advance guard, but gradually retreated. After that, although the enemy tried to put up some resistance at strategic locations in the urban area as well as in the neighborhood, they fled into mountains, abandoning quite a lot of weapons and ammunition.

- (4) On the 12th, the enemy who was deployed in the urban area of Langoan as well as all around Paso and Tompasso, had already lost their will to fight. While putting up some resistance against our attacks by using strategic locations, the enemy fled into mountains, abandoning various facilities, weapons and ammunition.
- (5) Sketch of the enemy positions in Langoan and the whole surrounding area
(Separate Illustration No. 1 – Note by the author: *Illustration No. 13*)
Map of the defensive positions at the Langoan airfield (dropping point)
(Separate Illustration No. 2 – Omitted by the author)

4. The Capture of Balikpapan (See Illustrations No. 14 and No. 17)

Postponement of the Invasion Schedule

The date of [the operation to] seize Balikpapan had been set for Day X + 43 (20 January) in the Cam Ranh Agreement. However, because the Air Unit's shift to the operation against the Dutch East Indies was delayed due to the delay in the capture of Davao and Jolo and the bad condition of the airfields, it was decided at the meeting on 6 January to postpone the seizure [of Balikpapan] by one day until 21 January. But the sweeping of the Lingkas anchorage after the capture of Tarakan was held up, and the debarkation of matériel and personnel for the construction of the airfield made little progress, delaying the preparation of the Tarakan airfield. On top of that, the condition of the airfield was worse than expected, which led to a further delay in the advance of air forces.⁽⁵⁶⁾ That is, there was only a dim prospect for the advance of nine fighter planes and two land-based reconnaissance planes of the Tainan Air Group on the 16th, but the advance of the land-based attack planes was expected to require a considerable further number of days.⁽⁶²⁾ Moreover, because it was difficult for land-based attack planes to take off fully loaded from the rear base of Jolo, things came to such a pass that both the air campaign against [enemy bases] south of Balikpapan by land-based attack planes as well as the surprise attack on Balikpapan by the paratrooper unit could no longer be counted on.⁽¹²⁾

In the meantime, in view of the example of Tarakan, there were great hopes for taking the oil facilities intact. For that purpose, it was decided to carry out a surprise attack and occupy [Balikpapan] not by means of a frontal attack but by catching the Dutch East Indies garrison off guard through a covert operation by the Army and prevent them from destroying and burning the facilities. On 15 January, 1st Escort Unit Commander Rear Admiral Nishimura conferred with Detachment Commander Sakaguchi and they came to the conclusion that the landing in Balikpapan should be [further] postponed from the 21st until the 24th, and reported the matter to the Dutch East Indies Unit Commander Vice Admiral Takahashi, who approved it on the next day, the 16th.⁽⁵⁶⁾

On the same day, the 16th, the *Asama-maru* with the Navy 1001 Unit (the 3d Yokosuka Special Landing Force, i.e. [another] paratrooper unit) on board entered the port of Tarakan. However, the postponement of only three days was not enough to get the Tarakan base ready for the required transport unit (twenty-eight to thirty-nine aircraft) to land on and take off from [the airfield], and the employment of the paratrooper unit for the Balikpapan [operation] was cancelled. It was decided to employ the unit [instead] in the subsequent operation to seize Banjarmasin, and [for that purpose] the unit was kept on standby in Tarakan.⁽¹²⁾

Plan of Operations, etc.

On the 17th, the units concerned made detailed arrangements in line with the postponed schedule, and the departure from Tarakan of the units to seize Balikpapan was changed to 1700 on 21 January. The outline of the arrangements, plans of operations, etc. were as follows.⁽⁵⁶⁾

The Arrangements Between the 1st Escort Unit and the Sakaguchi Detachment

On 17 January, in line with the [new] postponed schedule, the detailed arrangements between the Army and the Navy concerning the operation to seize Balikpapan were changed as follows:⁽⁵⁶⁾

1. Landing points
 - Main force: Near the Balikpapan airfield
 - Detached force: Near the reservoir 10 nautical miles north of Balikpapan, by sailing up the Wain River
2. Landing strength
 - Main force: two infantry battalions and [a] field artillery battalion as the core
 - Detached force: one infantry battalion as the core
3. Distribution, movements and sailing routes of the transport ships
 - Same as those in the plan of the 1st Escort Unit
4. Others
 - [The arrangements] at the time of the Tarakan invasion operation shall apply.

The Plan of Operations of the [Army] Sakaguchi Detachment

The main force, consisting of the 146th Infantry Regiment (minus the 2d Battalion), an armored car unit, a field artillery battalion, and an engineer company (minus one platoon), shall land near the airfield. After seizing the airfield, one element shall immediately be dispatched to the Samboja oilfields to the north and occupy them, while [at the same time] being assigned the task of covering the rear of the main force. [Meanwhile,] the main force shall advance westward along the coastal road and storm the Balikpapan stronghold. When carrying out the assault, the main force shall act in concert with the detached force, make use of the military gains [of the latter] and not rush into the assault.

The detached force, consisting of one infantry battalion, one engineer platoon, one independent engineer platoon and one radio section, shall sail up the Wain River, land near the reservoir, and dispatch one element to the water-pumping station, so as to prevent various facilities from being destroyed. The main force [of the detached force] shall swiftly advance to the hamlet of Batu Ampar. While cutting off the escape routes of the enemy, [the force] shall charge into the urban area as unexpectedly as possible and throw the enemy's organized resistance into disorder, so as to facilitate the assault of the main force of the Detachment on the stronghold.

The Resources Salvage Unit under the direct control [of the Detachment], consisting of two infantry companies, [one] antiaircraft artillery battalion, one independent engineer company (minus one platoon), one transport company, two radio platoons, [one] medical unit, and one platoon of the 1st Kure Special Landing Force, shall go ashore in the wake of the main force and enter Balikpapan City along with the main force. The Resources Salvage Unit shall split in two groups, each of which shall respectively accompany the main force and the detached force, and [be in charge of] preventing facilities from being destroyed and resources from being dispersed and lost.

After the occupation of the Balikpapan sector, one detachment consisting of one infantry battalion as the core shall be formed as swiftly as possible to take charge of seizing and securing the Sanga Sanga oilfields in conjunction with the naval special landing force.

By one unit after another, [the detachment] shall make preparations for the next [operation] to seize Banjarmasin.⁽⁸⁸⁾

The Covert Operation of the Sakaguchi Detachment

[The detachment] shall dispatch Captain Colijn, currently adjutant of the Tarakan garrison, who is the [eldest] son of a former governor-general of the Dutch East Indies [actually: former Dutch prime minister] and who is a manager of BPM (Bataafse Petroleum Maatschappij) and on friendly terms with the Balikpapan garrison commander, to the headquarters of the Balikpapan garrison, having Captain Reinderhoff, a staff officer of Tarakan garrison accompany him, to convey that the garrison “not put up useless resistance or destroy resources and materials.” For this purpose, [the detachment] shall put them on board of a seized steam launch and send them ahead to Balikpapan along the coast, flying the Dutch flag.⁽⁸⁹⁾

The Plan of Operations of the Detached Force of the Sakaguchi Detachment

From among the prisoners, [the detached force] shall have one native, who worked as a patrol officer in Balikpapan until about ten days ago, [also] board the launch of the unit for the covert operation and have him infiltrate into Balikpapan to light a leading light on the waterway to the Wain River (which flows into the bay of Balikpapan) and to guide the detached force (two companies led by a battalion commander). The detached force shall sail upriver in [landing] craft and land near the reservoir about ten nautical miles north of Balikpapan. In concert with the landing operation of the main force, the [detached] force shall envelop from the rear of Balikpapan the shelters of Dutch noncombatants, thereby advising them to surrender and prevent the resource facilities from being destroyed. Depending on the situation, [the detached force] shall attack the enemy lines at a stroke and occupy Balikpapan. The detached force shall separate from the main force the day before the landing, shift to [landing] craft at the 2d anchorage [near] the south coast of Balikpapan Bay, camouflage the craft with mangrove branches and sail upriver along the west coast of the bay.⁽⁸⁹⁾

The Plan of Operations of the 1st Escort Unit

On 18 January, the 1st Escort Unit announced its plan of operations for the capture of Balikpapan; it was in outline as follows:⁽⁵⁶⁾

1. Distribution of the Transport Convoy

(1) 1st Section

The *Tsuruga-maru*, the *Liverpool-maru*, the *Hiteru-maru*, and the *Ehime-maru* (carrying the Sakaguchi Detachment), the *Asahisan-maru* and the *Nittei-maru* (carrying the 2d Construction Squad), the *Kumagawa-maru* (the auxiliary personnel transport ship of the 1st Base Force) and the *Sumanoura-maru* (the auxiliary net-layer of the 1st Base Force)

(2) 2d Section

The *Havana-maru*, the *Hankow-maru*, the *Teiryū-maru*, and the *Kuretake-maru* (carrying the Sakaguchi Detachment), the *Kanayama[san]-maru* [*Kayamasan-maru*] (carrying the 2d Construction Squad), the *Tōei-maru* [B] (carrying the 1st Defense Detail), the *Nan'a-maru* (the transport ship of the 11th Air Fleet)

(3) The detached force

The 1st and the 2d ships of the 2d Section shall leave the line by separate order and form the detached force.

2. Departure from Tarakan

- (1) First of all, at 1700 on 21 January, the 1st Section of the 24th Destroyer Division, the 2d Destroyer Division and the 31st Subchaser Division shall leave [Tarakan] and form a clearing unit; sailing at slow speed ahead of the route of the convoy, they shall [search for the enemy] by using sound and signal detection until ordered otherwise by separate orders.
- (2) After that, the *Naka*, the transport convoy (led or escorted by the 9th Destroyer Division, the 11th and the 30th Minesweeper Divisions, and Patrol Boats Nos. 36, 37 and 38) shall leave [Tarakan] in that order and form a protective sailing formation.

3. Escort during the sailing

- (1) Scheduled route: As shown in the Separate Illustration No. 25 (omitted)
- (2) Sailing speed: 9 knots at normal speed; 6 knots at slow speed
- (3) The protective sailing formation

By day, the 31st Subchaser Division ([with] three submarine chasers) shall sweep the waters by using sound detection, sailing in a row seven kilometers ahead of the convoy. The 1st Section of the 24th Destroyer Division and the 2d Destroyer Division [shall clear the sailing route] by using signal detection, sailing in a row three kilometers ahead of the convoy. The *Asagumo* shall lead the 1st Section of the convoy and Patrol Boat No. 36 the 2d Section, while the 9th Destroyer Division (minus the *Yamagumo*), the 30th and the 11th Minesweeper Divisions, three patrol boats and the *Naka* shall provide direct escort. By night, the formation shall be contracted: the rows to clear the waters ahead shall be removed, and the destroyers shall be deployed at the front [of the convoy] to form a protective screen.

4. Entering into the anchorage

- (1) Around 1800 on 22 January, by separate order, the 1st Section of the 24th Destroyer Division, the *Havana-maru* and the *Hankow-maru* (note: the ships with the detached force on board) shall leave the line and sail ahead.
- (2) On the afternoon of 23 January, by separate order, the *Natsugumo* shall leave the line and sail ahead to take charge of guarding the waters around the 1st anchorage as the marker vessel east of the anchorage.
- (3) At 1800 on the 23d, the main body shall start shifting to the preparatory formation to enter into the anchorage.
- (4) The detached force shall sail ahead [of the main body] along the sailing route shown in the Separate Illustration No. 25 (omitted), and cast anchor at the 2d anchorage at 2100 on the 23d. After launching the landing units, the ships shall return to the 1st anchorage.
- (5) The main body shall shift to the formation to enter into the anchorage by separate order and enter into the anchorage following the route cleared in a two-tier clearing system, consisting of [a first] clearing [of the waters] along the route ahead by the 31st Subchaser Division and [a second] sweeping of waters by the 30th and the 11th Minesweeper Divisions and the 2d Destroyer Division. The main body shall cast anchor at the 1st anchorage around 0100 on the 24th. The 1st and the 2d anchorages are as shown in Separate Illustration No. 29 (*Illustration No. 14*).
- (6) The 30th and the 11th Minesweeper Divisions and the Special [Minesweeping] Service Unit (on board the *Kumagawa-maru*) of the 2d Base Force shall by separate order sweep the shallow waterways leading to the inside of the port of Balikpapan from the 1st anchorage.

5. Guarding the anchorage

After [the convoys] have entered into the anchorage, the areas around the anchorage of the convoy shall be guarded by the minesweepers, submarine chasers, and patrol boats. The 9th Destroyer Division shall guard the whole area southeast [of the anchorage], and 24th Destroyer

Division the area northeast [of the anchorage]. The *Naka* and the 2d Destroyer Division shall further guard the area outside that under the guard of the 9th Destroyer Division.

6. Communications, etc. (omitted)

The Plan of Operations of the 2d Base Unit

The commander on board of the *Itsukushima* shall leave Tarakan on 24 January, leading the *Wakataka*, the *Imizu-maru*, and the 21st Subchaser Division, to advance to Balikpapan on the 26th. He shall have the 30th and the 11th Minesweeper Divisions, the 31st Subchaser Division, the *Kumagawa-maru* and the *Sumanoura-maru* incorporated into the 1st Escort Unit and let them sail ahead. After his advance to Balikpapan, the commander shall have the forces, which had been incorporated into the 1st Escort Unit, rejoin his unit, putting them under his command and take charge of the minesweeping at the anchorage as well as along the waterways inside the port. He shall also take charge of the defense of the anchorage and the management of the port, while supporting the operation of the 1st Escort Unit. The rest of his unit shall remain mostly in Tarakan and take charge of escorting reinforcements and other units.⁽⁶⁸⁾

The Plan of Operations of the 1st Air Unit

The 1st Air Unit was scheduled to escort the Sakaguchi Detachment from Tarakan to Balikpapan, supporting the 1st Escort Unit and, depending on the situation, to support the landing operation in Balikpapan. The aircraft units were supposed to mainly conduct operations from the Tarakan base and the Sangkulirang base (note: about halfway between Tarakan and Balikpapan).

The main scheduled operations were as follows:⁽⁹⁰⁾

1. Division of the operations

(1) *San'yō-maru*

She shall dismantle her base at Tarakan on the 23d, collect the base supporting personnel and matériel, and sail at 1600 on the 23d along with the 2d Base Force vessels to set up a base [at] the coast south of the Balikpapan airfield on the 26th. After that, she shall at an appropriate moment enter the port of Balikpapan.

(2) *Sanuki-maru*

She shall leave Tarakan on the evening of the 24th, arrive at Sangkulirang Bay on the early morning of the 26th, dismantle the base, collect the base supporting personnel and assist in embarking the large-sized motorized [landing] craft used as patrol boats. She shall enter [the port of] Balikpapan around the 27th and support [the setting up of] a base [there].

2. Aircraft employment division

(1) [On] the 21st

Between 0645 – 0900: sweeping the waters of [enemy] submarines [to be conducted as shown in] Separate Illustration No. 1 (omitted by the author). Between 1000 – 1300: patrol against [enemy] submarines and direct guarding against [enemy] submarines [to be conducted with] one Type-0 observation seaplane of each ship. Between 1245 – 1900: direct escort of the transport convoy against [enemy] submarines [to be conducted by] two shifts of two observation seaplanes for each shift.

(2) [From] the 22d through the 23d

Direct escort of the convoy against [enemy] submarines shall be conducted almost in the same manner [as the day before].

(3) From the 24th Onwards

From early morning until about sunset, observation seaplanes shall guard the periphery of the anchorage against [enemy] submarines and reconnoiter the waters where mines were laid, while three-seater reconnaissance seaplanes shall search for the enemy in the area between 205° [SSW] and 180° [S] within a radius of 240 nautical miles from the base.

The Plan of Operations of the Air Unit of the Southern Task Force

The land-based air unit to support [the operation to] seize Balikpapan was the 2d Air Raid Unit. The deployment of the unit as of 20 January was as follows:

Tarakan: the 23d Air Flotilla headquarters, 20 Type-0 fighter planes of the Tainan Air Group, 4 land-based reconnaissance planes, and the 3d Yokosuka Special Landing Force
 Jolo: 45 Type-1 land-based attack planes of the Takao Air Group and 10 Type-0 fighter planes of the Tainan Air Group
 Gaoxiong: 20 Type-1 land-based attack planes of the Takao Air Group and 27 transport planes of the 1001 Unit

Although no documents are extant concerning the plan of operations of the 2d Air Raid Unit, the operation schedule of each unit is assumed to have been as in the following table.^(71, 75)

Unit	Actions
23d Air Flotilla Commander	1. To direct the operation of the 2d Air Raid Unit at the Jolo base. 2. To advance to the Tarakan base when the base is ready.
Takao Air Group	1. To push forward its forces to the Jolo base from Gaoxiong one after another when the Jolo base is ready. 2. To patrol the northern half of the Makassar Strait from the Jolo base and attack enemy naval vessels. 3. To conduct reconnaissance attacks and provide cover for [friendly] convoys as well as combat support for the landing units upon their request in the area of Balikpapan in Borneo from the Jolo base. 4. [The group] may advance one element of its force from the Jolo base to the Tarakan base when the latter is ready.
Tainan Air Group	1. To conduct a photoreconnaissance of the landing points of Balikpapan and [also] reconnoiter Banjarmasin and Makassar with land-based reconnaissance planes from the Jolo base. To provide direct guard in the air above Jolo and Tarakan and mop up the enemy air power in the Borneo area with the Type-0 fighter planes (land-based reconnaissance planes). 2. To advance from the Jolo base to the Tarakan base when the latter is ready, and mop up the enemy air power in the areas of Balikpapan and Banjarmasin with land-based reconnaissance planes from the [Tarakan] base. To provide direct guard in the air above Tarakan with Type-0 fighter planes. 3. To provide direct escort in the air above the 1st Escort Unit and the transport convoys with Type-0 fighter planes (land-based reconnaissance planes).

1001 Unit	1. The 3d Yokosuka Special Landing Force shall leave Gaoxiong on the <i>Asama-maru</i> on the 5th of January, arrive in Davao on the 12th via Jolo, leave Davao for Tarakan when the Tarakan base is seized, and provide guard for the latter. 2. To join the operation to seize Balikpapan from the Tarakan base. 3. The transport unit of the 1001 Unit shall advance to the Tarakan base from Gaoxiong, and cooperate in the paradrop operation of the 3d Yokosuka Special Landing Force participating in the operation to seize Balikpapan.
-----------	--

Remarks

1. The participation of the 1001 Unit in the operation to seize Balikpapan was cancelled (as already described).
2. Since the Tarakan [airfield] was not anytime soon ready for use by land-based attack planes, and it was also impossible for the planes to take off from the Jolo airfield fully loaded, the search for the enemy and the patrol over the Makassar Strait south of Balikpapan was assigned to the 1st Air Raid Unit until the advance of the land-based attack planes of the 2d Air Raid Unit to Balikpapan. Rear Admiral Tada, commander of the 1st Air Raid Unit, carried out the search for the enemy and the patrols over the southern part of the Makassar Strait from Menado with flying boats.^(71, 75)
3. When the Balikpapan airfield was ready for use, the Tainan Air Group and the 2d Air Raid Unit headquarters were supposed to advance to the base from Tarakan to prepare for the subsequent operations.

Assessment of the Enemy Movements in the Balikpapan Area⁽⁶⁸⁾

1. As the [Japanese] operations progressed, the allied surface forces moved southward outside the reach of our air forces. They are in the Java Sea area and show little enthusiasm to make a sortie, while a part of the defending forces seems to be operating in the Makassar Strait area.
2. It is necessary to be on alert against [enemy] submarines, because not only do they regularly appear off Tarakan, but also two or three of them have been detected with direction finders in the strait leading toward Balikpapan.
3. According to intelligence and air reconnaissance reports, [the enemy] has deployed to Balikpapan some destroyers, patrol vessels, mine-laying vessels and torpedo boats; they seem to busy themselves putting up a defense.
4. Dutch aircraft have been carrying out considerably aggressive counterattacks using airfields at various places, in particular hidden airfields, unknown to us. We need to be very much on our guard against their four-engine heavy bombers because they carry a large load and are very accurate in their bombing, and also because it is difficult for friendly fighter planes to bring them down.
5. In view of the experience in [the invasion of] Tarakan, it is certain that mines have been laid in the port of Balikpapan. Moreover, due to the shallowness of the waters, we need to be on our guard against mines at the whole planned anchorage.
6. According to air reconnaissance [reports], fires and explosions were spotted in the urban area of Balikpapan and at many places in the oilfields of Samarinda ([as of] 20 January); it appears that the enemy is adopting drastic scorched-earth tactics.

The Launch of the Invasion Operation

Prior Neutralization of [Enemy] Air Power Completed

From 30 December [1941] onwards, the Tainan Air Group of the 2d Air Raid Unit had launched reconnaissance [missions] over the Tarakan, Samarinda and Balikpapan areas by its land-based reconnaissance planes with the Jolo airfield as its base. After the capture of Tarakan, the air group advanced nine fighter planes and two land-based reconnaissance planes on the 16th [of January], and launched attacks on Balikpapan with these fighter planes from the 18th onwards. Along with this, it carried out reconnaissance [missions] over Banjarmasin with its land-based reconnaissance planes, but almost no planes or surface vessels of the enemy were spotted. [In the meantime,] the Tōkō Air Group had carried out searches for the enemy in the Makassar Strait almost every day since 7 January with its large flying boats using Davao as its base, but it did not spot the enemy, either. Also, the Takao Air Group, which had launched search (reconnaissance) attacks on the enemy in the Makassar Strait as well as on the Balikpapan airfield from 11 January onwards with its land-based attack planes using Jolo as its base, barely spotted the enemy, other than four enemy fighter planes, which they encountered (one shot down, unconfirmed) and several [enemy] merchantmen which they attacked (no direct hits).⁽⁷¹⁾ In the meantime, the 1st Air Unit (the seaplane unit) started to carry out reconnaissance [missions] over the east coast of Borneo on 17 January and started the construction of the Sangkulirang base on the 20th.^(76, 90)

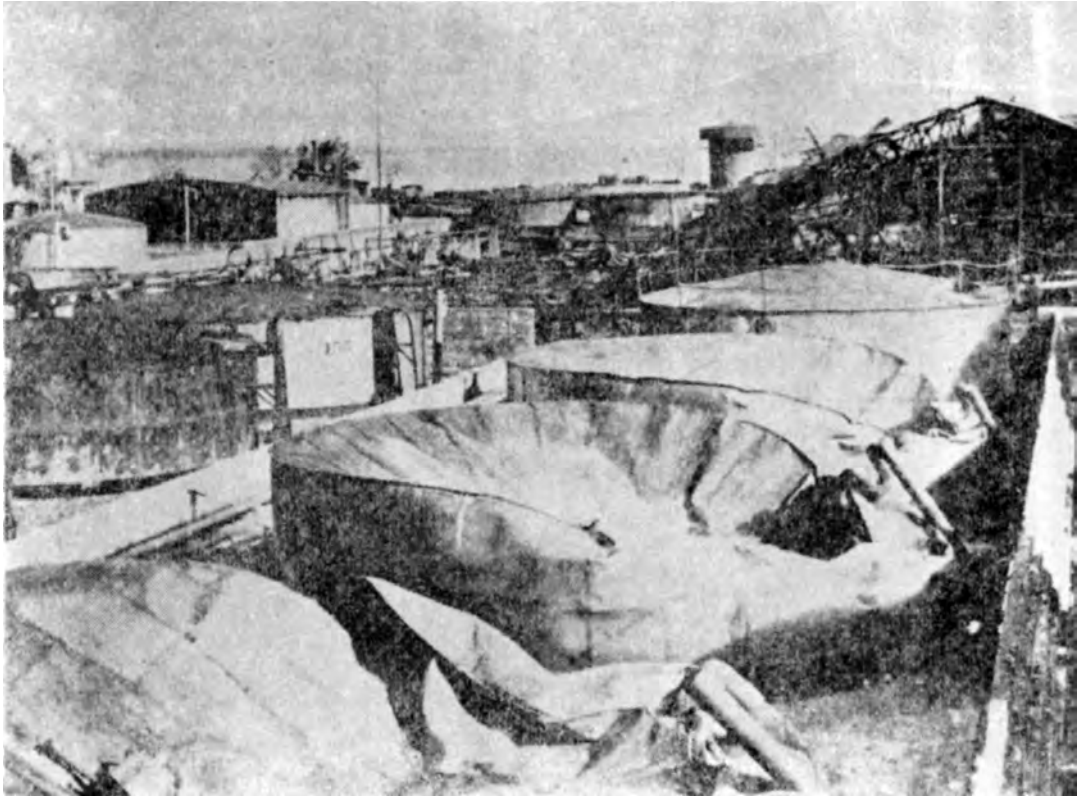
The Sailing of the Convoy

At 1535 on 18 January, the steam launch with those assigned to the covert operation on board left [Tarakan] port, heading for Samboja; the *Samidare* observed and escorted the launch until she was out of the harbor. Then, on the 19th from around 2000, an experiment was conducted on the waters east of Cape Batu [to test whether it was possible to] make out a large-sized motorized [landing] craft of the detached force camouflaged with mangrove branches in the search lights of a destroyer. The experiment confirmed the belief that [landing] craft could successfully sail upstream in disguise even when illuminated by search lights from Balikpapan.⁽⁸⁹⁾ At 1200 on the 21st, 1st Escort Unit Commander Rear Admiral Nishimura moved up the time of the main body's anchoring at the 1st anchorage by two hours to 2300 on the 23d. The reason for this [change] is unknown.

At 1700 on the 21st of January, the 1st Escort Unit and the transport ships left [Tarakan] as scheduled. The total strength consisted of one light cruiser, nine destroyers, four minesweepers, three submarine chasers, three patrol boats and sixteen transport ships, aggregating to thirty-six ships. With frequent squalls the weather was so bad that almost no air operations could be carried out, but [the sea] was relatively calm.⁽⁵⁶⁾

On the 22d, the bad weather from the previous day continued and was such that it was impossible to determine the position of the ships by celestial observation.

Friendly aircraft, which were supposed to directly escort the convoy from the air, did not appear at all, except for two land-based attack planes, which provided guard on the sailing route ahead of the convoy for about one hour in the morning only. Around 1200, when sailing southward at a point northeast of Cape Mangkalihat, [the convoy] spotted the steam launch, which had left [earlier] for the covert operation, coming back. The *Kawakaze* approached to



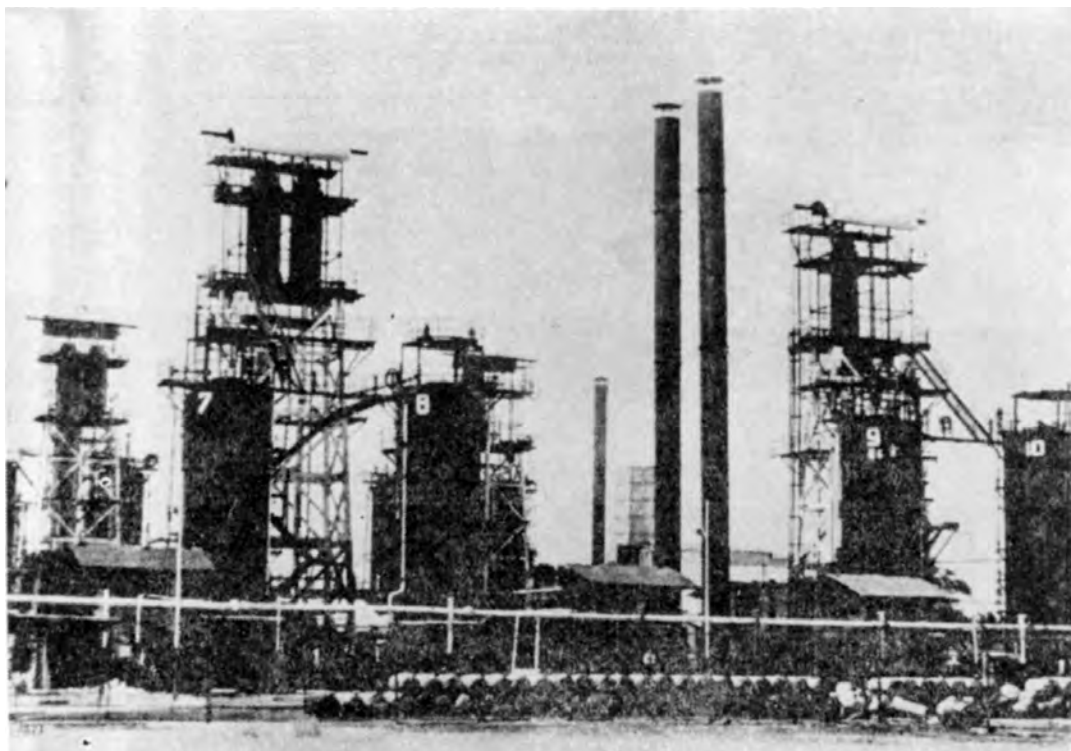
Destroyed Refinery at Balikpapan

investigate, only to find that the covert operation had failed. [The *Kawakaze*] took the interpreters on board and let the launch return to Tarakan.⁽⁵⁶⁾

The above-mentioned party for the covert operation had encountered a Dutch flying boat off Samarinda at 0700 on the 20th; it had landed on the water and taken the two* Dutchmen away. The steam launch had arrived at Samboja around 1600 on the 20th, and temporarily anchored there to wait for the reply from the [garrison] commander of Balikpapan. Around 1800, a military messenger bearing of a flag of truce and carrying the enemy commander's letter had come to the launch. The letter contained a reply to the effect that "the main facilities had been burned before the reception of the message from the Japanese Army;" the [covert] operation to prevent [the facilities] from being destroyed prior [to the invasion] was considered to have come too late and have met with failure. After putting ashore the personnel [assigned] to the marking of the landing point at 0200 on the 21st, the steam launch had left Samboja at 0300 to head back [toward Tarakan] and come across the convoy around noon on the 22d. After communicating the situation, the steam launch safely returned to Tarakan on the evening of the 23d.⁽⁸⁹⁾

In the meantime on the 22d, the convoy continued sailing on as scheduled. It entered the Makassar Strait around 1600 and sent the detached force ahead at 1800. At night, a message came from the 23d Air Flotilla headquarters in Tarakan, which read, "It rained all day long. Because the airfield was unfit for use, the tasks of the fighter planes were not carried out. It

* The text mistakenly has *three*. See also Vol. 3, p. 355.



Restored Oilfields of Balikpapan

is expected that [the airfield] will remain unusable tomorrow.”⁽⁵⁶⁾ Meanwhile on the 22d, the Tōkō Air Group carried out a search for the enemy in the southeastern part of the Makassar Strait from the Menado base with seven flying boats, but spotted no enemy in that area.

At 0005 on the 23d, the *Umikaze*, [escorting] the detached force, suddenly came under torpedo attacks of enemy submarine(s) at close range. Noticing three torpedoes passing by the bottom of the ship and another ahead of the ship, she immediately moved to detect and attack the enemy. At 0040, she detected an enemy submarine, [closed in] while keeping tracking the latter until the distance between them became 600 meters, and released six [antisubmarine] depth charges, but the results were unconfirmed.⁽⁵⁶⁾

Around sunrise on the 23d, the detached force reached a point about eighty nautical miles east of Balikpapan, while the ships of the main force were following about thirty nautical miles behind. At 1050, three enemy twin-engine bombers appeared in the sky above the ships of the main force, but they passed over in the direction of Samarinda without dropping bombs. Around 1130, the ships of the main force changed their course to 270° [W], and headed toward the anchorage of Balikpapan. From 1220 through 1305, one enemy twin-engine flying boat reconnoitered the ships of the main force from the south from a great distance. Again on that day, due to the bad weather in Tarakan, no friendly fighter planes showed up. The land-based attack planes just conducted search and attack [missions] against the enemy in the northern part of the Makassar Strait from the Jolo base, while the Tōkō Air Group also conducted no search and attack [missions] against the enemy in the southern part of the Makassar Strait. On top of that, due to the bad condition of the Sangkulirang base, the sea-plane unit was unable to provide close support for the escort unit, either. What was more,

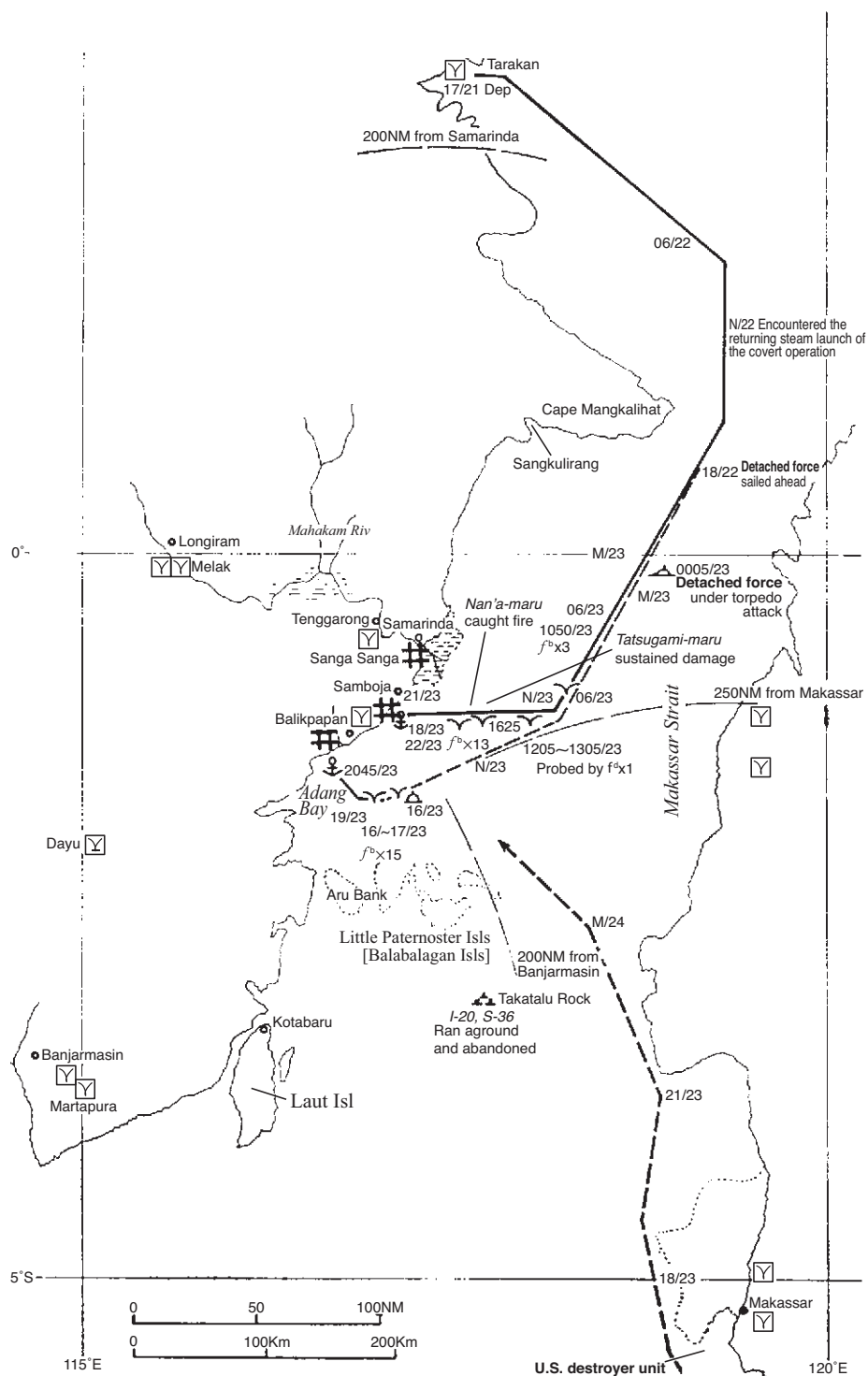


Illustration No. 14 — Summary of the Actions of the Units to Seize Balikpapan (21–24 January, 1942)

the weather at sea around the convoy was steadily improving, making the conditions more advantageous for enemy aircraft to attack.⁽⁵⁶⁾

Sure enough, at 1625 first of all nine twin-engine bombers and four light bombers [dive bombers] of the enemy raided the ships of the main force. In this attack, a small bomb hit the *Tatsugami-maru* (note: a Navy transport ship accompanying the convoy) sailing at the rear of [the convoy]. Although [the bomb] caused injuries, she fortunately did not sustain major damage.⁽⁹¹⁾ Meanwhile at 1602 on the part of the detached force, the *Kawakaze*, which had detected enemy submarine(s) and was attacking them with antisubmarine depth charges, was persistently strafed and bombed for about one hour by the enemy aircraft that had completed the attack on the [convoy of the] main force and who were later joined by two light bombers [dive bombers]. However, [the *Kawakaze*] narrowly avoided damage. Then at 1930 [1730?], when the minesweeping unit of the ships of the main unit started leaving [the line] to sail ahead, one enemy twin-engine bomber unexpectedly attacked from the scattered clouds the *Nan'a-maru* (note: a transport ship of the Eleventh Air Fleet), which was sailing at the rear of the [ships of the] main force. The [enemy] bomb hit near the mizzenmast of the ship, causing a huge fire and finally the inevitable abandonment of the ship.⁽⁵⁶⁾

At 2230, the detached force launched the landing unit and immediately raised anchor to head for the 1st anchorage, reporting that it would join [the main force] around 0900 on the next day. In the meantime, from around 1830 onwards, the main force began sweeping the sailing route ahead, and at 2100 set course towards the port [of Balikpapan]. During this period, at 2030, Patrol Boat No. 36, which was guiding the 2d Section, reported "two trails of [enemy] torpedoes on the starboard side of the ship heading in the opposite direction of the ship," and it was judged that enemy submarine(s) were still continuing their pursuit. However, there were no mines in the vicinity of the anchorage as had been dreaded, and the ships completed their anchoring between 2310 and 2330.⁽⁵⁶⁾

Surprise Attack of an Enemy Surface Unit on the Japanese Anchorage

(See Illustration No. 15)

As the [transport] ships had finished anchoring, all ships of the 1st Escort Unit were about to shift to [the task of] guarding the anchorage. However, the 2d Destroyer Division, which had been in charge of sweeping the anchorage of mines, was still retrieving its minesweeping cables at a point several nautical miles to the south of the anchorage. Just about that time, a submarine chaser, which was positioned to the southwest of the convoy, spotted a suspicious small vessel, but soon lost sight of it. At 0030, the *Naka*, which had temporarily anchored at a point about one kilometer to the southwest of the *Tsuruga-maru*, the 1st ship of the 1st Section, spotted a vessel, which looked like an [enemy] torpedo boat, at a distance of about three kilometers, 280° [W], and immediately started raising anchor, while giving an order to Submarine chaser No. 12 nearby to look into the matter. Following that, at 0040, [the *Naka*] spotted the trail of a torpedo heading for her port bow, evaded it, and gave order(s) to submarine chaser(s) to attack [the enemy], while evacuating to the east. The [spotted] ship was considered to be a torpedo boat or a surfaced submarine. Soon around 0045, torpedo(es) hit the *Tsuruga-maru*, and she sent out a signal that all hands were evacuating. First Escort Unit Commander Rear Admiral Nishimura ordered the 30th Minesweeper Division (Minesweepers Nos. 17 and 18) to go to the rescue. He also decided to newly divide the guarding tasks of the anchorage: he ordered the 9th Destroyer Division to guard an area about three kilo-

meters east of the convoy, the 31st Subchaser Division the area west of the convoy, the patrol boats the area south of the convoy, and the 11th Minesweeper Division the area north of the convoy.⁽⁵⁶⁾

The *Naka* continued sailing eastward and directed the subsequent operations while operating in an area five kilometers east of the anchorage. At 0140, the 1st Escort Unit commander ordered the 9th Destroyer Division to continue [its current task]. Around that time, the 2d Destroyer Division was patrolling the periphery [of the area covered by the 9th Destroyer Division].

At 0140, the first landing unit departed, and the second landing unit was preparing for departure. Around 0400, the *Naka* shifted its position from the patrol area of the 9th Destroyer Division to the peripheral area covered by the 2d Destroyer Division but reversed course around 0430. Just about that time, Minesweeper No. 15, sailing at slow speed on a southeastern course while patrolling the area to the northeast of the convoy, suddenly spotted a suspicious silhouette on her starboard bow. The silhouette approached in no time. Visibly confirming four funnels, the minesweeper at first thought that it could be the *Naka*, but after spotting more than one vessel, she judged that they were enemy [vessels]. But it was too late. At 0425, the enemy passed her at high speed and disappeared astern. Three minutes later, she spotted the trails of torpedoes on her port quarter and evaded them. At 0432, the minesweeper spotted a huge explosion in the northern part of the convoy; from the circumstances of the explosion, it was judged that the *Sumanoura-maru*, which carried antisubmarine depth charges as well as mines, had been instantly sunk. When Minesweeper No. 16, which was positioned to the north of the convoy, was changing course to rush to the rescue of the *Sumanoura-maru*, she spotted to her north one enemy vessel heading southwestward at high speed, but promptly lost sight of her. At 0437 the minesweeper reached the site where the *Sumanoura-maru* had sunk, but not an object was spotted on the waters around.^{*(56)}

The *Kumagawa-maru* (an auxiliary personnel transport ship), which was anchored next to the *Sumanoura-maru*, had raised anchor at the report of the enemy's appearance and headed for shallow waters near the coast. After a while, when changing course southwestward, she spotted an enemy vessel closing in on her at high speed on starboard quarter. The enemy vessel fired at her at close range, and about ten shells hit her. [Then the enemy] crossed her bow 200 meters ahead, switched to her port side and was gone in an instant. The *Kumagawa-maru* also made a counterattack and one of her shells hit the stern of the enemy vessel. The enemy vessel threaded between [the ships of] the convoy at high speed, fired at the *Asahi[san?]-maru* and the *Tōei-maru* [B], cut through the line to the eastern side of the convoy and lastly launched a torpedo at the *Kuretake-maru* (which hit at 0445); after strafing her stern, she disappeared southwestward.⁽⁵⁶⁾

In the meantime, the two [enemy] vessels, which had sunk the *Sumanoura-maru*, disappeared southward, after launching torpedoes at the *Tatsugami-maru* at the rear of the 2d Section [of the convoy] at 0435. At 0440, Patrol Boat No. 38, which was patrolling the area south of the convoy at slow speed, spotted two enemy destroyers to her north. The enemy shortly launched torpedoes at her, but she evaded them, and [the enemy vessels] passed westward at high speed. Then, Patrol Boat No. 37, which was to the west of Patrol Boat No. 36, spotted the same enemy vessels. Patrol Boat No. 37 [also] thought it was the *Naka*, but when she identified them as enemy [vessels] after having closed in, it was too late. One of three enemy tor-

* Actually, she headed for the *Sumanoura-maru* at 0437 and arrived at 0500.

pedoes hit her at the stern. Despite the immediate order to fire, her guns did not move due to a power supply failure. Before she could turn a searchlight [on the enemy], the latter crossed her bow and switched to her port side again launching torpedoes, one of which hit her at her port bow and another at her stern at 0445.⁽⁵⁶⁾

At 0450, Patrol Boat No. 36, which was to the south of Patrol Boats Nos. 37 and 38, spotted a silhouette, which bore a close resemblance to the *Naka*, at about two kilometers northwest of her. In the time that she identified the silhouette as an enemy [vessel], the enemy sailed past her southeastward launching an illumination flare, and disappeared from sight. The patrol boat mistook both the enemy vessels and the friendly patrol boats behind them for enemy cruisers, and reported that she had spotted four enemy cruisers to the south of the convoy at 0500. The [whole] engagement lasted only thirty minutes, between 0420 when Minesweeper No. 15 first spotted the enemy and 0450 when Patrol Boat No. 36 lost sight of them.⁽⁵⁶⁾

The first report that the enemy had been spotted that reached 1st Escort Unit Commander Rear Admiral Nishimura was the report from Minesweeper No. 15 at 0440, which meant that Rear Admiral Nishimura should have seen the explosion of the *Sumanoura-maru* ([at] 0432) by that time. However, he was on board of the *Naka*, which was in the patrol area of the 2d Destroyer Division about thirteen kilometers away from the anchorage, and he did not confirm the detailed situation. Moreover, when the report that the enemy had been spotted reached him, he was in the course of moving from the patrol area of the 2d Destroyer Division to that of the 9th Destroyer Division, and was still as much as ten kilometers away from the convoy. Even after receiving the report of Minesweeper No. 15,* the commander did not believe that a number of enemy destroyers were raiding the anchorage. At 0458, he issued an order to "Heighten the alert against enemy submarines and torpedo boats."⁽⁵⁶⁾

[Even] at the report from Patrol Boat No. 36 at 0500 in the patrol area south of the anchorage that she had spotted four enemy cruisers, 1st Escort Unit Commander Rear Admiral Nishimura was still skeptical about a raid by enemy surface vessels. At 0508, the commander inquired of the patrol boat: "Is it not possible that the [enemy] cruisers in the earlier [report] could [actually] have been the 2d Destroyer Division?" At 0512, he received a reply from the patrol boat: "The [enemy] cruisers in the earlier report were a mistake for destroyers with four funnels."^{***} Around 0520, while still operating in an area six to seven kilometers east of the convoy, he issued an order to the 9th Destroyer Division to attack the enemy to the north of the convoy, and he himself headed northward leading the *Naka*, but without knowledge about the enemy movements. However, because the 9th Destroyer Division, too, had no inkling about the enemy movements and was getting disorganized, the 1st Escort Unit commander ordered it at 0548 to resume [its previous task]. The commander [then] sailed toward the anchorage to ascertain the state of the convoy, but [in doing so] he got separated from the 9th Destroyer Division.⁽⁵⁶⁾

In the meantime at 0515, 1st Escort Unit Commander Rear Admiral Nishimura had wired the *Teiryū-maru* (note: with Detachment Commander Sakaguchi on board) to have the transport ships timely evacuate eastward. At 0553, he also wired the detached force, which was coming to join [the main force], to suspend the action until dawn. Around dawn at 0652, Submarine chaser No. 12 patrolling the area west of the convoy spotted [enemy] torpedoes passing under the ship. She immediately caught up with the enemy, sailed over the periscope,

* The text mistakenly has *Patrol Boat No. 15*.

** The allied destroyers involved in the raid were American four stackers; the Japanese destroyers of the 2d Destroyer Division were *Shiratsuyu*-class two stackers; the light cruiser *Naka* was a four stacker.

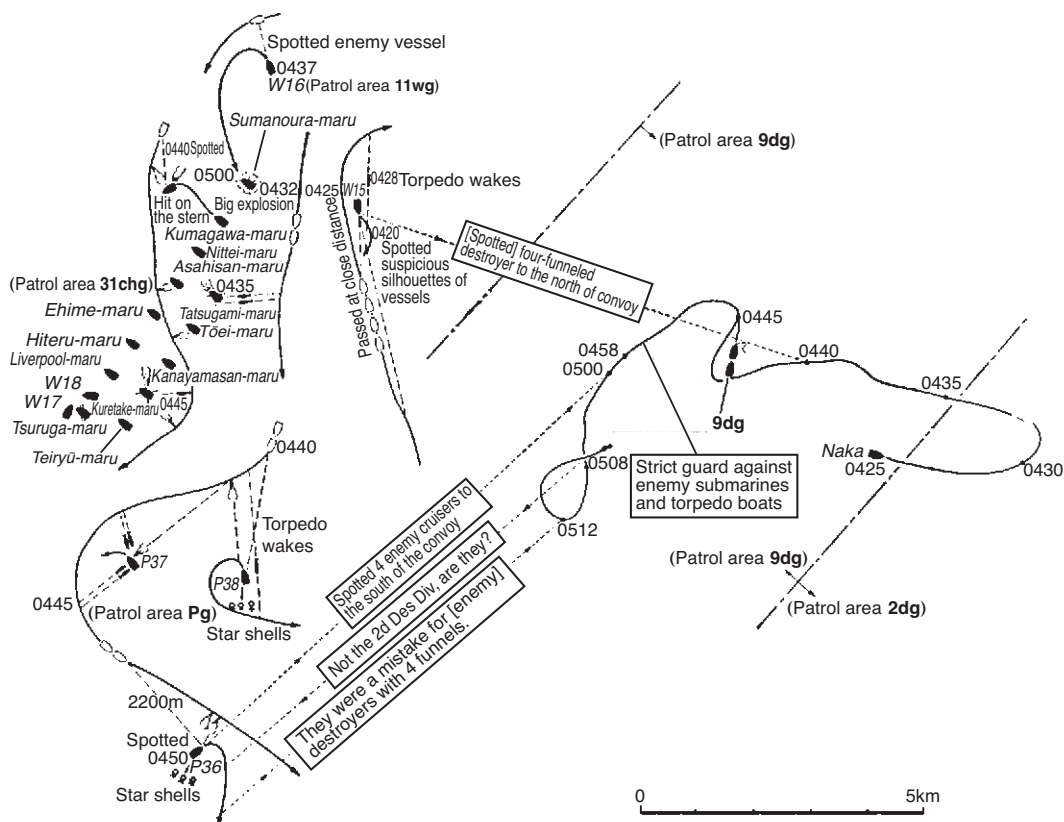


Illustration No. 15 — The Sea Engagement at Balikpapan (24 January, 0420 – 0515)

launched depth charge(s), and witnessed the enemy submarine sinking with its bow standing upright out of the water.⁽⁵⁶⁾

Around 0700, finally it became light at the anchorage. The situation at the anchorage was devastating, and it became clear that the following loss was sustained:⁽⁵⁶⁾

Army transport ships: The *Tsuruga-maru* and the *Kuretake-maru*, sunk by torpedoes (causing a loss of about thirty men in total)

Naval vessels: Patrol Boat No. 37, hit by three torpedoes at the bow and the stern, and too seriously damaged to sail (causing about thirty-five casualties); the *Sumanoura-maru*, hit by torpedoes and instantly sunk, leaving nine survivors; the *Tatsugami-maru*, hit by torpedoes and sunk thirty minutes later; the *Kumagawa-maru*, hit by about ten enemy shells (causing six casualties and minor damage to the hull); the *Asahisan-maru*, hit at the stern by several enemy shells (causing about fifty casualties)

Among the sunken Army transport ships, the *Tsuruga-maru* was hit by a torpedo around 0045 when the first landing unit was just about to depart and part of the unit had already shifted to the [landing] craft. Also, when the *Kuretake-maru* was hit by a torpedo around 0445, the first landing unit had already departed. It was fortunate that both ships sustained [only] a small loss of personnel. It was very much after the fact that 1st Escort Unit Commander Rear

Admiral Nishimura confirmed that it had been a night raid by three or four enemy destroyers.⁽⁵⁶⁾

The circumstances on that night were as shown in *Illustration No. 15*.

The Situation of the Allied Navy^(87, 92) (See *Illustration No. 16*)

Anticipating that Japan's next target after the landing on Tarakan would be Balikpapan, the allied headquarters deployed six U.S. and two Dutch submarines in the sea off Tarakan through the southern part of the Makassar Strait. On 20 January, judging that a sortie of the Japanese forces was drawing close, the ABDA naval forces commander issued an order to the main force of Task Force 5 led by U.S. Navy Rear Admiral Glassford, which had been replenishing at Kupang, Timor, to make a sortie. Although the force originally consisted of a strength of two light cruisers and four destroyers, the flagship *USS Boise* ran aground on an uncharted shoal while sailing through the Sape Strait on the evening of 21 January and sustained damage, which made the light cruiser *USS Marblehead* the flagship. However, due to engine trouble, she [also] became unable to participate in the attack, which left only four destroyers to take part [in the attack] in the end. The four destroyers, *USS John D. Ford*, *USS Pope*, *USS Parrott* and *USS Paul Jones*, led by Commander Talbot, commander of the [U.S.] 59th Destroyer Division, rushed into the anchorage at a high speed of 27 knots, dealt a blow against the Japanese convoy, which was highly visible as if silhouetted against the backdrop of Balikpapan in flames, and were gone like the wind. At that time, the United States extensively advertised this engagement as the "Battle of Makassar Strait."

Further, it was the Dutch submarine *K-XVIII* that tried to torpedo the *Naka* and sank the *Tsuruga-maru* right after the unit to seize [Balikpapan] had entered into the anchorage. The submarine sustained serious damage by Japanese [antisubmarine] depth charge(s), and barely managed to return to Surabaya, escorted by three B-17s. The Dutch submarine *K-XIV* returned also with damage sustained in air raids, but no [allied] vessels were [reportedly] sunk.

The movements of both forces in this sea engagement off Balikpapan may be reconstructed as in *Illustration No. 16*, based on the "Action Report of the 4th Destroyer Squadron," *The Rising Sun in the Pacific [(History of the United States Naval Operation in WWII)]* by [Samuel] Morison, and *Australia in the War of 1939-1945 Series [2] Navy Vol. 1 Royal Australian Navy [1939-1942]* [by G. Hermon Gill], etc..

Concerning the engagement of that night, 4th Destroyer Squadron Commander Rear Admiral Nishimura stated his views in the "Action Report" as follows:

In that engagement, when the enemy destroyers entered into the anchorage of the convoy, they used illumination flares and flash-suppressing gunpowder, deftly threaded their way through the transport ships, thus hiding their whereabouts and actions, accomplished their goals of attack and fled away.

Although their illumination flares were seen, the ignition flashes were not seen. (They might have been seen at a closer distance, but they were at least not seen at [a distance of] 2,000 meters or more.) In the end, it was impossible to catch up with them and we let them escape.

I believe that the performance of the enemy's flash-suppressing gunpowder is well worth studying.

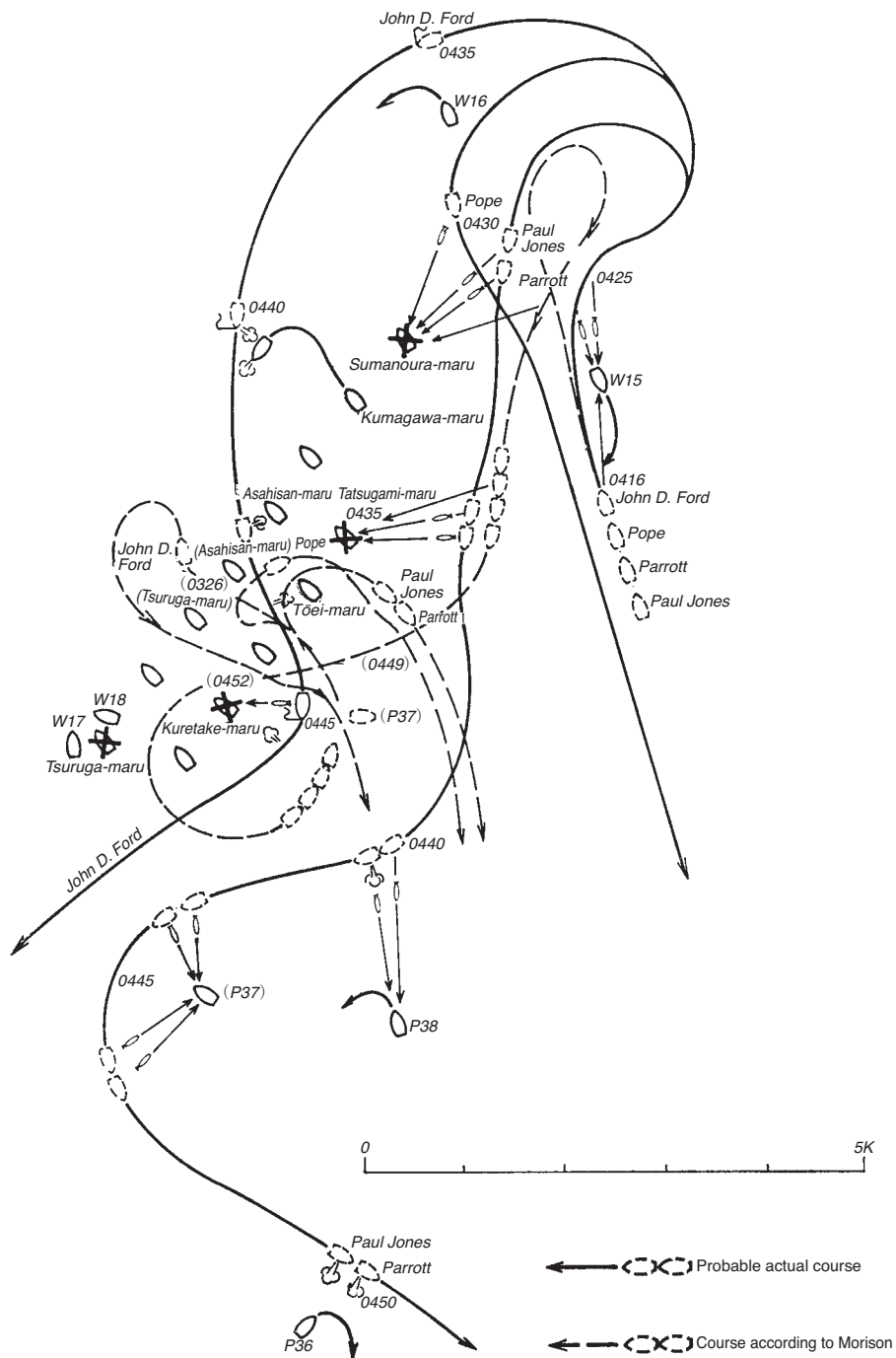


Illustration No. 16 — The Engagement with the U.S. Destroyers in the Sea Battle off Balikpapan (0416 – 0450, 24 January)

The Situation After the Landing [Illustration No. 17]

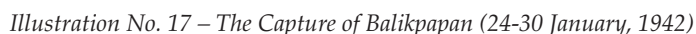
Despite the major loss sustained by the transport convoy, the front line units of the Sakaguchi Detachment successfully landed by and large as scheduled, with the first landing unit at 0240 and the second landing unit at 0640. Around sunrise, [the convoy of] the detached force was seen joining the 1st anchorage. [Prior to that] at 0545 while [sailing to] join the main force, the detached force had spotted an enemy surfaced submarine at a point about thirty nautical miles south of the anchorage. It attacked the submarine, which then submerged, the result of the attack remaining unknown. Meanwhile, the *Nan'a-maru* continued drifting, with the fires far from dying down.⁽⁵⁶⁾

On the 24th, as the weather improved, the Japanese fighter plane units, land-based attack plane units, flying boat units, and seaplane units resumed direct guarding and escorting, while attacking and searching for the enemy as scheduled. However, the anchorage continuously came under fierce raids by the enemy from morning onward.⁽⁵⁶⁾

At 0812, one enemy four-engine heavy bomber came for a raid, which was followed by one twin-engine flying boat, which came for reconnaissance at 0925. [Then,] five twin-engine bombers with five dive bombers, and seven four-engine heavy bombers came for a raid respectively at 0950 and at 1040. All of them bombed the convoy while threading through the desperate antiaircraft fire from the escort vessels as well as eluding interception by Japanese fighter planes. Fortunately, there was no damage, and [Japanese] fighter planes shot down some of the enemy aircraft. However, as observed from the naval vessels, the [enemy] four-engine heavy bombers, no matter how persistently attacked by Japanese fighter planes, were not brought down.⁽⁹¹⁾ At 1205, one [enemy] flying boat was seen reconnoitering from a distance, and an [enemy] raid in the afternoon was anticipated. In the meantime, the Sakaguchi Detachment reported that it had secured the airfield and the entire area around the bridge. Also around 0930, the 1st Escort Unit commander received a telegram from the [Navy] Dutch East Indies Unit commander saying: "the main unit is hurrying toward Balikpapan and is due to arrive on the evening of the 24th."

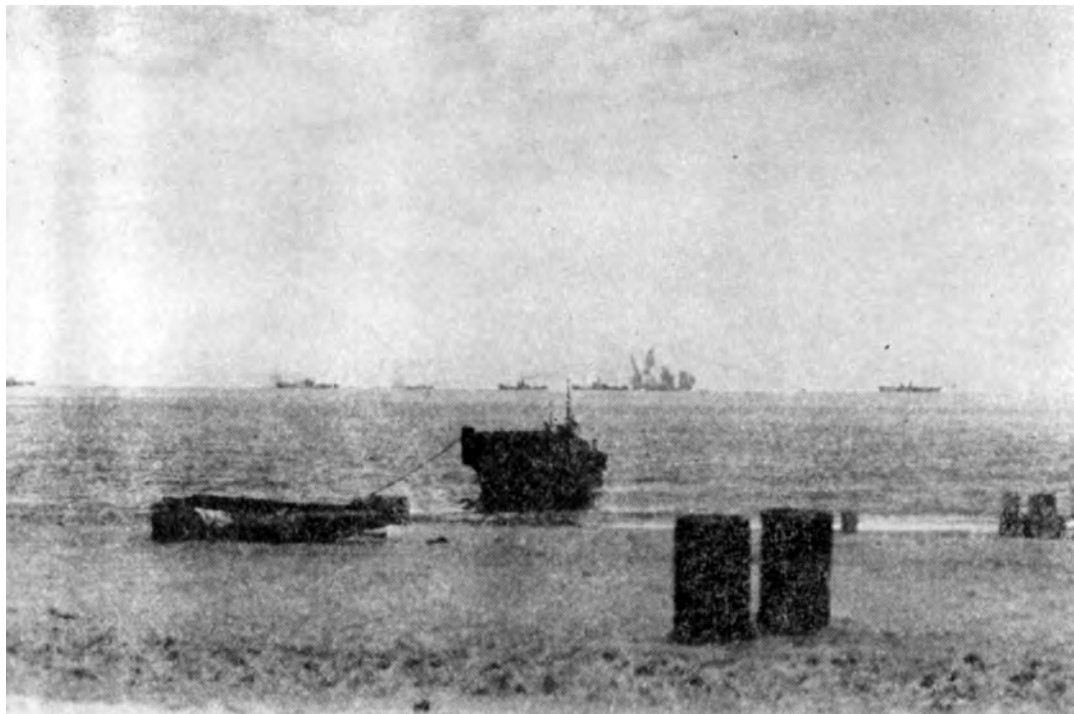
From around 1240 onwards, the 30th Minesweeper Division started clearing the waterway between the anchorage and the mouth of the river [near] the airfield for large-sized motorized [landing] craft. Meanwhile from 1230 through 1420, a total of more than thirty land-based attack planes of the 2d Air Raid Unit carried out bombings on batteries and positions to the east of Balikpapan.⁽⁷¹⁾ At 1710, eight enemy twin-engine bombers and three dive bombers raided [the anchorage] and dropped bombs, but no loss was sustained. The raiding enemy aircraft on that day aggregated to thirty-one aircraft.

Taking a lesson from the experience that morning, 1st Escort Unit Commander Rear Admiral Nishimura decided to have the ships leave the anchorage at night. At 1900, the *Naka*, the 9th and the 2d Destroyer Divisions, the 1st Section of the 24th Destroyer Division, the 30th and the 11th Minesweeper Divisions left the 1st anchorage, escorting eleven transport ships and appropriately moved around the waters to the east. Only the 31st Subchaser Division and three patrol boats remained in the anchorage to guard the area. At 2030 while escorting the ships, the *Umikaze* spotted probable torpedo trails, and almost simultaneously, also the *Samidare* and the *Asagumo* spotted trails of torpedoes; they attacked [the enemy] with [antisubmarine] depth charges, but with unknown results. Around 2100, during these actions, the *Nan'a-maru* was seen sinking after a huge explosion.⁽⁵⁶⁾



At 0113 on the 25th, the *Yūdachi* detected and attacked a submarine; the attack was believed to have been largely effective. Early in the morning, the Sakaguchi Detachment stormed into the city of Balikpapan. Although the attack did not meet any enemy resistance, it was delayed because the bridges were completely destroyed. At 0740, the transport ships returned to the anchorage and dropped anchor. At 1000, ten [enemy] twin-engine bombers came for a raid. However, no damage was sustained, and friendly fighter planes shot down one of them.^(56, 71) [Meanwhile] at 1045, the *San'yō-maru* and the *Sanuki-maru* entered the port of Sangkulirang and dismantled the seaplane base.⁽⁷⁶⁾ Although seven [enemy] four-engine heavy bombers came for an attack [on the Balikpapan anchorage] at 1305, no damage was sustained. When the detached force, which had left the water-pumping station on that day early in the morning, was about to advance southward from Batu Ampar at 1440, it encountered the Dutch East Indies garrison commander and his party in about 100 vehicles including armored cars and defeated them.⁽⁸⁹⁾

At 1930, the convoy shifted to a new anchorage closer to the coast and dropped anchor. After nightfall, the detached force advanced into the urban area of Balikpapan and established contact with the main force. By the end of the day, the city was completely cleared [of the enemy]. [In the meantime,] the main unit of the [Navy] Dutch East Indies Unit had ad-

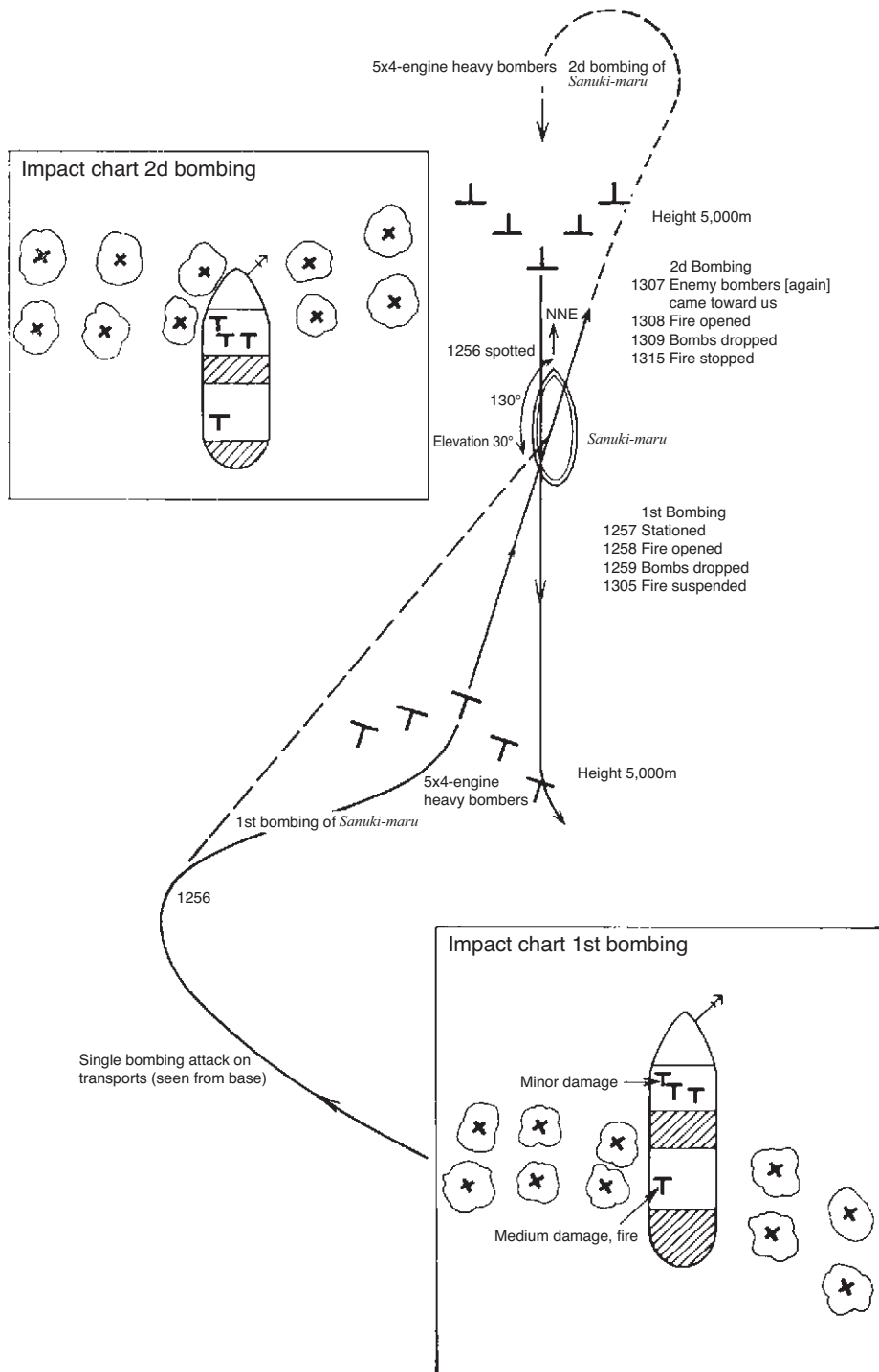


The Enemy's Bombing of [the Anchorage off] Balikpapan

vanced to about 200 nautical miles northeast of Balikpapan so as to support the units to capture the city, but judging that the operation [to] capture [Balikpapan] was for the most part completed, it began to reverse course toward Davao.⁽⁵⁶⁾

At 0800 on the 26th, the *San'yō-maru* and *Sanuki-maru* entered the port of Balikpapan and launched their support [operations].⁽⁷⁶⁾ At 1030, the 2d Base Unit [also] entered the port and took over the task of directing the minesweeping [operations] from the 1st Escort Unit. The 2d Base Unit from then on until 5 February disposed of 57 mines [in total] and finished clearing the waters inside the port.⁽⁵⁶⁾ On that day [the 26th], no enemy air raid was conducted. With the completion of mopping up [the enemy] in the Samarinda and the Sanga Sanga areas, the Sakaguchi Detachment started to prepare for the seizure of Banjarmasin, the next target.⁽⁸⁹⁾

On the 27th, at 1300, five [enemy] four-engine heavy bombers again came for a raid. The *Sanuki-maru* sustained some damage from near hits, which also caused some damage to one of the Type-0 observation seaplanes that was in the process of being taken on board and slightly damaged another.⁽⁷⁶⁾ At 1940, the 2d Destroyer Division (minus the *Harusame*) made a sortie to clear out five enemy submarines, which, according to signal information of the Takao Signal Unit, [had been detected] in the central area of the Makassar Strait. However, unable to locate the enemy, the division returned [to Balikpapan] early in the morning on the 28th. On that day, nine carrier-based bombers of the 2d Carrier Division advanced to Balikpapan. They were brought under the command of 2d Air Raid Unit Commander Rear Admiral Takenaka and assigned to guard the area against submarines. Meanwhile, it was decided that the *Sanuki-maru*, which had sustained damage from the [enemy] bombing,

Illustration No. 18 — The *Sanuki-maru*'s Engagement with [Enemy] Aircraft

would be brought under the command of the 2d Base Unit Commander R. Adm. Hirose Suéto, to be assigned to attacking and neutralizing enemy submarines in the Makassar Strait, and that she was due to be transferred to the 1st Base Unit from 7 February onwards.⁽⁷⁶⁾ (See *Illustration No. 18*)

On the afternoon of the 28th, nine Type-0 fighter planes advanced to Balikpapan. At 1630, 1st Escort Unit Commander Rear Admiral Nishimura was notified by the [Navy] Dutch East Indies Unit that Banjarmasin would be seized overland, and that the escort by the 1st Escort Unit was cancelled.⁽⁷⁶⁾ The 2d Base Unit started to prepare for the seizure of Banjarmasin. On the 29th, twelve Type-0 fighter planes and two land-based reconnaissance planes advanced to Balikpapan.⁽⁷¹⁾ On the next day, the 30th, 1st Escort Unit Commander Rear Admiral Nishimura headed for Lingayen Gulf, leading the main force, in order to make preparations for the next operation (the Java invasion operation); thereafter the defense of Balikpapan and the guarding of the anchorage was left to 2d Base Unit Commander Rear Admiral Hirose. On the same day, after dismantling its base, the *San'yō-maru*, too, left for Cam Ranh Bay in order to be engaged in the operations in the Malaya area.⁽⁹⁰⁾ Meanwhile, the 23d Air Flotilla headquarters and the entire fighter plane unit completed their advance to Balikpapan.⁽⁷⁵⁾

The Air Campaigns After the Departure of the Convoy

As previously told, from 11 January onwards, the 2d Air Raid Unit day after day carried out search (reconnaissance) attacks on the enemy in Balikpapan and Banjarmasin ([the latter only] from the 18 January onwards) as well as in the Makassar Strait. As a result, by the 20th, enemy aircraft and naval vessels came hardly to be seen [any longer] in those areas. However, from the time of the departure of the convoy to seize [Balikpapan] [from Tarakan] on the 21st through the 23d, the weather north of Balikpapan including Tarakan was bad, while south [of Balikpapan] it was fine, which created circumstances extremely disadvantageous to the [Japanese] air campaign. On top of this, also the seaplane unit was prevented from executing its [scheduled] flights on the 23d because of the bad condition of the Sangkulirang [sea] base, which the Navy had set up midway between Tarakan and Balikpapan ([that is,] shoals stretching to a good distance from the pebble-covered shore, marshy land, and trees growing even in the sea, which made the base unusable unless [the seaplanes] were moored to buoys).^(76, 90) Because of the above, both the land-based unit and the seaplane unit were not able to provide effective support for the convoy at the most critical moment, leaving the latter to experience the enemy air raid head-on.

From the 24th onwards, as the weather conditions improved, the air units resumed their search and attack missions against the enemy and also repeatedly attacked the [enemy] secret base in Melak (west of Samarinda), which had newly been spotted; by around the 28th they had on the whole suppressed the enemy movements in that area.⁽⁷¹⁾

However, the preparation of the airfield was delayed again this time (the [Balikpapan] airfield was 900 meters long from north to south: although runway was not paved, its ground condition was better than at Tarakan, and it was extendable).⁽⁵⁶⁾ Finally, nine carrier-based bombers of the 2d Carrier Division advanced [there] on the 27th,⁽⁷⁵⁾ and nine Type-0 fighter planes of the Tainan Air Group on the 28th.⁽⁷⁵⁾ They were followed by the 23d Air Flotilla headquarters, which also advanced [there] on the 30th (as previously told), but it was quite late and not until 3 February that (one element of) the land-based attack planes were advanced [there].⁽⁷⁵⁾ This was because the sinking of the *Nan'a-maru* and the *Tatsugami-maru*

had led to a shortage in the number of large-sized motorized [landing] craft, and the disembarkation of airfield construction matériel did not make the expected progress even after the arrival of the *Kamogawa-maru* and the *Okitsu-maru*.

In the meantime, from around that time, air raids by four-engine enemy B-17 heavy bombers had increased, and they were difficult to deal with. The circumstances were as follows:⁽⁷¹⁾

- 24th [of January 1942]: Seven [enemy] aircraft came for a raid; it was reported that three of them were shot down and another shot down but unconfirmed. Due to hits sustained in the air engagement, two Type-0 fighter planes were seriously damaged at the time of landing.
- 25th: Seven [enemy] aircraft came for a raid; the result [of the counterattack] unclear. Shot by [the enemy], one Type-0 fighter plane fell apart in midair. Another went missing.
- 27th: Five [enemy] aircraft came for a raid; none of them was brought down.
- 29th: Four [enemy] aircraft came for a raid; none of them was brought down. One Type-0 fighter plane crashed itself, while another was hit, leaving its crew seriously injured.
- 31st: Five [enemy] aircraft came for a raid; none of them was brought down.

Thus, the Balikpapan operation was completed. The loss sustained by the Japanese forces was the heaviest thus far in the landing operations in the Dutch East Indies area: The *Sumanoura-maru*, the *Tatsugami-maru* and the *Kuretake-maru* were sunk, Patrol Boat No. 37 and the *Asahisan-maru* badly damaged, the seaplane tender *Sanuki-maru* half damaged, and the *Kumagawa-maru* slightly damaged. However, despite these losses, the number of casualties was small. Also, the resistance put up by the enemy ground forces was extremely limited in this operation, [which led to a result that] only eight men of the Sakaguchi Detachment were killed on the ground. The Navy requisitioned the Sanga Sanga oil fields as well as the BPM oil refineries situated in Balikpapan and operated them. Although the enemy had thoroughly destroyed these facilities before retreating, the Japanese defense detail [1st Defense Detail] repaired the oil wells at an amazing speed and smoothly kept them in operation during the period from June 1942 until August 1943 (as mentioned previously). The crude oil from the Sanga Sanga oil fields was light in quality and could for 34% turned into petroleum. With a high octane rating, [the oil] refined at Balikpapan was of great use in the [Japanese] operations in the southwestern Pacific.⁽⁷⁷⁾

Just for reference, the loss of munitions sustained in the sinking of the transport ships is as shown in the following [tables] (the tables partly include losses in [later] naval engagements):⁽⁷⁵⁾

The Depletion of Ammunition Stocks (from 2 January 1942 until 9 April 1942, [of] the Air Unit of the Southern Task Force)

1. Ordnance

Torpedoes		6	
No. 80 bombs	Regular bombs	18	(160)
	Land bombs	28	(332)
No. 25 bombs	Regular bombs	475	(750)
	Land bombs	2,635	(700)

No. 6 bombs	Regular bombs	2,908	(2,500)
	Land bombs	2,043	(2,450)
No. 7 Mark-6 bombs		75	
Machinegun bullets	7.7-mm	434,134	(212,000)
	20-mm	42,800	(24,900)
Tubular clips [??]		190,654	(137,900)
Drop tanks	For Type-0 fighter planes	626	
	For Type-96 fighter planes	124	
Remarks	1. [The numbers] in parentheses were the loss incurred by the sinking of the <i>Tatsugami-maru</i> and the <i>Yūbari-maru</i> [Editor's note: the <i>Yūbari-maru</i> was sunk in Kupang on 27 March 1942.] 2. No. 80: 800-kg; No. 25: 250-kg; No. 7: 70-kg; No. 6: 60-kg 3. [Omitted: remarks on Japanese abbreviations]		

2. Aviation fuels

Aviation Fuel	Special 92 Octane Gasoline	412.1	
	92 Octane Gasoline	7,062.7	(4,040)
	91 Octane Gasoline	4452.1	
	87 Octane Gasoline	5430.3	(1,139)
Aviation Mineral Oil (kiloliter)		675.7	(280)
Remarks	1 [The numbers] in parentheses were the loss incurred by the sinking of the <i>Nan'a-maru</i> , the <i>Kamogawa-maru</i> and the <i>Yūbari-maru</i> 2 [Omitted: remarks on Japanese abbreviations]		

5. The Seizure of Kendari (See Illustration No. 19)

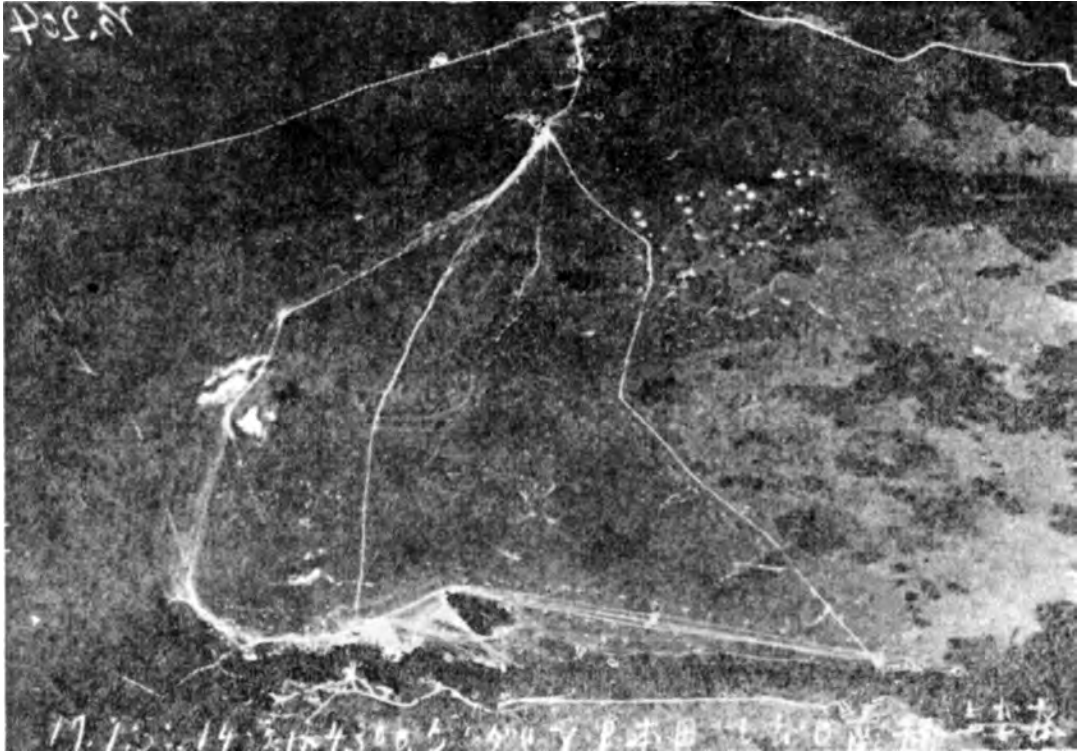
On 24 January, the same day as the capture of Balikpapan, the [operation to] seize Kendari was carried out single-handedly by the Navy. The seizure [operation] was executed by the Eastern Attack Unit (commander: 5th Cruiser Division Commander R. Adm. Takagi Takeo) with almost the same forces as employed in the [operation to] seize Menado (except for the paratrooper unit). However, the unit to seize Kendari was supposed to be directly commanded by 1st Base Unit Commander Rear Admiral Kubo, and 2d Escort Unit Commander Rear Admiral Tanaka was supposed to support it while making preparations for the [operation] to capture Ambon. In conducting the [Kendari] operation, the 15th and the 16th Destroyer Divisions and others of the 2d Escort Unit were incorporated into the 1st Base Unit, and the 21st Minesweeper Division and the 1st Subchaser Division were also returned to the 1st Base Force.⁽⁷⁸⁾

The [operation to] seize Kendari had been scheduled for 21 January at the time of the launch of the Dutch East Indies operation. However, [having found that] the transfer of the

1st Construction Squad could not be made in time, the staff of the 1st Base Force wired on the 14th [of January] that the next operation was expected be postponed for several days.⁽⁵⁴⁾ Further, after [receiving] on the night on 14 January the telegram reporting that the land-based reconnaissance plane of the 3d Air Group had “spotted thirty [enemy] submarines” (as previously told), Dutch East Indies Commander V. Adm. Takahashi Ibō decided, on 15 January, that [the operation to] seize Kendari should be postponed for three days till 24 January.⁽⁵⁴⁾ Without having detected after all [particular] enemy movements in the operation to clear the Molucca Sea of enemy submarines, the *Nagara*, the 15th and the 16th Destroyer Divisions and the 21st Minesweeper Division returned to the Bangka anchorage on the morning of the 17th. Earlier, the Air Unit had with Davao as its base launched its air campaign to destroy the enemy air power, as described previously. That is, starting with the night raid on Ambon on the 7th, the unit carried out search missions for the enemy in the Gulf of Tomini, the Molucca Sea, and the Ceram Sea as well as reconnaissance attack missions on Menado, Kendari and Ambon almost every day. Other than the twenty-five large and small aircraft, which [the unit] had spotted on the Ambon [airfield] on the 14th and destroyed in the raid on the 15th and the 16th, as previously told, it spotted no enemy worth attacking during the campaign. Signs of the enemy were no longer seen at Kendari around the 15th, and on the 18th, no enemy aircraft was spotted even in Ambon, either. Also, no enemy naval vessels were spotted even in the first reconnaissance of Makassar on the 17th, and it was concluded that [the campaign to] neutralize the enemy from the air was more or less completed by the time of departure of the unit to seize [Kendari]. On 24 January, the day when [the operation to] seize Kendari was conducted, carrier-based air units ([consisting of] the *Sōryū* and the *Hiryū* of the 2d Carrier Division as the core) carried out an air strike on Ambon (which shall be described later), but no enemy vessels or aircraft were spotted.^(71, 75, 81)

The unit to seize [Kendari] left the Bangka anchorage on 21 January. While the 2d Air Unit ([consisting of] the *Chitose* and *Mizuho*) provided direct escort against enemy aircraft and submarines and patrolled the sailing route ahead, it reached Kendari on the morning of the 24th and successfully landed at 0428.⁽⁵⁴⁾ Although several times during that period objects that seemed to be submarines had been detected, there was no counterattack from the allied forces, so the support unit, after merely cruising in the area to the north of Celebes, simply returned to Davao on the 26th. During this operation, the surface unit and the air unit pursued one enemy light cruiser, the only allied naval vessel that had come in the area (land-based reconnaissance planes had spotted the cruiser at a point south of Kendari on the 24th; according to *The Rising Sun in the Pacific* [History of the United States Naval Operations by Samuel] Morison, it was the U.S. seaplane tender *USS Childs*). However, due to the delay in the start of the pursuit and hindered by bad weather, they lost sight of the ship.^(54, 93)

Meeting with little resistance on land, Capt. Mori Kunizō, commander of the Sasebo Combined Special Landing Force, who had made the landing, reported at 0305 on the 25th that [his force] had occupied the airfield at 1700 on the 24th. The condition of the airfield was quite good, and the commander reported: “[the airfield is] right away available for 30 fighter planes. [The condition of] the airfield is quite good and it can be used even by medium-sized land-based attack planes without problem.”⁽⁵³⁾ The main force of the fighter plane unit of the 1st Air Raid Unit ([consisting of] twenty-five fighter planes and five land-based reconnaissance planes) advanced to the Kendari airfield as early as on the afternoon of the 25 January. Apart from just one disadvantage that it was far from the coast, for the Japanese [forces] the



The Kendari Airfield

airfield very fortunately met the conditions for a base in that it required almost no construction work and was immediately usable for land-based attack planes.⁽¹²⁾ As early as the 27th, the 21st Air Flotilla headquarters and twenty-seven land-based attack planes of the Kanoya Air Group Detachment advanced to Kendari.⁽⁵³⁾

It seemed that the Kendari operation would be successfully completed with only two men of the special landing force injured, but an unexpected accident happened early in the morning on the 25th. It was the collision between the *Hatsuharu* of the 21st Destroyer Division, which had been incorporated into the 1st Base Unit from the support unit for reinforcement and was rushing toward Kendari, and the *Nagara* with the 1st Base Force commander on board. At that time, it was raining and visibility was limited. The *Hatsuharu* collided into the *Nagara* near starboard midship at a high speed of 21 knots. The collision crushed the former's bow up to the turret of the fore gun, and left the *Nagara* with some damage to its starboard and to some of its upper structures.⁽⁹⁴⁾ It was fortunate that the only personnel damages were serious injuries to two men on board of the *Nagara*. Due to this [collision], 1st Base Force Commander Rear Admiral Kubo [had to] change ships from the *Nagara* to the *Hatsushimo* (the fourth ship of the 21st Destroyer Division). The *Nagara* [had to] be brought to Davao on its own [for repair], while the *Hatsuharu* [had to] be brought to Davao [as well], escorted by the *Nenohi* (the third ship) and the *Wakaba* (the first ship); the reinforcement of the Kendari operation unit [instead] ended up in a reduction of its strength.⁽⁸⁷⁾ Responding to this, the Eastern Attack Unit commander adopted such measures as to delay for one day the return of the 16th Destroyer Division, which had been due to leave [Kendari] on the 25th for the Bangka anchorage to prepare for the subsequent Ambon operation.⁽⁷⁸⁾ However, this accident

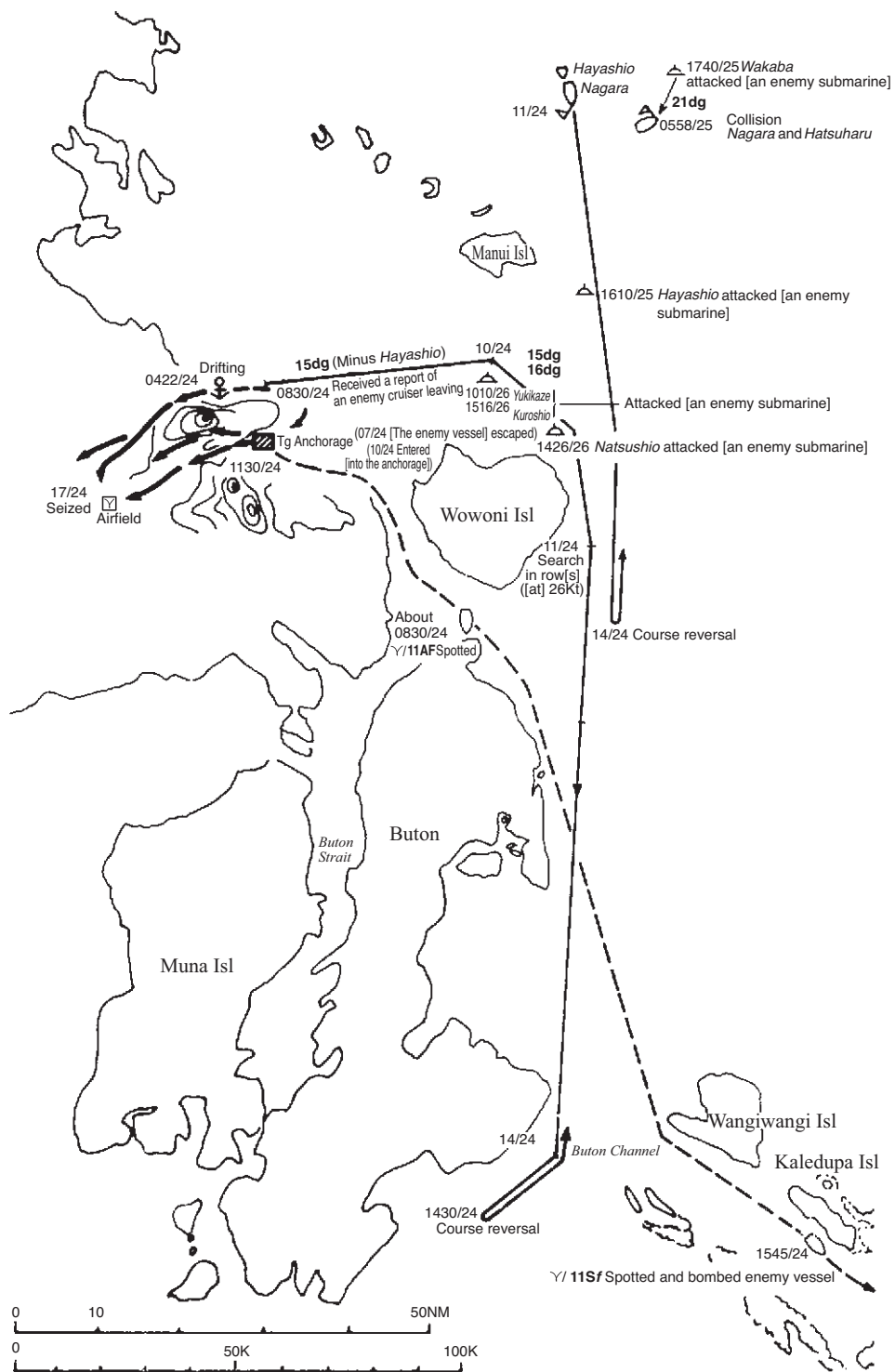


Illustration No. 19 — The Seizure of Kendari

struck a hard blow to the Eastern Attack Unit, which [already] suffered from a shortage of smaller vessels.

Apart from the unexpected accident of the collision between the *Nagara* and the *Hatsuharu*, the Kendari operation made smooth progress. The *Chitose* and the 16th Destroyer Division left Kendari on the 26th, the Sasebo Combined Special Landing Force on the 27th, the 15th Destroyer Division on the 27th and the 29th, the 21st Minesweeper Division on the 29th, and the rest on the 30th, which completed the withdrawal of all [invasion] units from the town, and they started preparations for the subsequent Makassar and Ambon operations. Meanwhile on the afternoon of the 26th, it was decided that the *Mizuho* should leave Kendari on the 29th to participate in the Ambon operation straight [from there].^(54, 59, 78)

The Japanese seized Kendari by catching the allied forces totally off guard. Until the invasion units entered into the anchorage, the allied forces were totally unaware of them.⁽⁹²⁾ This presumably had several causes: the allied air unit in Ambon had sustained loss after loss caused by the Japanese air campaigns, which had day by day been getting increasingly fierce from 7 January onwards, and its capacity to conduct patrols had markedly declined; in preparation against the Japanese [operation to] capture Balikpapan, allied submarines were concentrated in the Makassar Strait, which led to the deployment of fewer submarines in the Molucca Sea and the Banda Sea; and during [the Japanese approach to Kendari], the weather was calm but visibility was low.

After the landing of the [Japanese] invasion unit [at Kendari], too, half of the [U.S.] 19th Bombardment Group at Malang in eastern Java was engaged in operations from Palembang to Malaya, while the other half was attacking [Japanese forces] in Balikpapan and had no strength to spare for Kendari.⁽⁸⁶⁾ Although an Australian bomber squadron was stationed in Kupang, Kendari was beyond its range of action. And since no air unit was stationed in Makassar, no counterattack [on Kendari] was conducted from the air.⁽⁹⁵⁾ As for the [allied] surface units, though U.S. Task Force (TF) 5 was [covering the area], the unit with the *USS Houston* was out to the Torres Strait to escort transport ships carrying reinforcements from the United States, while the unit with the *USS Boise* was moving to attack [Japanese forces] in Balikpapan, leaving no strength to spare for the [Kendari] area.⁽⁸⁷⁾

On the day when the landing on Kendari was carried out, Commander in Chief of the Combined Fleet Admiral Yamamoto issued an order to shift to the phase-three disposition of forces. Having concluded that the landing of the main force of the Army Malaya invasion unit was completed with the landing of the main force of the 18th Division at Singora on 22 January, the commander in chief of the Combined Fleet issued an order by Telegraphic Operation Order No. 50 ([at] 1200 on 24 January), which read: "[The units shall] shift the disposition of forces to that of phase-three operations. However, the destroyer divisions (destroyers) shall remain in the same disposition as of 1200 on the 24th."⁽⁶²⁾ At that moment, the Endau and the Anambas operations were about to be launched in the Malaya area, while on the same day the units to capture Balikpapan and Kendari landed in these places in the Dutch East Indies, which made it impossible for the Southern Task Force to immediately shift the disposition of forces. Thus, [the commander in chief of the Combined Fleet] issued the order in such a way that [these units could] shift to the phase-three operations with their current disposition of forces.⁽⁶²⁾

6. The Manila Agreement and the Operational Policy for Phase-Three

Request for a Two-Week Postponement of the Operation Schedule

On 18 January, Southern Task Force Commander Vice Admiral Kondō advanced to Palau, leading the main body of the Southern Task Force.⁽⁶¹⁾ On the next day the 19th, he summoned the senior staff officers of the Third Fleet and the Eleventh Air Fleet, Capt. Yamaki Akira and Capt. Takahashi Chihaya, to discuss the subsequent Dutch East Indies operation. At this meeting, Captain Yamaki of the Third Fleet strongly demanded a two-week postponement of the operation schedule of the subsequent Dutch East Indies operation,⁽¹¹⁾ giving the following reasons:

1. The seized airfields in Davao and Jolo in the southern Philippines, and Tarakan and Menado in the Dutch East Indies are all in such an unexpectedly bad condition that [several] days will be required to extend and make them ready for use, and that two weeks from the moment of seizure would be required before land-based attack plane units could use them.
2. It is impossible to arrange the escort ships, if the invasion [were to be conducted] according to the schedule specified in the Cam Ranh Agreement.
3. The current schedule has put us in a situation where the Air Unit's [operations to] neutralize the [enemy] air power are started almost simultaneously with the departure of the invasion units from their bases. [Consequently,] the latter will [have to] rush headlong into the points to be seized before [the air operations] have brought about sufficient results, which we greatly fear may increase the damage to the invasion units.
4. In Tarakan, the mines laid by the enemy gave us a lot of trouble and much time was spent on minesweeping, which, as a result, became a major cause of the delay in the operation schedule. It may be expected that the farther we go southward from now on, the more minefields [will be encountered], which means that it is necessary to allow more time for sweeping mines.
5. In the current schedule, escort ships cannot afford to take time off for maintenance; their engines cannot be maintained because they have to be ready all the time for sailing at high speed, which is causing steam leakage and other troubles one after another. [Moreover,] the officers and crew are extremely exhausted due to patrol [duties], which do not allow them to rest even for a moment. It makes us worry about the prospect [for the coming operations] if the operations continue [in this way].

Remarks:

- (1) For example, the operations of the destroyers⁽⁷²⁾ (as shown in the following table)
- (2) The duty hours of the ships' captains

While the crews were exhausted, the overwork of the captains was an even bigger problem. That is, the captain was by far senior to his second-in-rank senior staff officer in terms of graduation classes at the Naval Academy. To the captain it was out of the question to regard his senior staff officer as his substitute. So, after leaving the port of Palau, the captain left the bridge only when he had a call of nature and even seldom slept in bed, which made the captain's work the toughest among the crew. [Examples of the differences in] graduation classes of the captain and the senior staff officer [of some destroyers] were as follows:

Natsushio (50th class – 65th class), *Kuroshio* (50th – 62d), *Oyashio* (50th – 63d), *Hayashio* (50th – 61st), *Yukikaze* (50th – 61st), *Tokitsukaze* (48th – 64th), *Amatsukaze* (49th – 61st), *Hatsukaze* (49th – 63d)

6. In the current circumstances, it is impossible to spare escort forces at the time of [the operation to] seize Banjarmasin. Moreover, the operation is tactically unfavorable because the operation

Unit	15th Destroyer Div				16th Destroyer Div			
	<i>Natsushio</i>	<i>Kuroshio</i>	<i>Oyashio</i>	<i>Hayashio</i>	<i>Yukikaze</i>	<i>Tokitsukaze</i>	<i>Amatsukaze</i>	<i>Hatsukaze</i>
November	Left Terashima- 26 suidō (channel)	Left Terashima- 26 suidō (channel)	Left Terashima- 26 suidō (channel)	Left Terashima- 26 suidō (channel)	Left Terashima- 26 suidō (channel)	Left Terashima- 26 suidō (channel)	Left Terashima- 26 suidō (channel)	Left Terashima- 26 suidō (channel)
December	2 ↑ Palau ↓ 6	2 ↑ Palau ↓ 6	2 ↑ Palau ↓ 6	2 ↑ Palau ↓ 6	1 ↑ Palau ↓ 8	1 ↑ Palau ↓ 8	1 ↑ Palau ↓ 6	1 ↑ Palau ↓ 6
	8 ↑ Davao ↓ 13	8 ↑ Davao ↓ 13	8 ↑ Davao ↓ 13	8 ↑ Davao ↓ 13	12 ↑ Legaspi ↓ 13	12 ↑ Legaspi ↓ 13		
	14 ↑ Palau ↓ 17	14 ↑ Palau ↓ 17	14 ↑ Palau ↓ 17	14 ↑ Palau ↓ 17	13 ↑ Guarding around the anchorage ↓ 19	13 ↑ Guarding around the anchorage ↓ 19	15 ↑ Palau ↓ 17	15 ↑ Palau ↓ 16
	20 ↑ Davao ↓ 23	20 ↑ Davao ↓ 23	20 ↑ Davao ↓ 23	20 ↑ Davao ↓ 23	22 ↑ [At] patrol area in Lamon Bay ↓ 26	22 ↑ [At] patrol area in Lamon Bay ↓ 26	20 ↑ Guarding inside Davao Gulf ↓ 29	20 ↑ Guarding inside Davao Gulf ↓ 31
	28 ↑ Davao ↓ 31	28 ↑ Davao ↓ 31	28 ↑ Davao ↓ 31	28 ↑ Davao ↓ 31	29 ↑ Palau ↓ 1	29 ↑ Palau ↓ 1		
January	6 ↑ Malalag Bay ↓ 6	6 ↑ Malalag Bay ↓ 6	6 ↑ Malalag Bay ↓ 6	6 ↑ Malalag Bay ↓ 6	4 ↑ Malalag Bay ↓ 6	4 ↑ Malalag Bay ↓ 6	1 ↑ Malalag Bay ↓ 5	1 ↑ Malalag Bay ↓ 6
	6 ↑ Magnaga Bay ↓ 9	6 ↑ Magnaga Bay ↓ 9	6 ↑ Magnaga Bay ↓ 9	6 ↑ Magnaga Bay ↓ 9	7 ↑ Magnaga Bay ↓ 9	7 ↑ Magnaga Bay ↓ 9	5 ↑ Davao ↓ 6	6 ↑ Magnaga Bay ↓ 9
	11 ↑ Bangka anchorage ↓ 11	11 ↑ Bangka anchorage ↓ 11	11 ↑ Bangka anchorage ↓ 11	11 ↑ Bangka anchorage ↓ 11	11 ↑ Kema anchorage ↓ 12	11 ↑ Kema anchorage ↓ 12		
					12 ↑ Menado ↓ 13	12 ↑ Menado ↓ 13		
					13 ↑ Bangka anchorage ↓ 15	13 ↑ Bangka anchorage ↓ 15		
					17 ↑ Bangka anchorage ↓ 17	17 ↑ Bangka anchorage ↓ 17		

*The Operations of the 15th and the 16th Destroyer Divisions
(from 26 November 1941 through 18 January 1942)*

Note: In the above table, Palau was the only safe port where it was not necessary to keep the engines on standby.

to seize [Banjarmasin] would be made by a sea route that exposed the flank [of the seizing unit] to Java. So, we would like to omit the escort on sea in this operation.

Also, Eleventh Air Fleet [Senior] Staff Officer Captain Takahashi requested a postponement on the following [grounds]:⁽³⁴⁾

1. It has taken more days than expected to make airfields ready for use, which has resulted in successive delays in the forward deployment of the Air Unit. I am of the same opinion as the Third Fleet on the postponement of the schedule.
2. The air campaign against eastern Java prior to the invasion of Java shall be conducted from Balikpapan and from Makassar. [That from] Banjarmasin shall be called off.
3. As a result of finding detailed documents on the airfield on Bali among the recently seized enemy objects at Tarakan, it became clear that the airfield has better facilities than expected. Therefore, we want our forces to capture this place, advance one element of the Air Unit there prior to the invasion of Java and use the facility as an air base for the invasion operation.

Remarks:

The view that [the operation to seize] Banjarmasin should be cancelled and [that an operation to seize] Bali should be added [instead] presumably came from the [following] judgment: the condition of the Banjarmasin airfield was not yet known and it was expected to take considerable time to ready the Banjarmasin airfield even if it were captured; [moreover,] supplying the airfield would involve serious risks; however, the airfield on Bali was better than expected; if [the Japanese forces] had to take risks in either case, occupying Bali and using it for the air campaign to destroy the enemy air power would be far more effective, because it would also enable [the Japanese forces] to cut off the enemy supply route from Australia. It was a strong request from the 23d Air Flotilla headquarters.

Though sympathetic to the predicament of the units on site, the Second Fleet headquarters, in response to these views, demanded [more] effort not to postpone the invasion schedule for reasons that a postponement of the schedule would have quite an impact on the entire conduct of the operation as well as on the [Navy's] good faith with the Army. However, persuaded by the insistence of the units on site that they could not give what they did not have, the Second Fleet decided to urgently confer with the Southern Army and propose as a compromise plan a postponement of ten days. For this purpose, it was decided to hold a conference at Manila from the 21st through the 23d of January. The telegram sent from the chief of staff of the Second Fleet to the chief of staff of the Southern Army read as follows:⁽³⁴⁾

The actual situation of the schedule for the invasion of the Dutch East Indies is that the advance and deployment of the air forces is experiencing one delay after another because the condition of the occupied bases in the eastern part of the Dutch East Indies is unexpectedly bad, despite all efforts to expand and ready those bases. Meanwhile, the enemy is mounting counterattacks using a great many bases. Moreover, from the situation at Tarakan, we may infer that mines have been laid across many stretches of water. In order to advance the subsequent invasion operations without major problems, it is inevitable to postpone the landing dates for Banjarmasin, Makassar, Timor and Java by more or less ten days. Therefore, in order to discuss the details, we will send the senior staff officer of our fleet to a conference to be held in Manila from 21 to 23 January in order to make arrangements between the Sixteenth Army, the Third Fleet and the Eleventh Air Fleet. We would appreciate it if you would arrange the dispatch of staff officers from your headquarters.

Southern Army headquarters was dead against the request by the Second Fleet to postpone the schedule. It insisted [in outline] that:⁽³⁴⁾

1. A postponement of the schedule would, if anything, give the enemy [an opportunity to] strengthen (in particular its naval and air) defense, which would all the more delay our invasion [schedule]. At this juncture, [we maintain that the invasion schedule] should be carried out on the basis of the schedule stipulated in the Cam Ranh Agreement at any cost.
2. The Army shall provide more than enough support for the Navy air units by such things as getting hold of and preparing airfields and by supplying the necessary fuel.

Not only the central command of the Army but also the upper echelon of the Navy, namely, the Navy General Staff and the Combined Fleet headquarters were against a postponement.⁽⁴⁰⁾ In particular, the Combined Fleet headquarters was extremely frustrated: it had ordered the Second Fleet headquarters to study the possibility of conducting [the operation to] capture Ambon around the 10th of January in tandem with [the operation against] Menado, but the latter had postponed it, replying that it was not feasible. Adding to the frustration was the fact that the Combined Fleet headquarters had taken the extraordinary step of transferring the 2d Carrier Division, which had returned from Hawaii, to the Southern Task Force in order to speed up the capture of Ambon, but nevertheless the Second Fleet headquarters had postponed the schedule from the 25th till the 29th [See p. 177], and then again postponed it till the 31st. Stating that the request for such a significant postponement for whatever reason was extremely inimical to the entire conduct of the operation, the Combined Fleet headquarters sent telegrams to the Second and the Third Fleets to demand explanations from them. The Navy General Staff also sent to the Combined Fleet as well as the Second and the Third Fleets a telegram demanding them to take appropriate steps, bearing in mind that a postponement of the operation schedule would have a large impact on all quarters.⁽³⁴⁾

In the meantime, the First Southern Expeditionary Fleet [too] had made a request to postpone Operation L (Bangka and Palembang) for two weeks on the grounds that the condition of the Kuching airfield on Borneo was bad and that it had had no prospects of occupying and preparing the Ledo airfield [yet]. This request was also added to the agenda at Manila.⁽³⁴⁾

The Difficult Conclusion of the Manila Agreement

The Manila Conference, held from 21 January, had four objectives: the schedule of the entire [southern] operation, Operation L, the operations in the eastern part of the Dutch East Indies, and the operations in western Java.^(34, 97) The meeting was held from the evening of the 21st of January until deep into the night. To begin with, the Navy made the following proposals.⁽³⁴⁾

1. The operation schedule after [the operations against] Makassar and Kupang until the landing in Java shall be postponed for about ten days from those stipulated in the Cam Ranh Agreement. That is, [the date of the operation against] Makassar shall be set on Day X + 69 (15 February), that against Kupang on Day X + 74 (20 February), and that against eastern Java on Day X + 80 (26 February). As for the date of [the operation to capture] Ambon, the Third Fleet and the Sixteenth Army have already agreed to postpone it till Day X + 54 (31 January).
2. The operation [to seize] Banjarmasin shall be cancelled and the air campaign to destroy the enemy air power in Java shall be conducted from Makassar and Balikpapan.

3. Instead of Banjarmasin, Bali shall be captured right before the invasion of Java so as to use it as a support air base at the time of the [Java] landings.
4. If the 48th Division is to depart from Lingayen Gulf on 8 February ([the place of departure was] changed because the delay in occupying Bataan Peninsula made it impossible for the division to depart from Manila Bay) and sail at an average speed of eight knots, it cannot arrive in eastern Java earlier than 19 February. It is impossible to conduct a landing [operation] on Java on Day X + 70 (16 February).

As previously told, the Army side fiercely objected to this proposal, saying that, in view of reports that the enemy's air and naval forces were being reinforced, a postponement of a few days at this moment would give the enemy time to reinforce its forces and eventually result in a delay of ten to twenty days; that by omitting [the operation against] Banjarmasin, Japan would also give up a perfect strategic point for the air operations against Java, which meant that sufficient results could not be expected unless reinforcements were to be provided by the aircraft carriers; that, for these reasons, the invasion operations had to be carried out as stipulated in the Cam Ranh Agreement at any cost. With neither side giving in, the conference continued well into the dead of the night and was then suspended for the time being.

The next day the 22d started early in the morning with the conference on Operation L between the staff of the First Southern Expeditionary Fleet and the staff of the Southern Army. The Navy side proposed a two-week postponement, as previously mentioned.⁽³⁴⁾ The Southern Army fiercely objected to a postponement of the dates, arguing that:^(38, 98)

1. If the Ledo airfield cannot be made ready in time, [the Navy] shall use the bases on the Malay Peninsula, because [the Army] has previously said that [the Navy] could make use of them. The airfields in the southern part of the Malay Peninsula will [soon] be seized by the ground units and made available by the time of Operation L.
2. We will see to it that the Ledo airfield shall be seized as soon as possible and we will have the Kawaguchi Detachment fully cooperate in the transportation of fuel and the preparation of the base, so as to have the airfield as ready as possible for Operation L.

These differences between the Army and the Navy stemmed from a fundamental difference in their way of thinking. That is to say, the Army thought it best to rush and seize strategic points of the enemy with the idea of a pursuit battle and without giving the latter time to put up a defense. The Navy on the other hand took the view that the invasion of strategic points should throughout adopt a standard method of attack, in which, prior to the launch of the invasion operation, preliminary air campaigns to destroy the enemy air power at air bases in the rear as well as at the invasion points should be carried out and once the air power of the enemy was neutralized, the invasion units should be pushed forward. If not, there would only be a useless increase in losses.

The Southern Army considered that some concession to the Third Fleet's request for a postponement was unavoidable, but it was absolutely against a postponement of Operation L by the First Southern Expeditionary Fleet. However, the Sixteenth Army, the Army unit that was to carry out the invasion operation, expressed approval of the Navy, taking the view that if there was no absolute certainty about the escort, the [invasion] date should be postponed.⁽³⁴⁾ Neither the Southern Army on the Army side nor the Third Fleet and the First Southern Expeditionary Fleet on the Navy side would budge until finally Capt. Yanagisawa

Kuranosuke, senior staff officer of the Second Fleet, proposed a compromise that at last managed to bring them together. The contents of the proposal were [in outline] as follows.⁽³⁴⁾

1. Operation L shall be postponed for four days from the date stipulated in the Cam Ranh Agreement, till Day X + 64 (10 February).
2. [The operation against] Makassar shall be postponed for four days from the date stipulated in the Cam Ranh Agreement till Day X + 63 (9 February), and [that against] Kupang for nine days till Day X + 74 (20 February).
3. After the capture of Makassar in the east and Palembang in the west on 9 and 10 February, air units shall be pushed forward there so as to substantially complete the air campaigns to destroy the enemy air power by and large by 20 February. The landing on western Java shall be carried out on Day X + 75 (21 February) and that on eastern Java on Day X + 77 (23 February).
4. While Banjarmasin shall be seized overland single-handedly by the Sakaguchi Detachment, the Navy shall as far as is practical provide forces to help with the maneuvering of craft along the coast and other operations.
5. Bali shall be captured around Day X + 75 (21 February), and the Navy air units shall be pushed forward there so as to use it as an air operation base at the time of the landing [operation] on eastern Java.

In accordance with the [principles of] the draft agreement above, a draft arrangement for the Java invasion was concluded between the Third Fleet, the Eleventh Air Fleet, the Sixteenth Army and the [Army] Third Air Force on the 23d. It was agreed to arrange it in such a way that after this draft arrangement had been brought back to each headquarters by its staff officers, the Second Fleet would first send a consultative telegram to the Southern Army while also informing the Combined Fleet and central command in order to make sure of their intentions, and that the agreement would formally come into effect after the reception of a telegram of approval from the Southern Army. On the next day, the 24th, all staff officers left Manila for their respective headquarters.⁽³⁴⁾

Then, on the 25th, in accordance with the arrangement of staff officers at Manila, Second Fleet Commander in Chief Vice Admiral Kondō sent Southern Army Commander in Chief General Terauchi the following consultative telegram:⁽⁶²⁾

Second Fleet Classified Telegram No. 750, 2100, 25 January

We would like to make the following additions and revisions to the agreement of 1 January, 1942, between the commander in chief of the Southern Army and the commander in chief of the Navy in the South, and [would like to] discuss these [with you].

1. Standard dates [to implement operations] of capturing (areas to be seized, the dates to start landing [operations])
 - (a) Makassar, around Day X + 63; (b) Bangka and Palembang, around Day X + 64; (c) Kupang, around Day X + 74; (d) Western Java, around Day X + 75; (e) Eastern Java, around Day X + 77
2. The seizure of Banjarmasin shall be conducted overland from Balikpapan as quickly as possible. However, depending upon the circumstances, the operation may be launched after consultations between the commander of the Sixteenth Army and the commander in chief of the Third Fleet.
3. The air base on Bali shall be seized in conjunction by the Army and the Navy around Day X + 75, so that [it can be used] as an air base at the time of [the operations to] capture eastern Java. The details of the implementation of the above operation shall be arranged between the commander of the Sixteenth Army, [the commander in chief of the Third Fleet], the commander of the Third Air Force and the commander in chief of the Eleventh Air Fleet.

4. The commander of the Third Air Force and the commander in chief of the Eleventh Air Fleet shall be included in the [number of] commanders with whom the arrangements for the operations to capture Java shall be made.

Looking at this consultative telegram and finding the word “around” before every invasion date, the discussion became heated again at the Southern Army headquarters.⁽³⁴⁾ It was settled by agreeing that regardless of the word “around,” [both sides] should do their very best and commit themselves to execute [the invasion operation] in accordance with this invasion schedule as the standard schedule. In the meantime, since the high command of the Army had not yet been informed of the plan to capture Banjarmasin overland, a telegram had come inquiring whether it was [still possible to capture the town] by means of [advancing] overland or by maneuvering craft along the coast, while advising that it would be better to seize the town in order to make sure of [the success of] the subsequent operations even if it was not in time for the capture of Java.⁽⁹⁹⁾ Then on the 28th, the high command of the Army, finally coming to understand that the Southern Army had a plan to capture the town overland in early February, approved the draft, and the draft arrangement made at Manila was formally concluded on 28 January.* The arrangement was called the Manila Agreement.⁽⁶⁵⁾

Issue of the Order to Commit the Main Force of the Carrier Task Force to the Southern Theater

In late December, when the Carrier Task Force returned to mainland Japan from the air strike on Hawaii, it was decided that for the subsequent operations the main force, that is, the 1st and the 5th Carrier Divisions, should support the operation to capture Rabaul, and that the 2d Carrier Division should be committed to the southern operation. Due to a lack of [relevant] materials, the detailed plans at that time of how these forces should subsequently be employed are unclear, but by putting all [available] documents together, various patterns of employment as shown below seem to have been considered by central command:

1. To commit one element of the Carrier Task Force to the [southern] theater at the time of the invasion of Java by the Southern Task Force, and have it act in concert with the invasion operation.
 2. To carry out offensive operations with the Carrier Task Force to cut off Australia from the United States in tandem with the invasion of Java.
 3. To have the 1st and the 5th Carrier Divisions advance [off] the east coast of Australia in early February after the operation to capture Rabaul, and carry out attacks in that area, after which they shall prepare against [an attack from] the east.
- The 2d Carrier Division shall be engaged in the southern operation.⁽⁴⁰⁾

In the end, the third plan was adopted as [operational] policy. However, on 24 January a detailed report from Submarine *I-8* on the sinking of the *USS Lexington* (on 12 January) came in, and its instant sinking was regarded as certain.** This led the Combined Fleet to conclude that it no longer needed to worry about [an attack from] the east, and that it would be more

* A more extensive version of the proceedings at Manila may be found in Vol. 3, pp. 209-22.

** The torpedo attack and the report were in fact made by *I-6* (Vol. 98, pp. 112, 118). The target was actually the *Lexington*-class *USS Saratoga*, who was severely damaged and had to be withdrawn for repairs ([https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/USS_Saratoga_\(CV-3\)\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/USS_Saratoga_(CV-3))).

effective to employ the main strength of the Carrier Task Force in the south at the time of Java invasion operation. So, on 31 January, by means of telegraphic order No. 54, it ordered the incorporation of the Carrier Task Force into the Southern Task Force.⁽¹⁰⁰⁾

However, on the next day, 1 February, a U.S. Task Force conducted a raid on the Marshall Islands. The main force of the Carrier Task Force, which just at that time had returned to Truk after completing the Rabaul operation, headed for the Marshall Islands to attack them. At 1100 on 1 February, Combined Fleet Commander in Chief Admiral Yamamoto issued an order that the time of incorporation of the Carrier Task Force into the Southern Task Force in accordance with telegraphic operation order No. 54 would be given later. However, with no [updated] information about the movements of the enemy in the Marshall [Islands] after that, he issued an order to the Carrier Task Force late at night on 2 February to cancel the advance to the Marshall Islands and prepare for joining the Southern Task Force. However, it was decided that the 5th Carrier Division and three destroyers [of the Carrier Task Force] should return to the mainland for training and guarding against [possible attacks by] U.S. Task Forces. By this order, the main force of the Carrier Task Force ([consisting of] the 1st Carrier Division as the core) sailed straight from the Marshall Islands to Palau. At 0000 on 8 February, the Combined Fleet formally issued an order to incorporate the Carrier Task Force (minus the 5th Carrier Division and three destroyers) into the Southern Task Force.⁽¹⁰⁰⁾



2d Carrier Division
Commander R. Adm.
Yamaguchi Tamon

Prior to this, the 2d Carrier Division, which had been incorporated into the Southern Task Force on 7 January, carried out an air raid on Ambon (which will be described later) in concert with the Kendari operation on 24 January, and achieved considerable success. As a result of this [raid], 2d Carrier Division Commander R. Adm. Yamaguchi Tamon proposed to the Second Fleet and the Combined Fleet a plan to attack Port Darwin with the 2d Carrier Division, stating that, rather than attacking the important invasion points prior to the invasions, the best employment of the aircraft carrier unit in support of the southern operation would be to attack Port Darwin, the point where the enemy concentrated its reinforcements, and that this operation [to attack Port Darwin] would be highly promising, judging from the current situation.⁽¹⁰¹⁾

Incorporating 2d Carrier Division Commander Rear Admiral Yamaguchi's plan for an air strike on Port Darwin as well, Southern Task Force Commander Vice Admiral Kondō issued on 9 February by Telegraphic Order No. 92 orders for the Carrier Task Force's mobile operation I (air strikes on Port Darwin) and mobile operation II (mobile operations to the south of Java), as well as orders for the operations of the submarine units (the details of which will be described later [p. 331]).⁽⁵³⁾

The Operational Policy of Phase-Three Operations of the Southern Task Force

Around 30 January, when it was informally decided to commit the Carrier Task Force to the southern theater, the Southern Task Force's phase-three operations in the Dutch East Indies theater were guided by the following operational policy:⁽⁵³⁾

1. In late February, the Java invasion operation shall be carried out to completely destroy the last bases of the allied forces in the southern theater.

2. In early February, the air campaign to destroy the enemy air power in eastern Java shall be launched with the air units from Balikpapan and Kendari.
3. In the western [part] of the Dutch East Indies, Bangka and Palembang shall be captured by the [Navy] Malaya Unit and the Sixteenth Army around 10 February; the Air Unit of the Malaya Unit shall swiftly be deployed at the [earliest] possible opportunity in western Borneo, southern Malaya and the Palembang area to launch its air campaign to destroy the enemy air power in western Java in tandem with the Army air units.
4. Makassar shall be captured by the Dutch East Indies Unit around 9 February; air units shall be advanced there in order to intensify the air operation against Java.
5. Ambon shall be captured on 31 January and Timor around 20 February by the Dutch East Indies Unit and one element of the Sixteenth Army; air units shall be advanced there in order to cut off the enemy route of supply and reinforcements from Australia to Java as well as to launch air strikes on northern Australia.
6. Almost simultaneously with the capture of Timor by the Dutch East Indies Unit, a surprise attack on Port Darwin shall be conducted with the newly to be deployed main force of the Carrier Task Force. The land-based air units shall also carry out simultaneous attacks.
7. Around 20 February, Bali shall be captured by the Dutch East Indies Unit in order to push forward there one element of the Air Unit.
8. From 21 to 23 February, the main force of the Dutch East Indies Unit shall escort the main force of the Sixteenth Army and put them ashore on both eastern and western Java.
9. In concert with the landing [operation] against Java, the main body of the Carrier Task Force, the main body of the Southern Task Force and the [later] to be added Submarine Unit C (2d Submarine Squadron) shall advance to the waters south of Java and carry out the operation to cut off the escape routes of the enemy, etc. The Air Unit shall act in concert with this operation.
10. Submarine Unit A (the 4th and the 6th Submarine Squadrons) shall act in concert with the Java invasion operation, watch and patrol the southern coast of Java, Port Darwin, the Torres Strait, etc.

7. The Capture of Ambon (*See Illustrations No. 20 and No. 21*)

Plan of Operations, etc.

[The operation to] capture Ambon was carried out by the Eastern Attack Unit with the support of the Air Unit of the Southern Task Force; this time, 2d Escort Unit Commander and 2d Destroyer Squadron Commander Rear Admiral Tanaka directly took command of the capture [operation]. The main force of the escorting force, i.e. the 15th and the 16th Destroyer Divisions and the 21st Minesweeper Division, which had been put in the 1st Base Unit in [the previous operation to] seize Kendari, were this time incorporated in the 2d Escort Unit. In the meantime, the 1st Base Unit was assigned to the defense of the Bangka anchorage and the protection of the sea lanes, while preparing for the coming operation against Makassar.⁽⁷⁸⁾

The following units were supposed to cooperate with the Eastern Attack Unit:⁽⁷⁸⁾

1. Army unit: the Itō Detachment (Commander: 38th Infantry Group Commander Maj. Gen. Itō Takeo)
Strength: three infantry battalions, one mountain gun battalion, one antitank gun battery and one field antiaircraft artillery battery, one engineer company, and one independent engineer company as the core ([with] about 5,300 men, 110 automobiles, etc.)
2. Land-based air unit: the 1st Air Raid Unit of the Southern Task Force's Air Unit ([consisting of] the 21st Air Flotilla and the 3d Air Group as the core)

3. Carrier-based air unit: the unit consisting of the 2d Carrier Division, which had been incorporated into the Air Unit of the Southern Task Force, as the core ([i.e.] The 2d Carrier Division, the *Maya*, the 7th Destroyer Division, the 2d Section of the 27th Destroyer Division)

The Arrangement Between the 2d Escort Unit and the Itō Detachment

On 18 January, escorted by the 8th Destroyer Division, the Itō Detachment had advanced from Hong Kong to Davao, where it made a [draft] arrangement on [the operation to] capture Ambon with 2d Escort Unit Commander Rear Admiral Tanaka on the 20th, and signed the arrangement on the next day the 21st. The outline of the arrangement was as follows.⁽⁵⁴⁾ Due to the delay in the shift from the Philippines operation to the Dutch East Indies operation, the search for enemy submarines in the Molucca Sea and the diversion of forces from Kendari, the schedule for [the operation to] capture Ambon had been changed again and again (25th → 26th → 29th). On the 19th, the day of signing of the arrangement, it was set on 31 January.*

1. Disposition of forces at the time of landing (as shown in the table below)

Distribution of Units	Main force of the Army Itō Det	The Navy 1st Kure SLF and the Army Wakabayashi Com
Time [to start] drifting near the anchorage	0100, 31 January	0000, 31 January
Time to launch the landings (time to leave the [mother] ships)	0400, ditto	0300, ditto
Landing points	Coast east of Rutung	Coast west of Hitulama
Disembarkation operations	First of all, the matériel and personnel required to carry out the immediate combat shall be disembarked; the rest shall be disembarked at Ambon Bay.	

- (1) The Army Itō Detachment and the Navy 1st Kure Special Landing Force shall act in conjunction with each other.
 - (2) One company led by 1st Lt. Wakabayashi Tōichi shall be dispatched from the Itō Detachment to the 1st Kure Special Landing Force, and brought under the command of the latter.
2. Landing combat and cover for the landing [operation]
- (1) Although [the unit] is primarily supposed to make a surprise landing, [it shall] determinedly carry out an assault landing if the situation is unavoidable.
 - (2) Covering fire for the landing operations shall be provided at the request of Detachment Commander Itō.
 - (3) If requested by the Army, the naval vessels near the anchorages of the [Army] transport ships shall provide temporary repairs for [Army] craft, when the war situation permits.
3. The movement of the transport ships after the landing (omitted by the author)
4. Others (omitted by the author)

* There seems to be some confusion about when the agreement was signed and when the date of the Ambon invasion was decided. See also Vol. 3, pp. 362 and 366.

The Plan of Operations of the 2d Escort Unit

On 25 January at Davao, 2d Escort Unit Commander Rear Admiral Tanaka issued an order concerning the main points of [the operation to] capture Ambon by 2d Escort Unit Order No.

4.⁽⁵⁴⁾

1. Distribution of the transport ships

1st Echelon: *Yamaura-maru*, *Africa-maru*, *Zen'yō-maru*, *Miike-maru* (all with the Army Itō Detachment on board)

2d Echelon: *Kirishima-maru* (1st Kure SLF), *Yamafuku-maru* (3d Construction Squad), *Yamagiri-maru* (3d Construction Squad), *Lyons-maru*, *Hino-maru No. 5*, *Katsuragi-maru* (the last three belonging to the Eleventh Air Fleet)

Out of the line: *Ryōyō-maru* (will leave port along with the 1st Echelon)

2. Disposition of forces (as in the table below)

Unit	Commander	Forces	Outline of the tasks	
Main Body	2d Destroyer Sqdn Cdr	<i>Jintsū</i> , 1st Section of the 16th Destroyer Div	[In charge of] the entire [operation]	
Covering Unit		15th Destroyer Div Cdr	15th Destroyer Div	To watch and guard the entrance of the bay and to cover both detachments
1st Detachment		8th Destroyer Div Cdr	8th Destroyer Div, 1st Subchaser Div (minus 3 submarine chasers), 21st Minesweeper Div (minus Minesweepers Nos. 9 and 11)	To escort 1st Echelon and cover its disembarkation
2d Detachment		Capt of the <i>Amatsukaze</i>	2d Section of the 16th Destroyer Div, Minesweepers Nos. 9 and 11	To escort 2d Echelon and cover its disembarkation

(1) This disposition of forces shall take effect from 0000 on 26 January onwards.

(2) Incorporation of units currently engaged in other operations in progress shall be ordered by separate orders.

(3) The 1st Kure Special Landing Force (minus one element) shall be assigned to landing operation in conjunction with the Army units.

3. Tasks and operations of each unit

(1) The main body (the *Jintsū* and the 1st Section of the 16th Destroyer Division)

The *Jintsū* shall leave Davao at 1300 on 26 January, and sail to the Bangka anchorage. Then she shall generally operate near the 2d Detachment. After the arrival of all units in Ambon, she shall timely operate around the Ceram Sea and the Molucca Sea. The 1st Section of the 16th Destroyer Division shall operate along with the 2d Detachment until ordered otherwise by separate orders.

(2) The covering unit (The 15th Destroyer Division)

On the morning of 30 January, it shall join the 1st Detachment on the waters northeast of Buru ([by] sailing straight from Kendari), take charge of the direct cover of the detachment until 1800 on that day. After that, it shall be assigned to watch the entrance of Ambon Bay

while directly supporting the minesweeping inside the bay, as designated by the commander.

- (3) The 1st Detachment (The 8th Destroyer Division, the 1st Subchaser Division, and the main force of the 21st Minesweeper Division)

Escorting the 1st Echelon, it shall leave Davao at 1600 on 27 January, and have the former disembark at Ambon (on the coast east of Rutung). The scheduled time to enter into the anchorage ([staying] adrift) shall be at 0100 on 31 January. Submarine chaser No. 2 shall escort the *Ryōyō-maru* and catch up with the detachment. The 21st Minesweeper Division (minus Minesweepers Nos. 9 and 11) shall join the detachment on the morning of the 30th (by sailing straight from Kendari).

- (4) The 2d Detachment (the 2d Section of the 16th Destroyer Division, and Minesweepers [No. 9] and No. 11)

Escorting the 2d Echelon, it shall leave the Bangka anchorage at 0000 on 29 January, and have the former disembark at Ambon (on the coast west of Hitulama). The scheduled time to enter into the anchorage ([staying] adrift) shall be at 0000 on 31 January. Minesweepers Nos. 9 and 11 shall join the detachment on 30 January (by sailing straight from Kendari).

4. Outline of the escort

- (1) Sailing speed: 10 knots at normal speed; 11 knots at fast speed
- (2) Sailing route and sailing formation (omitted by the author)

5. Outline of the entry into the anchorages (omitted by the author)

6. Outline of the guarding after shifting to the anchorage inside Ambon Bay (omitted by the author)

7. Main points of the plan

- (1) The landing operation is meant to be carried out after the 1st Air Raid Unit has thoroughly neutralized the enemy air power in Ambon and vicinity.
- (2) Since the enemy's defense of the front of Ambon Bay is extremely strong and the entire area has practically been turned into a stronghold, the landing points are set at Rutung and Hitulama in order to seize the area from the rear.
- (3) In view of the situation at the time of the capture of Tarakan, minesweeping inside the bay shall not be launched until the batteries at the entrance of the bay surrender. Disembarkation shall proceed at the landing points as much as possible until it becomes feasible to [safely] anchor inside the bay.
- (4) When it is not necessary to worry about counterattacks by enemy surface vessels, the main body shall hide its whereabouts as much as possible from enemy aircraft.
- (5) Due to [the schedule of] the units diverting from the Menado and Kendari operations (i.e. the 15th and the 16th Destroyer Divisions and the 21st Minesweeper Division), the operational preparations of the 1st Detachment (the Army unit) and the 2d Detachment (the Navy unit) shall be made respectively at Davao and at the Bangka anchorage.
- (6) In the event of major counterattacks by enemy aircraft, the transport ships shall be evacuated to the Bangka anchorage after having disembarked the minimum [amount of men and matériel] required.

The Plan of Operations of the Itō Detachment⁽¹⁰²⁾

1. Operational policy

[The unit] shall land in Rutung, swiftly cut through the mountains and charge into the urban area of Ambon from the east. Then it shall seize the battery on the southwestern peninsula.

2. Disposition of forces

- (1) Left Attack Unit (the main force of the 228th Infantry Regiment)

After the landing in Rutung, [the unit shall] split into two units; the main force shall head straight for Ambon through the mountains from Rutung, while the detached force shall head for Ambon along the southern road through Hatalai.

- (2) Right Attack Unit (the 2d Battalion of the 228th Infantry Regiment)
[The unit shall] advance eastward from Rutung along the coastal road to Paso and seize such strategic points as Paso and Halong.
- (3) The Wakabayashi Company
[The company shall] come under the command of the 1st Kure Special Landing Force and land in Hitulama along with that force.

The Plan of Operations of the 1st Kure Special Landing Force

On 28 January at the Bangka anchorage, the 1st Kure Special Landing Force announced the outline of the operation to capture Ambon by Operation Order No. 10.⁽¹⁰³⁾ Now, Cdr. Fujimura Masasuke, the commander of the 1st Kure Special Landing Force, had fallen ill after the capture of Legaspi (the Philippines) and Cdr. Hayashi Shōjirō had been ordered to replace him as of 21 January, but Commander Hayashi could not be in time to assume his new post, so until that time it fell to senior officer Lt. Hatakeyama Kunito as acting commander to draw up the plan.

1. Operational Policy
Before daybreak on 31 January, [the force shall] determinedly carry out the landing at the coast of Hitulama and swiftly seize the Laha airfield as well as the Alang battery.
2. Disposition [of forces] at the time of landing
 - (1) First Landing Unit ([at] the coast of Hitulama)
First landing: Special Landing Force headquarters, 2d Company, one element of the artillery unit and the main force of the attached units
Second landing: The [Army] Wakabayashi Company, the main force of the artillery unit, the paymaster unit, ammunition and provisions
Third landing: ammunition, provisions, base construction matériel, and supplies for the Wakabayashi Company
 - (2) Second Landing Unit ([at] the coast of Hitulama) and the Third Landing Unit ([at] the coast of Laha)
Base construction personnel and matériel; depending on the situation, the landing of the second landing unit shall be called off and immediately [combined] with the landing of the third landing unit.
3. Operations after landing (omitted by the author)
4. The forces under the command of the 1st Kure Special Landing Force (750 men in total; components omitted by the author)

In order to make up for the understaffing at the 1st Kure Special Landing Force caused by the absence of its commander, Dutch East Indies Unit Commander Vice Admiral Takahashi ordered that R. Adm. Hatakeyama Kōichirō, prospective commander of the 24th Special Base Unit, which was due to be set up at Ambon after the capture of the island, should take command of the 1st Kure Special Landing Force after its landing. Also, Cdr. Ieki Kōnosuke, prospective senior staff officer, and two other officers were assigned for the staff work.⁽¹⁰³⁾

The Plan of Operations of the 2d Air Unit

Also accepting the opinion offered by 11th Seaplane Tender Division Commander R. Adm. Fujita Ruitarō (that the Ambon operation should be carried out with the whole force), 5th Cruiser Division Commander Rear Admiral Takagi decided on 26 January to have the full strength of the 2d Air Unit participate in the operation to capture Ambon; he issued orders that the *Mizuho*, and Patrol Boats Nos. 34 and 39 should leave Kendari on the 29th in order to participate in the Ambon operation straight [from there].⁽⁵³⁾ The flagship *Chitose*, which was scheduled to participate in the invasion of Ambon from the start [of the planning], left Salabangka Channel on the 26th, arrived at the Bangka anchorage at 1500 on the 27th, where 2d Air Unit Commander Rear Admiral Fujita met with 2d Escort Unit Commander Rear Admiral Tanaka to discuss the Ambon operation. As a result [of this meeting], it was decided that in [the operation to] capture Ambon, the 2d Air Unit should carry out such tasks as patrolling the route ahead of the convoy, providing direct escort against [enemy] aircraft and submarines, providing direct protection around the anchorages as well as protecting the unit itself against enemy aircraft and submarines, and searching for the enemy in the Banda Sea.⁽⁵⁴⁾

The Plan of Operations of the Air Unit of the Southern Task Force

1. 1st Air Raid Unit

It was decided that the 1st Air Raid Unit should provide guard for the invasion unit against enemy aircraft and reconnoiter the landing points, as well as such tasks as destroying enemy naval vessels and air power, searching for the enemy and patrolling [against them], and supporting the ground combat.⁽⁵³⁾

2. Carrier-based Air Unit

In order to destroy the enemy surface and air power in Ambon in concert with the [operation to] seize Kendari on 24 January, the carrier-based air unit ([consisting of] the 2d Carrier Division as the core) was scheduled to leave Palau on the 22d of January to carry out air strikes on Ambon on the 23d.⁽⁷¹⁾

The Launch of the Operation

Signs of the Enemy Hardly Seen

As previously told [p. 117], 1st Air Raid Unit Commander Rear Admiral Tada carried out a (night) attack on the Ambon [airfield] for the first time on 7 January with the forces of the Kanoya Air Group Detachment and the Tōkō Air Group. After that, he gradually intensified the attacks and reconnaissance in the following way:⁽⁷¹⁾

14 January: One land-based reconnaissance plane of the 3d Air Group conducted a reconnaissance on Ambon from Menado.

15 January: Twenty-six land-based attack planes of the Kanoya Air Group Detachment and eighteen Type-0 fighter planes and one land-based reconnaissance plane of the 3d Air Group carried out an attack on Ambon (the former from the Davao base and the latter from Menado) and reported a military gain of destroying seven enemy aircraft.

16 January: Sixteen land-based attack planes of the Kanoya Air Group Detachment, four Type-0 fighter planes and one reconnaissance plane of the 3d Air Group, and one large flying boat of the Tōkō Air Group carried out an attack on Ambon.

18 January: One land-based reconnaissance plane of the 3d Air Group reconnoitered Ambon.

19 January: Four large flying boats of the Tōkō Air Group reconnoitered the area of Ambon.

21 January: Three Type-0 fighter planes and two land-based reconnaissance planes of the 3d Air Group attacked and reconnoitered Ambon, while conducting a photoreconnaissance of the landing points.

On 22 January, 1st Air Raid Unit Commander Rear Admiral Tada sent Rear Admiral Yamaguchi, commander of the 2d Carrier Division (carrier-based air unit) the following telegram concerning the situation of Ambon.⁽⁵³⁾

The situation of Ambon is as follows:

1. In January, our unit has carried out attacks and reconnaissance (at night) on the 7th as well as (in the daytime) on the 14th, the 15th, the 16th, the 18th, and the 21st. After it destroyed seven aircraft in total (all aircraft [spotted there]) on the 15th and the 16th, no enemy aircraft has been seen since then. However, [this is to be expected because] the military airfield located at Laha [on Ambon] seems to have been used only occasionally as a staging base.
2. Although several fast enemy naval ships and merchantmen were seen at anchor [at Ambon] until around the 16th, no enemy vessels have been spotted recently. Yesterday, the 21st, two mid-sized [enemy] merchantmen entered the port.
3. Apart from the military airfield and the flying boat base, another airfield is under construction at the eastern point of Ambon Island, but it is not yet fit for use.
4. In view of [our] use [of the existing facilities] after the capture of Ambon, we consider it better to choose the following attack targets in case no enemy naval vessels or aircraft are spotted:
 - (a) The batteries on both sides of the entrance of Ambon Bay in the west
 - (b) The battery southwest of the city of Ambon
5. For reference:
 - (a) The enemy air force has its main bases on Timor and Java, and uses Ambon, Kendari, and Banjarmasin as advance bases, but it lacks fighting spirit.
 - (b) U.S. naval vessels sometimes appear in the Banda Sea; at present the *USS Houston* is in Darwin.
 - (c) There are oil fields as well as large-scale port facilities in Bula at the east point of Ceram; it is better to seize and make use of them. There is no airfield on Groot-Banda (note by the author: an islet located about sixty nautical miles south of Ceram).
 - (d) [We have] roughly bombed and destroyed [enemy facilities in] Sorong and Babo (in western New Guinea) and Ternate (note by the author: on Halmahera Island). [The enemy has] formerly made counterattacks in these areas, but we have met with no counterattacks these days.

Today, the 22d, the search for the enemy in these areas was carried out by one large flying boat.

On 23 January, under the command of Lt. Cdr. Kusumi Masashi, the *Hiryū* Air Unit commander, the carrier-based air unit headed for Ambon for an attack with nine Type-0 fighter planes, nine Type-99 carrier-based bombers and nine Type-97 carrier-based attack planes of the *Hiryū* and nine Type-0 fighter planes, nine Type-99 carrier-based bombers and nine Type-97 carrier-based attack planes of the *Sōryū*, fifty-four planes in total. However, due to bad weather, the unit was unable to carry out the attack and changed its target to Ternate, where it found no suitable targets. The unit ended up cancelling the attack and all aircraft returned safely.⁽⁷¹⁾ On the next day the 24th, the unit [again] reached the sky above Ambon with the same strength. But having spotted no enemy naval vessels or aircraft, the unit bombed the

barracks and the battery southwest of the city [instead], and all returned safely, [after which] the carrier-based air unit headed back to Davao⁽⁷¹⁾ (arriving in Davao on the 25th). Furthermore on 27 January, in accordance with the Air Unit's Telegraphic Operation Order No. 36, eighteen Type-0 fighter planes and nine carrier-based bombers of the carrier-based unit were advanced to Kendari from Davao [in Vol. 3, the date and number of planes differs] and put under the command of 1st Air Raid Unit Commander Rear Admiral Tada, in order to take charge of destroying the enemy naval vessels and air power until the completion of the Ambon operation.⁽⁸¹⁾

The Enemy Movements in the Ambon Area at the Time of the Launch of the Invasion Operation

As of 28 and 29 January, the intelligence that the unit to capture Ambon had obtained on the enemy movements was by and large as follows:

1. The situation of [enemy] air units⁽⁵⁴⁾

- (1) Because Kendari has fallen into Japanese hands, which brought Timor as well as Ambon within the action range of Type-0 fighter planes, large-scale enemy counterattacks are not expected, [although there may be] counterattacks by a small number of mid- and small-sized aircraft using [airfields in] western New Guinea as their staging base, or from Port Darwin by a few large aircraft or flying boats.
- (2) However, there are still traces of use at the Ambon airfield even now; [the airfield] seems to be still in use as a staging base from the Port Darwin area. Also, Namlea on Buru (west of Ceram) is being used as an air base; we must be on alert against other hidden enemy bases as well.

2. The movements of [enemy] surface units⁽⁵⁴⁾

- (1) Although the enemy surface forces seem to have evacuated to the areas south of Timor and west of Makassar, it is likely that they will make a surprise counterattack.
- (2) While it seems that enemy submarines have [mainly] been deployed in the area south of the Molucca Sea, some of them are also active near the Bangka anchorage.
- (3) Although it seems that the U.S. and Dutch naval units are by and large stationed at Port Darwin and Surabaya, one element of them appears in the Banda Sea at times.

3. The situation on Ambon and the surrounding waters⁽¹⁰³⁾

- (1) As the central military and economic base of the eastern part of the Dutch East Indies, Ambon has recently been provided with strong defenses; it seems that almost the entire island has been fortified.
- (2) Although the strength of the Dutch East Indies garrison stationed in Ambon is said to have consisted of about 1,000 men, it seems to have been reinforced with about 2,000 men of the Australian army.
- (3) Reconnaissance by our naval air units from the end of December [1941] onwards has delivered the following [picture]:
 - {1} From the end of December onwards, [enemy] naval vessels have frequently sailed in and out of Ambon; they seem to have been assigned [the task] of troop reinforcements as well as the transport of evacuees.
 - {2} Mines seem to have been laid over strategic areas such as the entrance of Ambon Bay as well as Baguala Bay; before 16 January, several minelayers as well as light and fast ships were seen at anchor.

- {3} Antisurface vessel [coastal] batteries seem to be located both at the south and the north entrance of Ambon Bay, and it is certain that the Halong seaplane base as well as the Laha airfield have anti-aircraft battery positions.
- (4) Putting all the above together, it seems that for Ambon the Ambon Bay area serves as its front defense and the Baguala Bay as its rear defense, while there are strong defensive positions around the city of Ambon as well on the western part of the Laha airfield.

The Sailing of the Invasion Convoy

At 1530 on 27 January, the 1st Echelon left Davao and started sailing southward toward Ambon. At 0200 on 28 January, the *Asashio* and Submarine chaser No. 1 left the Bangka anchorage in order to join the 1st Echelon; they joined it around 1400. In the meantime, the 1st Section of the 15th Destroyer Division and the 21st Minesweeper Division, which were at Kendari, discontinued the Kendari operation and left Kendari at 0700 on the 28th for the Ceram Sea to join the 2d Escort Unit.⁽⁵⁴⁾

At 0000 on 29 January, the 16th Destroyer Division and the 2d Echelon left the Bangka anchorage. They met up with the *Jintsū* around 0915, after which they sailed southward in the Molucca Sea, following the 1st Echelon at a distance of about twenty-five nautical miles. During the sailing, first at 1426 the *Arashio*, which escorted the 1st Echelon, then at 1623 the *Amatsukaze*, which escorted the 2d Echelon, and then at 1703 the *Hayashio*, which guarded the 1st Echelon, detected a little north of the equator enemy submarine(s). Each of them made an attack with antisubmarine depth charges but with unconfirmed results.⁽⁵⁴⁾ Although a little choppy, the weather was fine that day. With fighter planes of the 1st Air Raid Unit and seaplanes of the 2d Air Unit flying over the convoys the whole day to guard against enemy aircraft and submarines, no enemy aircraft came to attack.⁽⁹⁴⁾ In the meantime, the support unit left Davao at 1700 as scheduled and headed for the Bangka anchorage to support the invasion unit.⁽⁷⁸⁾ On that day, flying boat[s] of the Tōkō Air Group reconnoitered Ambon and sent the following report:⁽⁸¹⁾

1. One flying boat was moored (in the north corner) inside the inner harbor.
Two reconnaissance seaplanes were taking off from the water, while two twin-engine aircraft were spotted on the airfield.
2. As for the ships at anchor, in addition to two 200t-class ships, there were many small boats. Also, two fast ships were spotted near Cape Nusanive.
3. The defense gunfire near the seaplane base and near the airfield was fierce and relatively accurate.
4. Reconnaissance altitude: 3,000m

In the early morning on 30 January, the convoy sailed into the Ceram Sea, passing between the Sula Islands and the island of Obi Mayor. At 0715, the 1st Section of the 15th Destroyer Division and the 21st Minesweeper Division, both of which had sailed straight from Kendari, joined the convoy, and sailed southward at seven to ten nautical miles ahead of the latter by way of precaution.

At 0745, one enemy Lockheed bomber was spotted reconnoitering [the convoy], but it soon disappeared into the clouds. It was judged that with this reconnaissance the enemy must have gotten the full picture of the Japanese invasion unit. At 1200, the main body (the *Jintsū* and the 1st Section of the 16th Destroyer Division) separated from the 2d Detachment

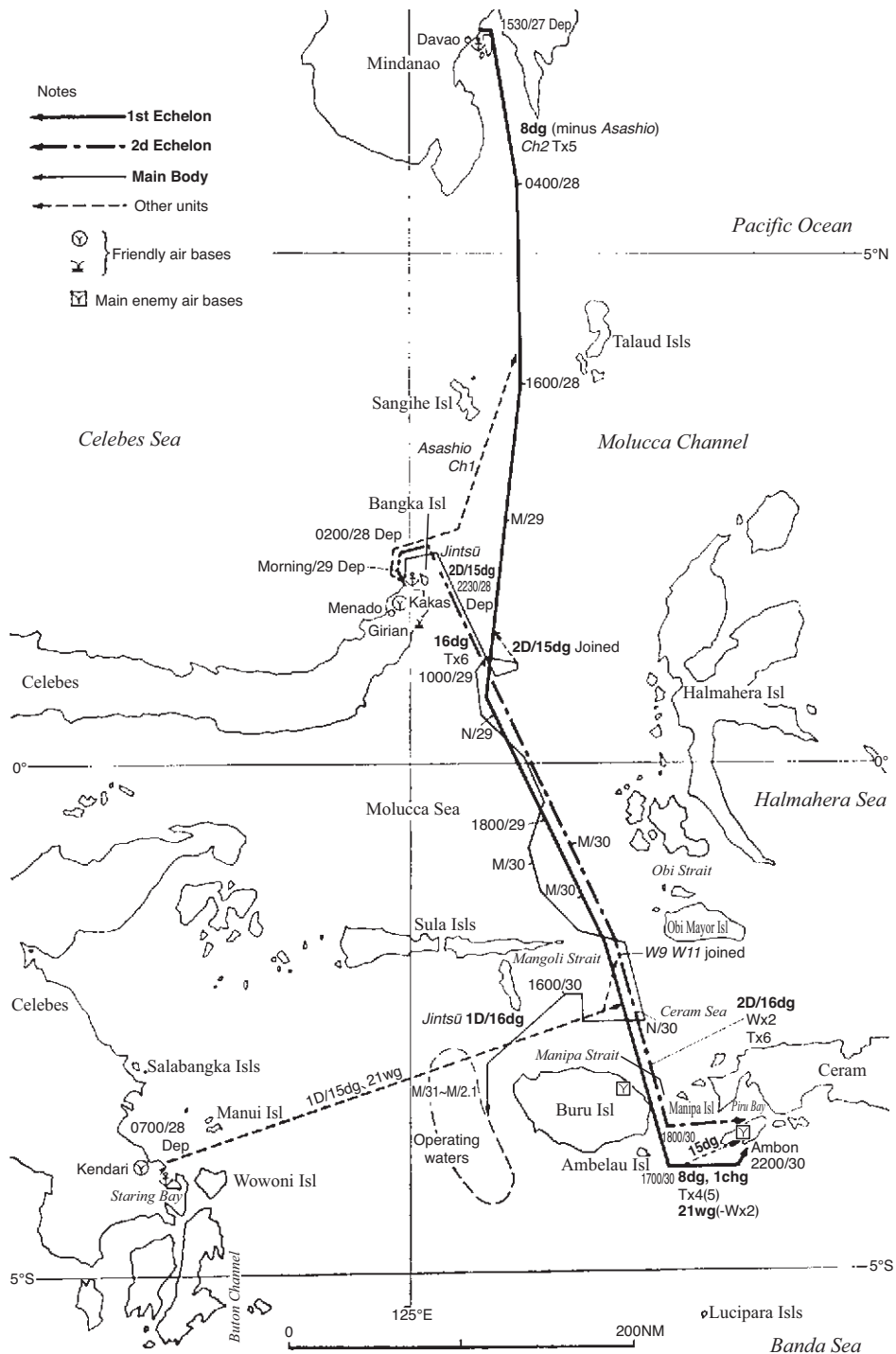


Illustration No. 20 — Outline of the Operations of the Ambon Invasion Units (27-31 January, 1942)

and sailed westward to be on guard to the west of Buru. At 1320, one Lockheed bomber once again approached the main body and the 2d Echelon; three observation planes in the sky attacked it, but it disappeared into the clouds. However, with friendly fighter planes, reconnaissance seaplanes and observation planes providing also on that day guard in the sky above, the escort unit basically did not need to worry about [enemy] air attacks.⁽⁷⁰⁾

About sunset on the 30th, the 15th Destroyer Division, which sailed ahead, was approaching a point about twenty nautical miles from the entrance of Ambon Bay, the 1st Echelon a point about forty-five nautical miles from Rutung, and the 2d Echelon only thirty-five nautical miles from the Hitulama anchorage. At 1950, the 15th Destroyer Division reached the entrance of Ambon Bay and reported: "The heavy oil tanks near the urban area of Ambon as well as near the Laha airfield are in flames."⁽⁹⁴⁾ The weather conditions at that time showed occasional sudden showers with the wind from a 0° direction and a velocity of 6 meters [per second]. At 2216, the *Hino-maru No. 5*, the fifth ship of the 2d Echelon was torpedoed by [an] enemy submarine (with three torpedoes that passed by her bow), but she sustained no damage. The *Amatsukaze* and Minesweeper No. 11 immediately attacked to neutralize the enemy, while Minesweeper No. 9 reversed course to pin down the enemy submarine astern. At 2218, the *Amatsukaze* spotted a surfaced enemy submarine at a distance of about 6,000 meters and approached it for an attack but lost the opportunity to attack it because it submerged. At 2300, the 2d Echelon entered the Hitulama anchorage about one hour earlier than planned, while at 0020, the 1st Echelon entered the Rutung anchorage forty minutes earlier than planned without encountering the enemy.⁽⁵⁴⁾ Meanwhile, 2d Escort Unit Commander Rear Admiral Tanaka, leading the *Jintsū* and the 1st Section of the 16th Destroyer Division, directed the operation while appropriately operating from a position about ten nautical miles west of Buru. At 1420 on that day, the Support Unit (the 5th Cruiser division and the *Ikazuchi*) advanced to the Bangka anchorage.⁽⁷⁸⁾

The Launch of the Landing Operation and the General Completion of the Capture

Having entered the Hitulama anchorage at 2300 on the previous night, the 2d Echelon immediately launched the landing operations, and at 0100 on 31 January, two hours earlier than planned, its landing craft departed from the anchorage of the convoy. However, because the enemy had placed wooden stakes, barbed wire entanglement and underwater obstacles along the coast and put up stiff resistance from pillbox positions with trench mortars and machine-guns, the landing operation got momentarily bogged down. The 2d Detachment commander reported the situation in quick succession: "0120: Departed;" "0200: Having difficulty in landing;" "0210: Meeting with resistance." The 1st Kure Special Landing Force forced a landing, eliminating stiff enemy resistance and finally succeeded in landing at 0320, occupying Hitulama, the landing point.⁽⁵⁴⁾

In the meantime, the 1st Echelon had entered the anchorage at Rutung, [and its landing craft] departed from the anchorage of the convoy at 0220, about one hour earlier than planned. After [the Army unit] had successfully landed at 0245 without meeting any resistance, Second Escort Unit Commander Rear Admiral Tanaka reported the success of the landings at both Rutung and Hitulama.⁽⁵⁴⁾ From about 0700 or 0800 on that day, the weather on Ambon and its surroundings rapidly worsened; it rained torrentially with a west wind blowing as strongly as twenty meters [per second]. The 2d Air Unit wired that it would suspend its air campaign until the weather improved. The rainstorm weakened from around 1100 on-

wards, and by around 1200 it completely cleared up; the 2d Air Unit reported that it would resume its air campaign. Despite the return of the good weather, the enemy fortunately did not carry out any air raids in the afternoon.⁽⁵⁴⁾

During that period, whereas the ground operations of the Army went smoothly, the advance of the 1st Kure Special Landing Force seemed to experience extreme difficulties. That is, from 1100 onwards, the headquarters of the 1st Kure Special Landing Force, which had headed for the Laha airfield from Hitulama, lost contact with the force remaining at the Hitulama landing point, leaving the Landing Force totally clueless as to the situation at its front. In the evening, the 15th Destroyer Division in charge of watching the entrance of Ambon Bay reported that the batteries to the southwest of [the city of] Ambon were volleying toward the Laha and Lata areas, so it was assumed that the front of the 1st Kure Special Landing Force had advanced more or less to that neighborhood.

Meanwhile, the Rutung anchorage was calm, with no enemy raids other than that the *Asashio*, which was guarding the anchorage, detected at 1715 [an] enemy submarine and attacked her, with unconfirmed results. The debarkation of personnel and matériel from the *Miike-maru* and the other ships at the Rutung anchorage was largely completed by the evening. After that, in order to avoid attacks by enemy submarines, excepting the *Miike-maru*, the other three ships left the anchorage at 2000 escorted by the 8th Destroyer Division and timely sailed to an area within thirty nautical miles southeast of the anchorage. During that action, at 2035, the *Asashio* again detected [an] enemy submarine and attacked her almost at the same point as she had done in the evening, [again] with unconfirmed results. At the Hitulama anchorage [the ships] kept drifting there on the alert, but there were no enemy attacks.

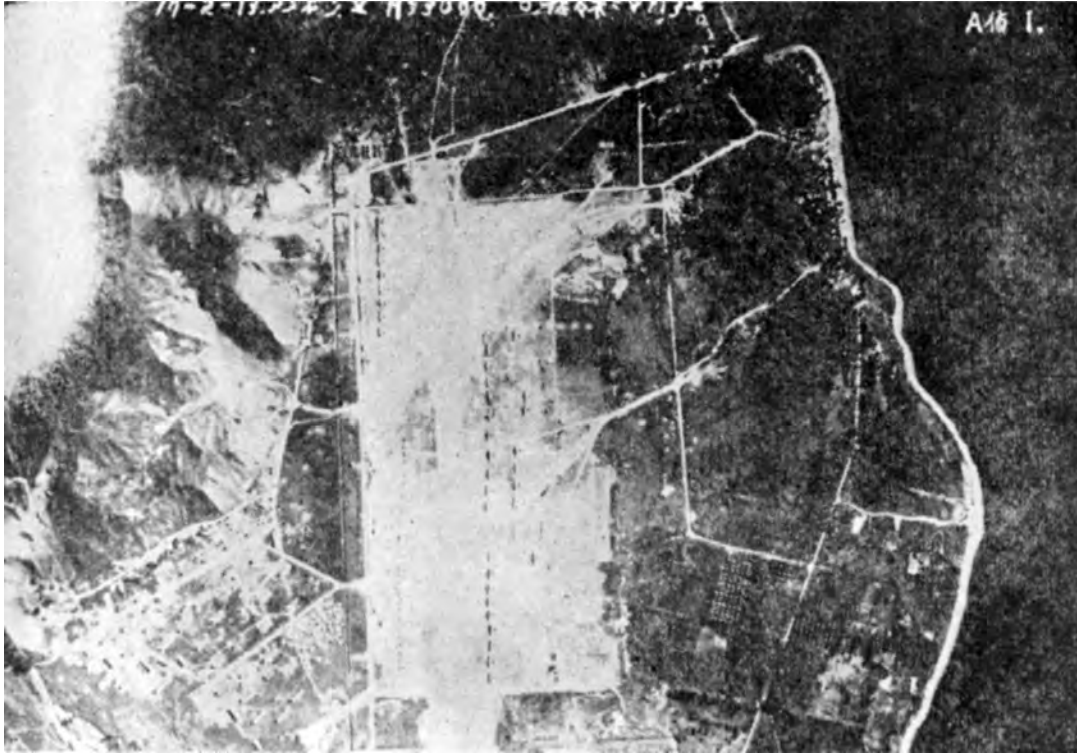
Whereas at 2400 the Army unit reported to have charged into Ambon city before sunset, the 1st Kure Special Landing Force remained out of contact with its headquarters until the morning of 1 February. In order to establish contact with the front as well as to supply ammunition and provisions, the commander of the 16th Destroyer Division guarding the Hitulama [anchorage] formed a landing party of one platoon with the approval of 2d Escort Unit Commander Rear Admiral Tanaka and dispatched it to the coast of Hitulama at 0700 (it returned to the ship(s) at 1900 on the same day). Right after the dispatch of the landing party, contact with the headquarters of the 1st Kure Special Landing Force was restored, and their situation from the afternoon of the 31st onwards became clear. According to the report, the front line unit had reached Hunut at 1000 and [further] advanced westward along the coast. While from that moment on fierce torrential downpours and bad roads had troubled them, they continued marching on while on the alert. However, because of the rain they actually avoided being spotted from the enemy positions on the opposite shore [of the bay]. The unit passed through Waime at 1430 without meeting with any resistance and reached Suakodo by 1530. However, because of the heavy rain the wireless radio set[s] had broken down, and it became impossible to establish contact. Also, the unit following [the front line unit] became unable to move forward due to fierce shelling from the opposite shore [of the bay] at the bridge near Waime and [also] lost contact with the front line unit.⁽¹⁰³⁾ At 1600 on the 31st, the front line unit reached the line of the Weti River and advanced to the attack, intending to break through the enemy position at a stroke with the Wakabayashi Company on the right and the 2d Company on the left front. However, fierce enemy counterattacks from positions at the airfield as well as from the batteries near Ambon city on the opposite shore with weapons such as trench mortars and machineguns made it difficult to break through. There-

fore, at 1850 the unit suspended the attack and momentarily retreated as far as Suakodo to halt there for the night while on the alert and make preparations for the next day.⁽¹⁰³⁾

On the morning of 1 February, contact with the friendly units was restored, but as a result of a thorough reconnaissance of the enemy positions, it was judged impossible to carry out a daylight assault with the present strength. So, it was decided to request a bombardment by friendly aircraft on the enemy positions during the day, and [then] break through the enemy positions in a night attack on the 1st. While stationed between Suakodo and the Weti River, the unit made efforts to reconnoiter and learn the movements of the enemy, while trying to make contact with [its fellow units in] the Hitulama area. At 1430 the bulk of the rear unit as well as a considerable amount of ammunition and provisions arrived. For the disposition of forces for the night attack it was decided that the Wakabayashi Company should leave at 2100 and make a detour through the mountains to the north and charge into the enemy [position] from behind from the highland to the north, while the 2d Company should launch an attack on the enemy position at 2200. The Wakabayashi Company, which was dispatched to the north at 2100 in accordance with this disposition, was [also] ordered that if the company did not reach the enemy position by midnight, it should make a further detour in a northwestern direction, refrain from making an assault by daylight on the 2d, and charge into the enemy position exactly at 0300 on the 3d of February.⁽¹⁰³⁾

The 2d Company organized a suicide squad to destroy the barbed wire entanglements [of the enemy positions] under the command of Lieutenant Hatakeyama [Kunito], advanced to the attack at 2200 on the 1st, breached the enemy position north of Tawiri at 0400 on the 2d, and penetrated into a corner of the position. However, after that, fiercely concentrated enemy fire made it difficult for the company to advance, and the sun rose. The company remained pinned down there until the sunset on the 2d, unable to move either forward or backward. The rear unit (accompanied by Rear Admiral Hatakeyama [Kōichirō]) also [tried] to advance toward the breach before sunrise in order to cover the 2d Company, but fierce [enemy] gunfire totally cut it off from the latter. In the meantime, Rear Admiral Hatakeyama dispatched Commander Ieki and tried to have him inspect the front, but an enemy trench mortar shell killed the commander around 0800. Rear Admiral Hatakeyama, after requesting the air units as well as the 2d Escort Unit to bomb and shell the enemy positions to the north of the airfield, decided to suspend the attack at 1200 to rearrange his force. On that day, from around 0800 till around 1630, friendly attack planes and reconnaissance seaplanes continuously bombed the enemy positions, and naval gunfire from the sea was added to it in the afternoon. Although considerable confusion was seen at the enemy positions and white flags were spotted at places on the Laha airfield, the main force of the enemy still had a strong will to fight and kept fiercely firing at the Japanese forces. From the night of the 1st till the morning of the 2d, the Wakabayashi Company did so far not show up at the rear of the enemy position, and no contact was established with the company either.⁽¹⁰³⁾

The rear unit, which had been prevented from advancing, retreated to the neighborhood of Suakodo at 2200 on the night of the 2d, after sustaining a loss of about twenty men including Commander Ieki killed and about forty men injured. In the meantime, the assault unit, led by Lieutenant Hatakeyama [Kunito], which had penetrated a corner of the enemy position, also succeeded in extricating themselves at 2300. Although having sustained a loss of more than a dozen men killed and about twenty men injured, they managed to join the rear unit, and tried to reorganize. Despite doubts about [the readiness for] an attack on the morn-



The Ambon Airfield

ing of the 3d, the 1st Kure Special Landing Force decided to once again carry out a night attack in concert with the Wakabayashi Company, because that company was supposed to storm [the airfield] at 0300. It was [also] decided that the 1st Kure Special Landing Force would leave one platoon to guard the injured and advance to the attack at 0115 on the 3d under the command of Lieutenant Hatakeyama [Kunito] with all the rest of the force.⁽¹⁰³⁾

At 0215 on the 3d, the point of the advance guard reached the enemy position in Tawiri, and the engagement was reopened. At 0500, the enemy fire slackened off markedly, and [the 1st Kure Special Landing Force,] without missing an opportunity, carried out an all-out attack and broke through the Tawiri position at a blow, and charged into the area around the Laha pier by 0530. This brought about that the enemy troops soon raised white flags and offered a general surrender. At 0615, the 1st Kure Special Landing Force raised a naval flag at a northern part of the airfield and completely seized the airfield at 0630; Rear Admiral Hatakeyama [Kōichirō] then also entered the airfield. Meanwhile, the Wakabayashi Company, whose advance had experienced immense difficulties because its detour had taken it through a large and densely forested region that had consumed more time than expected, charged into the airfield from the rear of the enemy at 0600 on the 3d. Another company of the Army that had been dispatched overland from the Paso area for support reached Laha on the evening of the 3d.⁽⁵⁴⁾

The operations of the Itō Detachment that had landed in Rutung had gone smoothly after the landing. That is, at 2030 on the 31st, the detachment had forced 800 enemy troops in Paso to surrender, had occupied Halong at 0500 on the 1st, and Detachment Commander Itō had

entered into the urban area of Ambon at 1000 on the 1st. After that, the detachment had attacked the enemy in the hilly areas southwest [of the city], seized Amahusu and Mt. Nona by the early morning of the 2d, and had forced the surrender of the whole enemy army in the area of Eri by 0630 on the next day, the 3d. The loss sustained by the Itō Detachment in that area was 55 men killed and 135 men injured.⁽¹⁰⁴⁾ On the other hand, the loss sustained by the 1st Kure Special Landing Force was 40 men killed (including Commander Ieki and three platoon commanders) and 50 men seriously injured; the casualties with serious injuries or more amounted to 12% of its total strength of 750 men.⁽¹⁰³⁾

Having seized the airfield (about 1,300 meters long and 100 meters wide), the 1st Kure Special Landing Force with one element of its force immediately started clearing the obstacles and repairing the destroyed parts and together with the advance base personnel of the Eleventh Air Fleet, which had advanced in its wake, worked hard to put it back into service. As a result, it was expected that the airfield would be available for a few fighter planes from the next day, the 4th, onwards (two planes advanced on the 4th). From the afternoon on the 3d onwards, the 1st Kure Special Landing Force started mopping up the enemy in the area of Cape Alang with its main force, and completed the cleanup operation after having all the remnants of the enemy surrender by around 7 February.⁽¹⁰³⁾

Minesweeping Delayed

In the meantime at sea, Minesweepers Nos. 7, 8 and 12 from Rutung, and Minesweepers Nos. 9 and 11 from Hitulama had assembled at the entrance of Ambon Bay by 0700 on the 1st, completing preparations for clearing [the bay] of mines. However, the Laha airfield and the batteries on the southern coast had not yet been seized, which prevented the minesweepers from entering into the bay and kept them there on standby. During that period, the Army unit requested the rapid sweeping of Ambon Bay in order to speed up the disembarkation of its matériel in the area of Paso (it was difficult to enter into Baguala Bay due to the risk of mines). Furthermore, the special landing forces were in a situation that needed strong support from sea. At 0800 on the 2d, 2d Escort Unit Commander Rear Admiral Tanaka ordered the 21st Minesweeper Division and the 15th Destroyer Division to launch the scheduled minesweeping, while watching out for gunfire from land. The 21st Minesweeper Division immediately entered the bay and started a single-ship minesweeping maneuver ([i.e.] sweeping mines by extending sweeping wires from both sides of a ship) while the 15th Destroyer Division followed in its wake and covered it with gunfire and machinegun fire against enemy coastal positions. At 1030, the minesweeper division advanced as far as the line connecting Amahusu and Laha, where it snagged a mine for the first time, after which the division cut and disposed of fifteen mines by 1200. However, when the division was about to further advance into the area off Ambon [city], mines successively touched the paravanes of Minesweepers No. 11 and No. 12 and exploded. The explosions caused a leak at the stern of Minesweeper No. 12 and engine trouble to Minesweeper No. 11. Then at 1400, Minesweeper No. 9 hit a mine and sank. When this was reported to 2d Escort Unit Commander Rear Admiral Tanaka, he immediately called off the sweeping operation by the minesweepers and switched to a small-scale minesweeping operation by large motorized [landing] craft (an operation where small shallow-draft boats or small motorized vessels would tug compact and simple minesweeping devices to snag mines and blow them up).

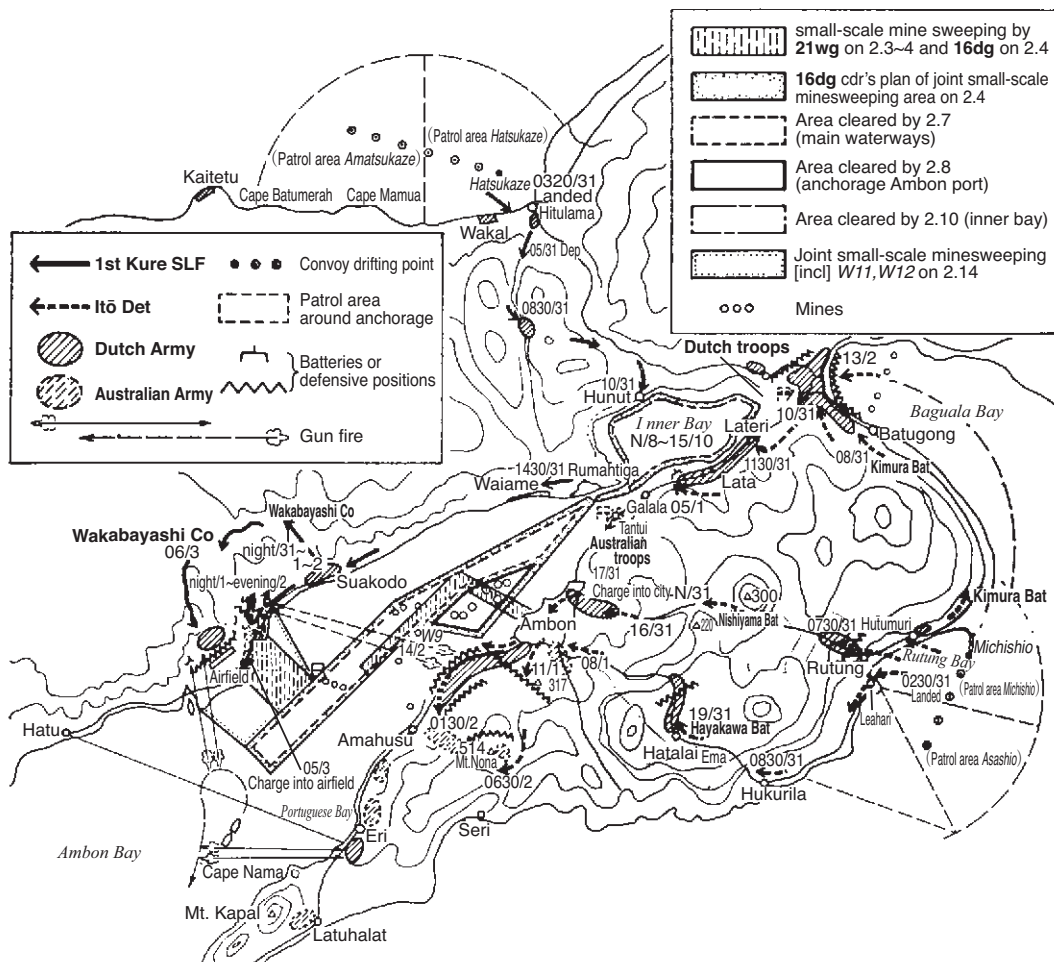


Illustration No. 21 — The Invasion of Ambon and the Minesweeping

Meanwhile, the 8th Destroyer Division had been discussing the disembarkation [of personnel and matériel] of the Army at Paso. In the end, a minesweeping operation was launched by means of a small minesweeping unit consisting of a motor launch and four small motorized [landing] craft from 1020 on the 2d onwards. It reached Paso at 1215 and successfully established a communication route for small boats. The unit swept the waters down to five meters deep, but snagged no mines. On that day, there were no enemy attacks from the air or appearances of [enemy] submarines, except for one enemy flying boat that was spotted in the southern part of Ambon Bay around 1440.

On 3 February, the 21st Minesweeper Division off Ambon city carried out a small-scale minesweeping operation on the waters in front of the urban area using its motor launch with the support of [a] large motorized [landing] craft and disposed of three mines. However, because they only performed a few sweeps, the sweeping was far from thorough. To make matters worse, the damage survey of Minesweepers Nos. 11 and 12 resulted in the conclusion

that both were crippled beyond an emergency repair of the engines. Meanwhile, at 1500 on the 3d, the 8th Destroyer Division reached the entrance of Ambon Bay, escorting the 1st Echelon [of the transport convoy]. However, because the anchorage in front of the urban area of Ambon was not yet completely swept, [the echelon] could not enter into the anchorage and perforce started the disembarkation by shipping the freight in landing craft from the vicinity of Portuguese Bay in the outer bay area to the urban area of Ambon.

From 1000 on 4 February onwards, the warships launched a small-scale minesweeping operation with boats and completed clearing the anchorage south of Laha at 1500, with no tethered mines found. It was concluded that no mines had been laid, so the Navy transport ships entered the anchorage one after another and started disembarkation right in front of the airfield. [However,] because the anchorage in front of the urban area of Ambon (hereafter called Ambon port) had a wide waterway leading to it with many tethered mines, it would take [the Navy] much time to clear it of mines, which kept the Army transport ships still standing by near Portuguese Bay.

From 5 February onwards, under the command of the captain of the destroyer *Sazanami*, [the naval vessels] jointly formed a number of small-scale minesweeping units and went on with the minesweeping of Ambon port. After snagging five mines on that day, fourteen mines on the 6th, and nine mines on the 7th, they completed clearing Ambon port on the morning of the 8th. After this operation, five Army transport ships and the *Katsuragi-maru* (with the base matériel of Tōkō Air Group on board) were finally allowed to enter the port at 1430. Afterwards, the operation of the joint small-scale minesweeping units continued until 10 February, and was finally completed after disposing of forty-two mines in total. During that period, on the 9th, one requisitioned merchantman struck a mine and sank in the yet-to-be-swept waters south of the swept waterways.

The Operations of the 2d Air Unit (See Illustration No. 22)

As previously told [p. 221], at 1130 on 26 January, the flagship *Chitose* departed from the Salabangka Channel (north of Kendari). At 1500 on the next day the 27th, the ship arrived at the Bangka anchorage,⁽⁶⁸⁾ where she provided direct escort in the air above the convoy and patrol against submarines until 1900 on the 29th; thereafter she headed for Sula Mangoli Strait.^(71, 72) Meanwhile, the *Mizuho* provided guard on the sailing route ahead of the 1st Section of the 15th Destroyer Division, the 21st Minesweeper Division and the 1st Subchaser Division, which left Kendari at 0730 on the 29th, while [also] providing them with patrol against submarines. Then at 0940, the ship departed from the Salabangka anchorage for Sula Mangoli Strait along with Patrol Boats Nos. 34 and 39 and six fishing boats, and joined the *Chitose* south of Sula Mangoli Island at 1000 on the 30th.⁽⁶⁸⁾

On the 30th, the 2d Air Unit provided direct escort in the air above the convoy sailing southward at a point southeast of Sula Mangoli [Island], while escorting it against enemy submarines, guarding its sailing route ahead, and conducting a reconnaissance attack on Namlea. During these operations, the unit strafed and seriously damaged one Lockheed Hudson and one PBV flying boat at Namlea, and further drove away mid-sized enemy attack plane[s], which came for reconnoitering the echelon at 1320.^(68, 71)

On the evening of that day, the ships left Sula Mangoli for Kelang Bay (to the west of Ceram) and arrived there at 0550 on the next day the 31st.⁽⁶⁸⁾

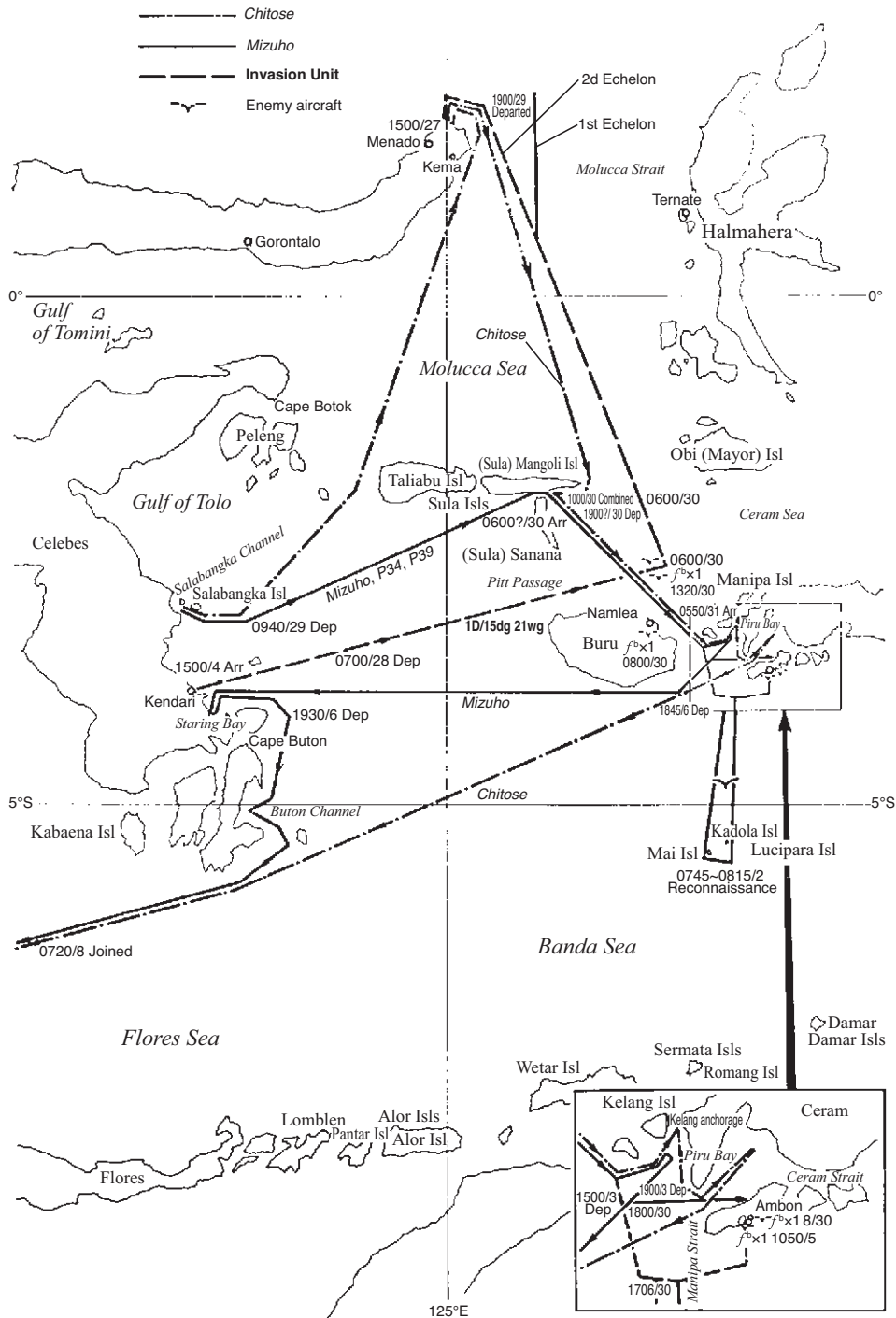


Illustration No. 22 — The Outline of the Operations of the 2d Air Unit in the Ambon Operation

On the 31st (the day of the landing operation [on Ambon]), the unit provided direct escort against [enemy] submarines as well as direct escort in the air above the convoy, while searching for the enemy in the Banda Sea ([the aircraft assigned to the latter] turned back due to bad weather). During these operations, no enemy was spotted other than one plane, which the aircraft assigned to the 1st shift of the direct escort in the air above [the convoy spotted,] pursued without knowing whether it was friend or foe and lost sight of. On the morning of that day, as previously told [p. 226], the weather was quite bad on Ambon and the surrounding waters, and it was not possible to carry out air operations.

On the 1st and the 2d of February, the unit carried out a search for the enemy in the Banda Sea, provided the convoy with guard against enemy submarines as well as in the air above, while supporting the land combat with its full force. The unit dropped 137 60-kg bombs using a total of about 70 aircraft on the 1st, and on the 2d 251 60-kg bombs, using a total of about 70 aircraft on the enemy positions near the Laha airfield as well as on the batteries [near the city of] Ambon, and neutralized the enemy.^(68, 71) Also from the 3d of February until the 6th, the unit searched for the enemy on the Banda Sea, while providing guard against enemy submarines as well as enemy aircraft day after day. During this period, no enemy was spotted other than one PBY flying boat, which had come for a raid on the 5th, but was shot down by friendly aircraft.⁽⁷¹⁾ At 1500 on the 3d, the *Mizuho*, Patrol Boat No. 39 as well as three guard ships left the Kelang anchorage, headed for Kendari to participate in the Makassar operation.⁽⁶⁸⁾ Meanwhile, the *Chitose* left the Kelang anchorage at 1900 on the 3d, headed for Piru Bay (to the north of Ambon). After carrying out operations [while stationed] at Piru Bay, she discontinued the Ambon operation at 1730 on the 6th, left the bay at 1845 along with Patrol Boats Nos. 34 and 38 and headed for a point southeast of Selayar Island (to the south of Celebes) in order to participate in the Makassar operation.

The Engagements of the Land-Based Air Units^(68, 71, 81)

From 24 January onwards, the land-based air units continued their operation to search for the enemy in the Banda Sea and conduct reconnaissance attacks on the airfields on Ambon and Namlea [Buru], while directly escorting the convoy from the air after its sortie, with large flying boats of the Tōkō Air Group, land-based attack planes of the Kanoya Air Group Detachment and the 1st Air Group, Type-0 fighter planes and land-based reconnaissance planes of the 3d Air Group, along with the carrier-based bombers and Type-0 fighter planes of the force dispatched from the 2d Carrier Division. By the 30th, the unit had destroyed most of the enemy military facilities in that area and also virtually driven off all existing enemy aircraft. During that period, no enemy naval vessels appeared at all. Meanwhile on 27 January, the 21st Air Flotilla headquarters and the Kanoya Air Group Detachment advanced from Menado to the Kendari base.^(71, 81)

On the 31st (the day of the landing operations), no air campaign was executed due to bad weather. After the weather improved from the 1st onwards, [the unit] carried out a search for the enemy operation in the Banda Sea and provided patrol in the air above Ambon. On the 2d, [the unit] totally destroyed enemy positions in support of the ground combat with its land-based attack planes. As early as the 4th, two fighter planes advanced to the Laha airfield, which was followed by one reconnaissance plane and seven fighter planes on the 5th. From the 7th onwards, the land-based air unit began its reconnaissance over the vicinity with its land-based reconnaissance planes, while starting preparations for the subsequent opera-

tions. Meanwhile, the Tōkō Air Group pushed forward three of its flying boats to Ambon. It was followed by the 1st Air Group, which pushed forward its land-based attack planes to the Laha airfield, attaining the expected goal of the Ambon operation.^(71, 81)

The Formation of the 24th Special Base Force and the Preparations for the Subsequent Operations

As mentioned previously, the prospective staff members of the 24th Special Base Force headquarters had landed along with the 1st Kure Special Landing Force and advanced to the Laha airfield led by Rear Admiral Hatakeyama [Kōichirō]. On 5 February, the 24th Special Base Force was [officially] formed and assigned to guard Ambon Island and the surrounding waters with a strength of about 490 men of the 1st Kure Special Landing Force, the 3d Military Supplies Department and about 2,000 men of the 3d Construction Squad. From the 10th onwards, the force successively took over the guard from the Army Itō Detachment and completed the takeover on the 16th. It was [also] decided to assign the crippled Minesweepers Nos. 11 and 12 to the guarding of Ambon and cooperate with the 24th Special Base Force until ordered otherwise by special order.⁽¹⁰⁷⁾

In the meantime, the Support Unit, which had stayed at the Bangka anchorage from the 30th onwards, left the anchorage and sailed northward at 1100 on 5 February to return to Davao for the preparations of the Makassar operation (arriving there at 0800 on the 6th).⁽⁷⁸⁾ Meanwhile, 2d Escort Unit Commander Rear Admiral Tanaka, who had been on the waters southwest of Buru during the Ambon operation, arrived in the port of Ambon at 1030 on 10 February, leading the *Jintsū*. Thereafter, the 2d Escort Unit started on the preparations for the operation against Kupang, while its escort forces, the 8th and the 15th Destroyer Divisions and others began the preparations for the operations against Makassar.⁽⁵⁴⁾

The Ambon operation was thus completed: During the operation, the 2d Escort Unit sustained a loss of one minesweeper sunk and two half-damaged at sea, while forty men of the 1st Kure Special Landing Force were killed and fifty men seriously injured on land. As for the 1st Kure Special Landing Force, it reported military gains of 150 enemy abandoned bodies, 250 prisoners, 5 seized tanks, 12 firearms, etc.⁽⁵⁴⁾ According to the documents of the allied forces,⁽⁹⁵⁾ the strength of the garrison at that time consisted of about 2,600 men of the Dutch East Indies army and about 1,100 men of Australian army, about 3,700 men in total.

The action report of the 2d Destroyer Squadron describes its observations and lessons learned in the operations as follows:

1. Since in this operation the friendly air units gave quite close and well-timed support and the air campaign to destroy the air power of the enemy had produced sufficient results, the operation progressed without enemy counterattacks.
2. Although providing [friendly forces] with fire and bombing cover in their ground combat is difficult because of the risk of friendly fire [accidents], it inflicts an enormous mental blow to the enemy. Therefore, against a tough enemy, it is necessary to do this vigorously while leaving enough margin [to avoid mistakes] and specifying the [bombing] zones, thus eliminating the possibility of friendly fire [accidents].
3. In conducting minesweeping operations in hostile territory, it is required to conduct them in such a way as to first sweep the sea with special craft (of 0.5-meter draft or lighter), and then clear the waters with minesweepers.

For that purpose, it is urgently necessary to build powerful high-speed special minesweepers as well as to develop [new] minesweeping equipment (both of the cutting mine cables type and the pair-ship minesweeping type).

4. In guarding against enemy aircraft, close cooperation between fighter planes assigned to the direct escort and naval vessels is most required. Since the observation ability of fighter planes in direct escort is generally quite poor, it is most essential to swiftly inform the aircraft in charge of the direct escort about enemy planes spotted by the superior observation [ability] from the vessels. And the best and most certain way [to provide the directly escorting aircraft with information about the enemy aircraft] is gunfire from general naval ships. This was keenly felt both in the Jolo operation as well as in the Ambon operation.

Therefore, when there is [support from] friendly fighter planes, it is necessary to show the position and direction of the enemy aircraft by swiftly firing some salvos regardless of the firing range.

8. Operation Z of the Air Units and a Sea Engagement off Java

The Launch of the Operations (See Illustrations No. 23 and No. 24)

It was decided that the air units, which had deployed in Kendari and Balikpapan, should immediately launch an air campaign to destroy the enemy air power in the Surabaya area. The strength of the [Japanese] air units deployed in that area as of the end of January was as follows:^(75, 81)

Eleventh Air Fleet headquarters		Davao
1st Air Raid Unit (21st Air Flotilla) headquarters		Kendari
Kanoya Air Group Detachment	34 land-based attack planes	Kendari
1st Air Group	27 land-based attack planes	Kendari
Tōkō Air Group	4 large flying boats	Kendari
	17 large flying boats	Menado
3d Air Group	41 Type-0 fighter planes	Kendari
	6 land-based recon. planes	Kendari
Unit dispatched from the 2d Carrier Division	18 carrier-based fighter planes	Kendari
	8 carrier-based bombers	Kendari
2d Air Raid Unit (23d Air Flotilla) headquarters		Balikpapan
Tainan Air Group	30 Type-0 fighter planes	Balikpapan
	3 land-based recon. planes	Balikpapan
Unit dispatched from the 2d Carrier Division	9 carrier-based bombers	Balikpapan

At that time, the condition of the Kendari airfield was such that it could immediately be used by a large number of aircraft. However, it took a considerable number of days to ready the base in Balikpapan. Finally at the end of January, it was ready for a concentrated use by fighter planes, but land-based attack planes could only use it in small numbers and lightly loaded.

Operation Orders

At 1650 on 30 January, Southern Task Force Air Unit Commander Vice Admiral Tsukahara issued his orders, which were in summary as follows:⁽⁷⁵⁾

- 1. On the 3d and 4th (with the 5th as an alternative date) of February, the unit shall [conduct an operation to] destroy the enemy air power in eastern Java with its whole force.
- 2. Deployment of forces
The bulk of the fighter planes shall assemble in Balikpapan and shall be led by the 2d Air Raid Unit commander. The entire force of the land-based attack planes shall assemble in Kendari and shall be led by the 1st Air Raid Unit commander.
- 3. Disposition of forces in the attack

1st Attack Unit	Full force of the Takao Air Gp	} Surabaya and vicinity
1st Fighter Plane Unit	Full force of the main unit of the 3d Air Gp	
2d Attack Unit	Full force of the Kanoya Air Gp Det	} Madiun (about 80 NM west of Surabaya)
2d Fighter Plane Unit	Half of the Tainan Air Gp	
3d Attack Unit	Full force of the 1st Air Gp	} Malang
3d Fighter Plane Unit	Half of the Tainan Air Gp	

The 1st weather reconnaissance plane ([of] the 1st Air Raid Unit) shall reconnoiter the Sunda Sea, the eastern part of the Java Sea, and at 0700 [the waters] north of Madura.

The 2d weather reconnaissance plane ([of] the 2d Air Raid Unit) shall reconnoiter the eastern part of the Java Sea, and [the waters] north of Surabaya at the earliest possible hour.

The 1st reconnaissance plane ([of] the 1st Air Raid Unit) shall observe the military gains.

Rescue unit: 2 large flying boats of the Tōkō Air Gp; each aircraft shall take positions near Laut Island and the Kangean Islands.

- 4. The time to launch the attack
Day 1: 1200
Day 2: 1100-1330
- 5. Shifting [of bases] and the command system
The Takao Air Gp (note: [currently] at Jolo) shall shift to Kendari by 2 February, to come under the command of the 1st Air Raid Unit commander. Also, the main body of the 3d Air Group shall shift to Balikpapan by 2 February, to come under the command of the 2d Air Raid Unit commander.
- 6. Related operations
The 1st Air Raid Unit shall destroy the enemy air power in Timor, the Banda Sea and the Arafura Sea area with the 2d Carrier Division Unit dispatched to Kendari and 3d Air Group Detachment, and clear the area of the enemy.
- 7. This operation shall be called Operation Z only within our unit.

The outline of cooperation between the fighter planes and bombers in this operation was discussed [and decided] in such a way that [both] should go into action at a fixed time without assembling [beforehand].⁽¹²⁾

Note: The time of sunrise and sunset was at 0730 and around 2000 respectively.

Reconnaissance

On 1 February, the 2d Air Raid Unit Commander Rear Admiral Takenaka conducted a reconnaissance over eastern Java (Surabaya, Malang, and Madiun) with three land-based reconnaissance planes of the Tainan Air Group. Although the first reconnaissance plane, which had headed for Surabaya, went missing without [prior] communication, the second recon-

naissance plane successfully reconnoitered the Malang area, spotted three B-17s and two small planes on the airfield as well as in the Madura Strait one vessel, which looked like a tender ship, and returned. The third reconnaissance plane, which reconnoitered Madiun, spotted nine large planes and three mid-sized planes on the airfield.⁽⁷¹⁾ In the meantime, the 1st Air Raid Unit searched for the enemy in the Banda Sea and the Sunda Sea with three land-based attack planes, but spotted no enemy except for five large enemy flying boats, which were flying toward Surabaya. On the 2d, the unit spotted eighteen flying boats on the Surabaya seaplane base.⁽⁷¹⁾

Bombing the Airfields in the Surabaya Area

At 0757 on 3 February, twenty-six land-based attack planes of the Takao Air Group of the 1st Attack Unit under the command of Lt. Cdr. Nonaka Tarō took off from the Kendari base and headed for the Surabaya airfield for an attack. At 1220, the unit carried out a bombing of the airfield as well as the port facilities and reported that all bombs had hit their targets and that one out of four moored flying boats had been sunk. Although the unit engaged with four enemy fighter planes in the air from [the beginning of] the bombing till 1230, there were no military gains or losses [in the air combat]. After the attack, the 1st and the 2d Squadrons returned to Balikpapan (as had been specified in the plan of operations), and the 3d Squadron to Kendari, all without damage. Twenty-seven land-based attack planes of the Kanoya Air Group of the 2d Attack Unit under the command of Lt. Cdr. Irida Toshiie took off from Kendari at 0710 for Madiun. At 1225, the unit carried out a bombing of the airfield and the area of the hangars and barracks, reporting a military gain of [damaging] two [buildings] and one large plane, [both of] which had been set ablaze, and seriously damaging two mid-sized planes (the unit spotted ten large planes and two mid-sized planes on the ground and two small planes in the course of taking off). The unit also engaged with five enemy fighter planes in the air, which came for an attack after the bombing, and reported shooting down two of them (one of which was unconfirmed). All aircraft returned to the Kendari airfield (five of them marked by bullets). Also, nineteen land-based attack planes of the 1st Air Group of the 3d Attack Unit, led by Lt. Cdr. Ozaki Takeo, took off from Kendari at 0630. The unit bombed Malang at 1210 and reported seriously damaging one large plane (out of six planes it spotted on the ground) and scoring direct hits on two warehouses as well as an antiaircraft artillery position, after which all aircraft returned to Kendari without damage. The unit further reported around 1350 on its way back [to Kendari] having spotted at Madura two battleships, one Class-A cruiser and two Class-B cruisers and nine destroyers at anchor.

Destroying the Enemy Fighter Plane Units⁽⁷¹⁾

At 0930, twenty-seven Type-0 fighter planes and two land-based reconnaissance planes of the 3d Air Group of the 1st Fighter Plane Unit took off from Balikpapan led by Lt. Yokoyama Tamotsu. [The unit] rushed into [the air over] Surabaya, and reported military gains of shooting down fifteen Curtis-Wright fighter planes, three P-36 fighter planes (one of which with unconfirmed results), four P-40 fighter planes (one of which [also] with unconfirmed results), four flying boats, nine Buffalo fighter planes, and four Hawker Hurricane fighter planes, totaling thirty-nine planes, as well as seriously damaging one B-17 and four flying boats, and [also damaging] fourteen flying boats, which had caught fire. Although three Type-0 fighter

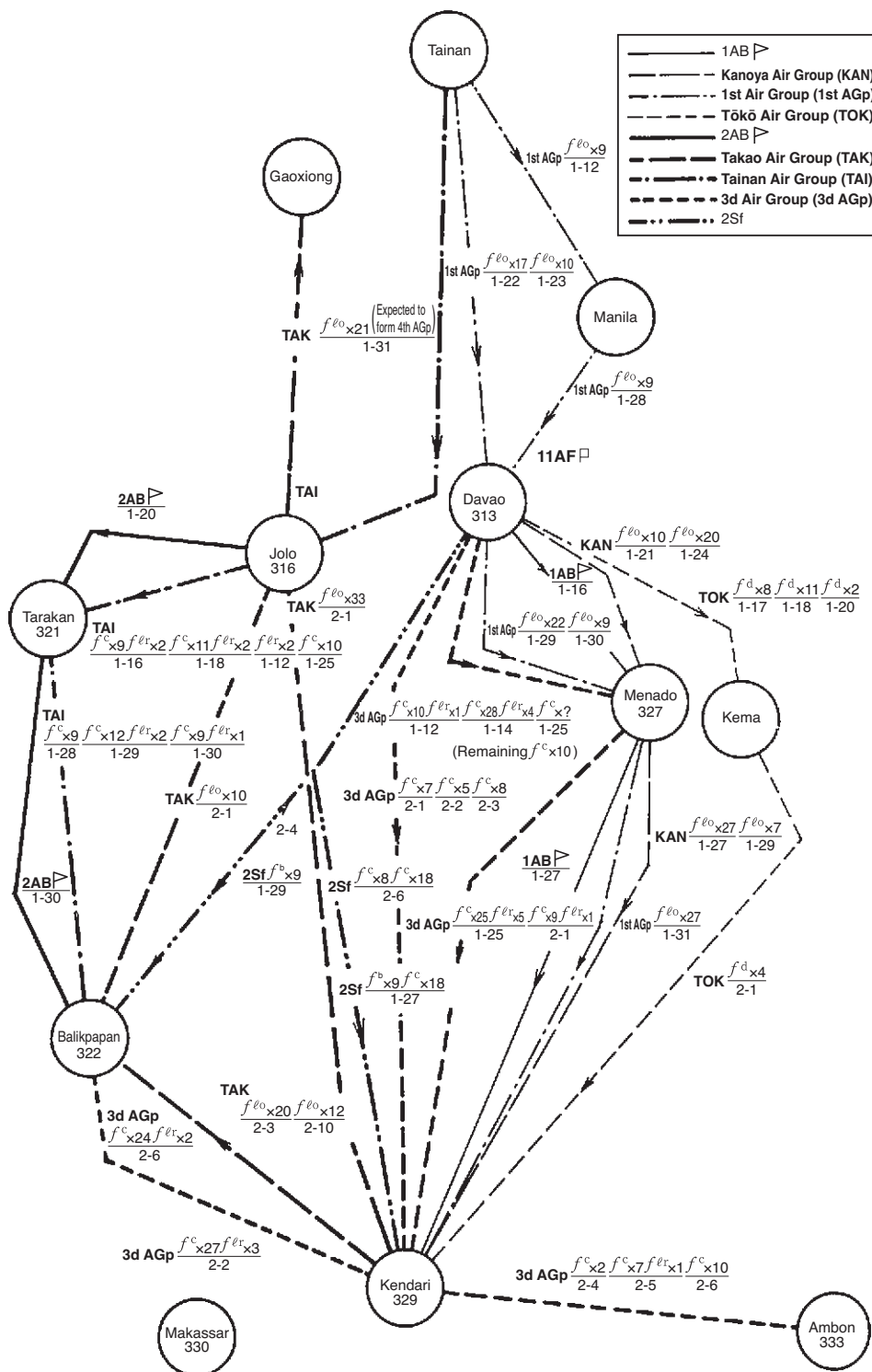


Illustration No. 23 — The Shift of the Bases of the Air Units (11 January – 6 February, 1942)

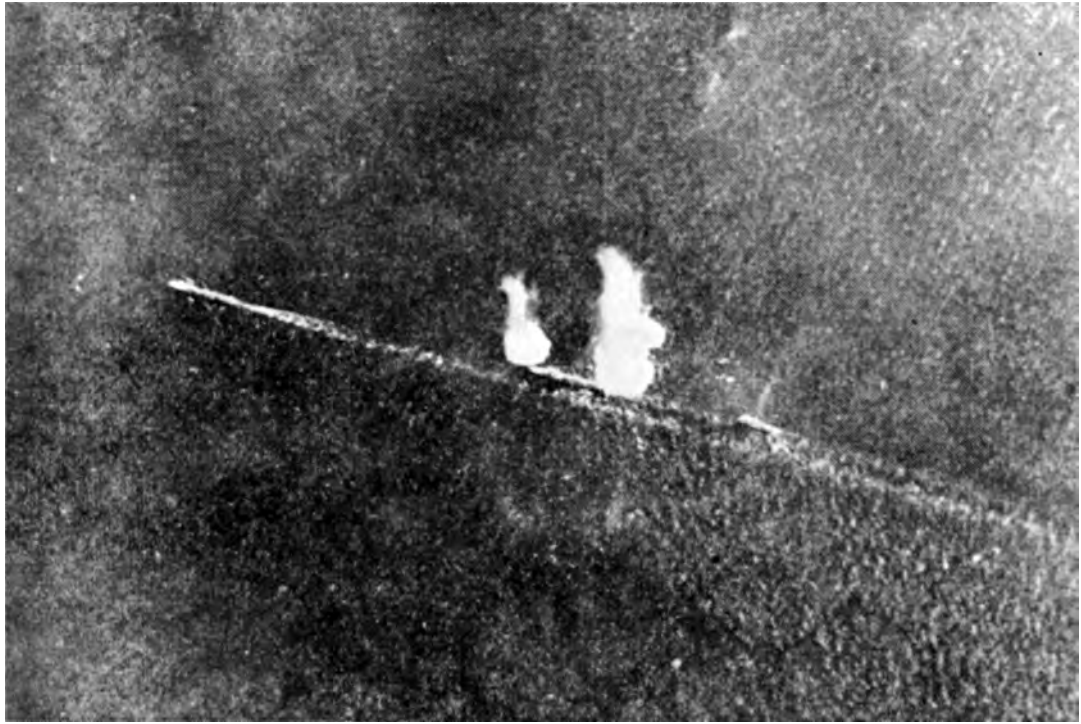
planes and one land-based reconnaissance plane went missing, all other Japanese planes returned to Balikpapan without problems (of the latter, three Type-0 fighter planes were marked by bullets). [Also,] seventeen Type-0 fighter planes and one land-based reconnaissance plane of the Tainan Air Group of the 2d Fighter Plane Unit, led by Lt. Asai Masao, took off from Balikpapan at 0900. [The unit] rushed into [the air over] Madiun at 1230. Reporting military gains of shooting down two and destroying four [enemy planes], all planes returned to Balikpapan without damage. [Meanwhile,] fourteen Type-0 fighter planes and one land-based reconnaissance plane of the Tainan Air Group of the 3d Fighter Plane Unit, led by Lt. Shingō Hideki, took off from Balikpapan at 0915, rushed into [the air over] Malang, and reported military gains of damaging one B-17, one twin-engine flying boat, five four-engine planes, one twin-engine plane and one small plane, which were destroyed or had been set ablaze, by strafing [those on the ground] or in air combat. Other than one Type-0 fighter plane, which crashed itself, the unit returned to Balikpapan (seven of which were marked by bullets).

At 2350 on the 3d, Eleventh Air Fleet Commander in Chief Vice Admiral Tsukahara reported the military gains of that day as sixty-two planes being confirmed results (shot down or set ablaze), and twenty-three or twenty-four planes being unconfirmed results (heavily damaged by strafing or shot down but unconfirmed), totaling eighty-five aircraft.⁽⁵⁴⁾ The loss sustained on the Japanese side was one Type-0 fighter plane, which crashed itself, and three Type-0 fighter planes and one land-based reconnaissance plane, which did not return, totaling five aircraft. This attack surprised the enemy to such a degree that, having no idea of where the Japanese fighter planes had flown from, they [even] assumed that the Japanese had conducted the raid from the south, using aircraft carriers.⁽¹⁰⁸⁾ Air Unit Commander Vice Admiral Tsukahara [then] issued an order concerning the attacks on the following day, the 4th, ordering that the Kendari Unit should attack the enemy fleet (which had been spotted by the attack [plane] unit of the 1st Air Group), while the Balikpapan Unit should continue Operation Z.⁽⁷⁵⁾

Destroying an Enemy Fleet off Java

As previously told, on 3 February on its way back from the attack on Malang the land-based attack plane unit of the 1st Air Group had spotted two enemy battleships, one Class-A cruiser, two Class-B cruisers and nine destroyers at anchor off Madura Island around 1350. (As a result of a review after its return [to base], the “battleships” in that report were amended to “Class-A cruisers.”) Air Unit Commander Vice Admiral Tsukahara decided to immediately conduct a probe and an early morning search for the enemy, and to attack the enemy fleet with the full force of the land-based attack planes on the following day, the 4th.⁽¹²⁾ However, with regard to the attacks by the land-based attack planes on the 4th, the Air Unit commander issued an order at 2330 [on the 3d] that eighteen land-based attack planes of the Takao Air Group at Balikpapan should continue Operation Z.⁽⁷⁵⁾

At 1900 on the 3d, one land-based attack plane of the 1st Air Group took off to probe the enemy, but [shortly] returned due to trouble with its telegraph. Then it was decided that two large flying boats of the Tōkō Air Group at Kendari should take off, but this was delayed due to bad weather; one took off at 2245 and the other at 2315. One of them spotted three large enemy cruisers and two destroyers at 0410 (the report of the sighting did not reach [the base] before 0530) and continued tailing them until 0600, returning [to base] at 0945. The

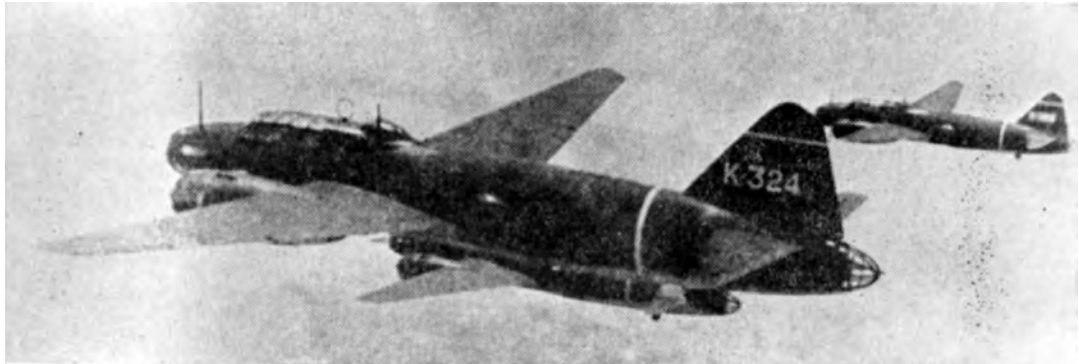


The Enemy Fleet Under Fierce Bombing from Japanese [Air Units]

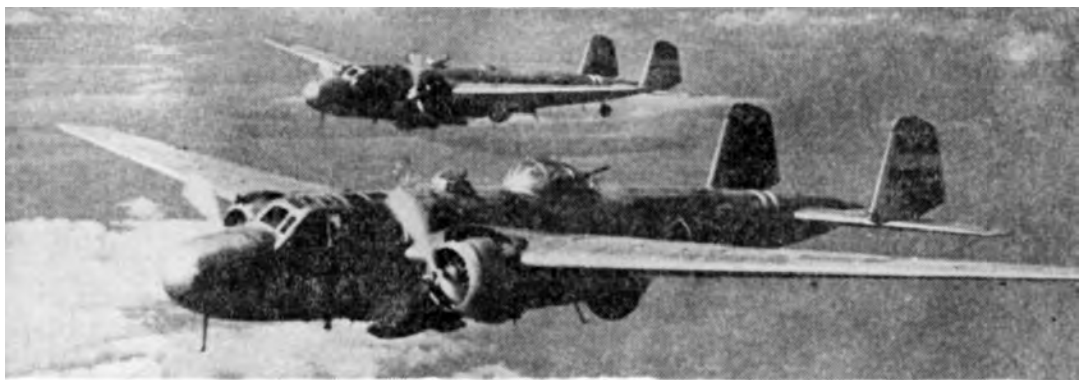
other plane spotted one large enemy cruiser and four destroyers at 0537, tailed them until 0630 and returned [to base] at 1055.⁽⁷¹⁾

In line with the plan that the land-based attack planes should [start] searching for the enemy if no report on the enemy movements from the flying boats had been received by 0530 on 4 February, four land-based attack planes of the Takao Air Group at Balikpapan and one land-based attack plane of the Kanoya Air Group at Kendari were deployed to search for the enemy and took off from their respective airfields at 0735 and 0600.⁽⁸¹⁾ The plane of the Kanoya Air Group returned to Kendari at 1345 without spotting the enemy, while three out of four land-based attack planes of the Takao Air Group returned [to Balikpapan] due to bad weather. However at 1005, the last aircraft spotted one cruiser, one destroyer and two armed merchantmen at a point 80 nautical miles 93° [E] from Surabaya. After tailing them and reporting on them until 1130, the aircraft further searched for the enemy and in the end spotted another enemy fleet ([consisting of] five cruisers and five destroyers) at 1305. It tailed them and reported on them until 1317 before returning to base at 1530.⁽⁷¹⁾ Meanwhile, on the basis of the report that the enemy had been spotted, twenty-seven land-based attack planes of the Kanoya Air Group (led by Lieutenant Commander Irisa), nine land-based attack planes of the Takao Air Group (led by Lt. Yokomizo Kōshirō) and twenty-four land-based attack planes of the 1st Air Group (led by Lieutenant Commander Ozaki), which had already taken off from the Kendari base around 0800 and were heading toward Surabaya, immediately rushed toward the enemy fleet.

At 1115, the land-based attack plane unit of the Kanoya Air Group spotted an [enemy] fleet consisting of two *Java*-class cruisers, one *De Ruyter*-class cruiser, one *Marblehead*-class



Type-1 Land-based Attack Plane



Type-96 Land-based Attack Plane

cruiser, and five destroyers (two of the latter being *Tromp*-class) [sailing] (at a speed of twenty-four knots on a southeastern course) at a point thirty nautical miles south of the Kangean Islands and attacked it. [The unit] reported the following military gains: The 1st Squadron ([led by] Lieutenant Commander Irisa) bombed the 1st ship at 1140, which was half damaged by two near hits at the stern, while the 2d Squadron ([led by] Lt. Morita Rinji) dropped bombs at the 2d ship at 1129, two of which hit the ship at the fore and at midship, causing an explosion near the engine around 1132. [The second] bombing at the 1st ship had no results, while the 2d ship sank at 1153. The 3d Squadron ([led by] Lt. Tanaka Takekatsu) dropped bombs at the 3d ship at 1138, [one of] which fell at 100 meters from the side; the ship was half damaged by two bombs which fell close to the stern. At 1157, the bombing of the 1st ship scored one direct hit at the fore, another at the aft, and four nearby hits, [which caused] damage to the rudder. [After] one explosion near the fore turret around 1200, the flagship *USS Houston* sank at 1215. Then, all aircraft (of which thirteen planes were marked by bullets) returned to Kendari between 1425 and 1500.^(71, 81)

Nine land-based attack planes of the Takao Air Group spotted a combined fleet of U.S. and Dutch naval forces at 1135, and carried out a bombing at 1141 for the first time and at 1149 for the second time. However, because the enemy took large evasive actions at high speed, the unit scored no direct hits. During [the engagement], at 1152 the 3d plane of the 3d Flight crashed itself after being hit by enemy antiaircraft fire; the others returned to Kendari at 1416 without damage.⁽⁷¹⁾



First Air Raid Unit Commander Rear Admiral Tada reported the military gains in these attacks in his preliminary operation report as follows:⁽⁸¹⁾

Of the enemy fleet consisting of two *Java*-class [cruisers], one *De Ruyter*-class [cruiser], one *Marblehead*-class [cruiser], and seven destroyers (two of the latter were assumed to be *Tromp*-class), one *Java*-class [cruiser] was instantly sunk ([by] two direct hits of regular No. 25 bombs), and one *De Ruyter*-class [cruiser] was seriously damaged by two direct hits of regular No. 25 bombs and a number of near hits. She caught fire, and stopped for a while. [However,] after [successfully] putting out the flames one hour later, she sailed without sinking, trailing a large amount of spilt heavy oil.

One *Sumatra*-class [destroyer] was directly hit by a No. 6 regular bomb and nearly hit by two No. 25 bombs and for a while belched out black-brown smoke. Though the fire was put out, she was heavily damaged. One (*Marblehead*-class) light cruiser was directly hit by a No. 25 bomb at [one of] its turrets and nearly hit by another No. 25 bomb, [both of] which caused considerable damage.

Meanwhile, one transport ship ([of] about 5,000 tons) heading for Makassar escorted by two gunboats was set ablaze and destroyed by carrier-based bombers of the 2d Carrier Division.

The 1st Air Raid Unit commander decided to have [some] large flying boats of the Tōkō Air Group try as hard as possible to tail the enemy fleet on the night of the 4th, in order to resume the attack on the next day, the 5th, and completely destroy the enemy.⁽⁸¹⁾ Accordingly, one large flying boat took off from Kendari at 1533 on the 4th, but did see no enemy fleet other than spotting one merchantman in flames (accompanied by two destroyers; the one attacked by the carrier-based bombers of the 2d Carrier Division) to the south of Makassar at 1730. Another flying boat took off at 1820 and searched for the enemy around the Lombok Strait at 2345, but returned due to bad weather without finding the enemy.⁽⁷¹⁾ Thereafter, [all] sorties were suspended due to bad weather, and the chance to tail the enemy fleet was completely lost. Also, the attack of [Operation] Z by the Balikpapan Unit on the 4th was not carried out due to bad weather and was postponed to the 5th.⁽⁷⁵⁾

The Second Attack of [Operation] Z

On 5 February, the unit at the Balikpapan [base] carried out the second attack of [Operation] Z.⁽⁷¹⁾ On that day, because it was expected that enemy fighter planes would be advanced to Bali in connection with an evacuation of the enemy fleet, one element of the attack was directed to the Bali airfield.

At 0820, twenty-seven Type-0 fighter planes ([led by] Lieutenant. Shingō) and one land-based reconnaissance plane of the Tainan Air Group took off from Balikpapan, dashed [into the air over] Surabaya at 1115; the reconnaissance plane immediately headed back. The Type-0 fighter plane unit was engaged in air combat and strafing until 1150. After reporting military gains of shooting down four [enemy] fighter planes and one flying boat, damaging one flying boat that was set ablaze, destroying one reconnaissance seaplane, and damaging two large four-engine planes that had belched out black smoke, all returned [to base] (four of them marked by bullets).

Eleven Type-0 fighter planes ([led by] Sublt. Yamaguchi Sadao) and a land-based reconnaissance plane of the 3d Air Group took off from Balikpapan at 0915, and entered [into the air over] Surabaya at 1145. After reporting [military gains of] shooting down one flying boat and two P-36s, and damaging two flying boats, which had been set ablaze, between 1200 and 1300, all returned [to base].

Eighteen land-based attack planes of the Takao Air Group ([led by] Lt. Adachi Jirō; after the attack on the 3d the unit had moved to Balikpapan) attacked the Surabaya airfield, having left Balikpapan at 0820. Having dropped their full load of bombs ([totaling] 108 60-kg bombs) at 1120, hitting the facilities of the airfield, all [aircraft] returned to Balikpapan without damage.

Ten Type-0 fighter planes ([led by] Lt. Hasuo Ryūichi) and one land-based reconnaissance plane of the 3d Air Group left Balikpapan at 0835 and entered into the air over Denpasar

([on] Bali Island) at 1125. After reporting having shot down in air combat until 1200 eleven P-14s (two of them unconfirmed), all returned [to base]. Only one aircraft had bullet marks. It was concluded that in the first and the second attacks of Operation Z, almost all of the enemy aircraft stationed in the Surabaya area had been destroyed.⁽⁸¹⁾

Letting the Remnant of the Enemy Fleet Slip by

At 0700 on the 5th, three land-based attack planes took off from Kendari and searched for the enemy on the waters south of Lombok Strait.⁽⁸¹⁾ After spotting one surfaced [enemy] submarine at 0950, the 1st search plane spotted one badly damaged Class-A cruiser, four destroyers and one transport ship at a point 150 nautical miles 243° [WSW] from Bali. The plane tailed them until 1300 and returned to base at 1650.⁽⁷¹⁾ However, the transmission of this sighting of the enemy did not reach the attack units of the Kanoya Air Group or the Takao Air Group.⁽⁷⁵⁾ Meanwhile, at 1200, the 2d search plane had spotted one *Marblehead*-class cruiser and one 5,000t-class transport ship sailing eastward at 10 nautical miles south of Sumbawa. The plane tailed them until 1230 and returned to the base at 1410. However, the transmission of this sighting of the enemy did not reach the attack units, either.⁽⁷⁵⁾

Twenty-three land-based attack planes of the Kanoya Air Group ([led by] Lieutenant Commander Irisa) took off from Kendari at 0815 along with the eight land-based attack planes of the Takao Air Group ([led by] Lieutenant Yokomizo) and in concert with the search unit headed for an attack on the enemy fleet. However, unable to detect enemy movements, [both] units reversed course at 1200 and headed for the Jimbaran airfield on Bali. After bombing the airfield from 1228 till 1249 (there were one large, seven mid-sized and ten small aircraft on the ground) and reporting having damaged three mid-sized aircraft, which had been set ablaze, and destroying three mid-sized and four small aircraft, all returned to the Kendari airfield without damage.⁽⁷¹⁾ Meanwhile, twenty-three land-based attack planes of the 1st Air Group ([led by] Lieutenant Commander Ozaki) took off from Kendari at 0835 and spotted one *Marblehead*-class [cruiser] and one transport ship sailing eastward at a point ten nautical miles south of Sumbawa at 1220. From 1300 through 1350, the unit bombed the enemy at a low altitude (900–1,500 meters) despite fierce enemy defensive fire, bad weather and treacherous air currents. However in the end, due to the treacherous air currents, the unit could not score direct hits on the enemy. In this attack, the right engine of the plane of the commander stalled due to enemy hits, and he had to fly back to base on only one engine. Although seven other planes were [also] hit, all aircraft returned to Kendari by 1845.⁽⁷¹⁾

On the 6th, a search and attack mission was conducted with as many as fifty-three land-based attack planes, but in the end they failed to spot the enemy fleet. On that day at 1600, [the Navy Department of] IGHQ made the following announcement:⁽¹⁰⁹⁾

During [the mission to] search for the enemy fleet on 4 February, following the air operation to destroy the air forces of the Dutch East Indies on the previous day, the air unit of the Imperial Japanese Navy spotted the main force of the enemy fleet accompanied by several destroyers on the waters thirty nautical miles south of the Kangean Islands in the Java Sea. Without missing an opportunity, the unit fiercely attacked [the enemy fleet], and during an engagement of several hours, it instantly sank one enemy cruiser of the Dutch *Java*-class and seriously damaged the Dutch cruiser *De Ruyter*, which sank before long; it [also] caused some damage to one Dutch *Java*-class cruiser as well as one U.S. *Marblehead*-class cruiser, and sank one enemy 5,000t-class ship. In this sea engagement, the enemy fleet, which had been operating in the western Pacific

from the opening of hostilities, the main force of the Dutch East Indies fleet in particular, has in effect been virtually destroyed. In this sea engagement, we lost one aircraft.
(NB: This sea engagement shall be called the Sea Engagement off Java.)

A Review of the Course of the Engagement

By comparing the Japanese materials^(71, 81) with *The Rising Sun in the Pacific* [(History of the United States Naval Operation in WWII), pp. 298-303] by [Samuel] Morison, the course of events in the engagement may be reconstructed as follows:*

On 3 February, the enemy fleet had assembled in the Banda** anchorage at Madura Island. The forces consisted of the Dutch light cruiser *HNLMS De Ruyter*, the U.S. heavy cruiser *USS Houston*, the U.S. light cruiser *USS Marblehead*, the Dutch light cruiser *HNLMS Tromp*, the U.S. destroyer *USS Stewart*, the U.S. destroyer *USS [John D.] Edwards*, the U.S. destroyer *USS Barker*, the U.S. destroyer *USS Bulmer*, the U.S. destroyer *USS Paul Jones*, the U.S. destroyer *USS Pillsbury*, the U.S. destroyer *USS Whipple*, the U.S. Oiler *USS Pecos*, and a Dutch destroyer unit. [Editor's note: According to Dutch sources, the last four mentioned ships were not present. The Dutch destroyers were *HNLMS Banckert*, *HNLMS Piet Hein*, and *HNLMS Van Ghent*.]

At 0130 on 4 February, the Dutch commander, Rear Admiral Doorman, left the Bundan anchorage, leading a combined striking force in order to intercept the Japanese units that were about to advance into the Makassar Strait to seize either Makassar or Banjarmasin (they were then assembling at Kendari). The force headed for the Makassar Strait with the flagship *HNLMS De Ruyter* in the lead, followed by the *USS Houston*, the *USS Marblehead*, the *HNLMS Tromp* in that order, and guarded by four U.S. destroyers on the flanks, as well as by four [three] Dutch destroyers at the rear.

Since Rear Admiral Doorman had sent out a warning at 1105 that thirty-seven [Japanese] land-based attack planes were heading for Surabaya, the *USS Marblehead* dumped more than 4,000 gallons of aviation gasoline that was stacked on the deck into the sea. At 1115, the land-based attack plane unit of the Kanoya Air Group and the Takao Air Group spotted the U.S.-Dutch fleet at thirty nautical miles south of the Kangean Islands. At 1120, Lieutenant Commander Irida, commander of the attack unit gave the order to attack, and the attack planes in formations of nine planes each and at an altitude of 4,000 meters and a speed of 150 knots entered upon a bombing course aimed at *HNLMS De Ruyter* and *USS Houston*. At the first try, they lost the opportunity to drop bombs due to the high-speed evasive movements [of the enemy ships] and they flew over the ships. On the second try they again flew over. Then, on the third try, they attacked from 1129 till 1149, but [still] could not damage the fleet. (Note: Although the Morita Squadron reported sinking *USS Houston*, and the Tanaka Squadron half-damaging *USS Marblehead*, and the Irida Squadron half-damaging *HNLMS De Ruyter*, Morison's *The Rising Sun in the Pacific* has no record of any bomb damage.) During that attack, one of the land-based attack planes of the Takao Air Group was hit by antiaircraft fire from the *USS Marblehead* and crashed itself.

* The author does not make a clear distinction between the passages from Morison which he summarizes and those which he quotes directly. Here the directly quoted passages are given as in the original and put within quotation marks.

** Morison has *Bunda*. Dutch sources only mention that the fleet was assembled at the Gili Islands off the southeast coast of Madura. *Bunda* should probably read as *Bundan*, a place on the island of Giligentsis.

At 1157 in the second attack, the Tanaka Squadron bombed the *USS Marblehead* from the [port] quarter. Fourteen 250-kg bombs were dropped over the target scoring two direct and four near hits. One of the direct hits “crashed through the starboard motor launch, pierced the deck, and exploded below, wiping out the sick bay, demolishing the wardroom and near-by cabins, and blowing a 6-foot hole in the deck. Fires broke out all over the stricken section.” Another direct hit at the stern pierced “the main deck and exploded in the hand-steering compartment.” With this [explosion], “all living quarters in that part of the ship were gutted and leaks started.” Although the fires in the after part were extinguished soon, “the rudder jammed hard left and the ship started steaming in circles with a 10-degree list to starboard.” The attack caused a loss of “15 killed or mortally wounded, and 34, including the executive officer” injured. Furthermore, the bow was also damaged by a near hit.

At 1240, the 1st Air Group unit attacked *HNLMS De Ruyter* (reporting a military gain of sinking the ship). [According to Morison, only] “her antiaircraft fire control [was] knocked out” and disabled in this attack. In the last of four attacks, the 1st Air Group unit scored a direct hit on the *USS Houston*. The 250-kg bomb “exploded on her main deck, [and] killed some fifty men.” The shrapnel of the bomb which “knocked out the after gun turret,” “pierced the turret in a hundred places and set fire to the powder” and blew up the turret. The crew of the turret and “turret 3, except for two men, were all burned to death.” [The author seems to think that the “after gun turret” and “turret 3” were different turrets. In fact, they are the same turret.] The damage sustained in this engagement by both sides was as follows:

<i>HNLMS De Ruyter</i> :	Serious damage to her antiaircraft fire control system (attacked by the 1st Air Gp)
<i>USS Houston</i> :	Serious damage to her after gun turret (attacked by the 1st Air Gp)
<i>USS Marblehead</i> :	Fires at the fore part; damage to the bow; rudder trouble (attacked by Kanoya Air Gp)
Japanese aircraft:	One land-based attack plane crashed itself, sixteen sustained hits

In this sea engagement, no torpedo attacks were conducted due to various reasons; in reality the Navy was not able to sink even a single ship. The allied fleet repaired to Cilacap on 8 February. Since her after gun turret was destroyed, *USS Houston* was assigned for the time being to escort important convoys between Port Darwin and Timor. Meanwhile, after having her bottom temporarily repaired at Cilacap and after a further temporary repair at Ceylon, *USS Marblehead* sailed westward to enter on 5 April the U.S. Naval dockyard in Brooklyn (southeast of New York).

Related Operations

The major related operations conducted from 1 February onwards from the Kendari and the Balikpapan bases were [in summary] as follows.⁽⁷¹⁾ (The Ambon operation has been previously described.)

	Kendari Base	Balikpapan Base
1 February	- Eight land-based attack planes of the Kanoya Air Gp and one Type-0 fighter plane of the 2d Carrier Div carried out an attack on Kupang, destroying one [enemy] 10,000t-class merchantman; no enemy aircraft was spotted either in the air or on the ground. - Nine land-based attack planes of the Kanoya Air Gp and six Type-0 fighter planes of the 2d Carrier Div carried out an attack on Waingapu (Sumba Island); no enemy [aircraft] was spotted either in the air or on the ground. The unit bombed one warehouse, which caught flames, but there were no signs of use [by the enemy] at the airfields in Waingapu, Seba (Savu Island), and Reo (Flores Island). - Two carrier-based bombers of the 2d Carrier Div carried out a reconnaissance around the Makassar area, but no enemy aircraft or naval vessels were seen.	- Three carrier-based bombers of the 2d Carrier Div searched for enemy naval vessels. They spotted two submarines afloat, and reported sinking one of them. - Nine carrier-based bombers of the division carried out an attack on [enemy] submarines, and reported sinking one [enemy] submarine sailing with its conning tower above the water.
4 February	- Seven carrier-based bombers and one Type-0 fighter plane of the 2d Carrier Div and one land-based attack plane of the Takao Air Gp carried out an attack on a transport ship (accompanied by two gunboats, which were spotted by the attack unit of the 1st Air Gp; two direct hits of (60kg) bombs on the ship set her ablaze, while one near hit on each of the two gunboats were delivered.	

A Change in Deployment

Having destroyed the bulk of the enemy aircraft in the Surabaya area with the first and second attacks of Operation Z and having destroyed the main force of the allied surface units in the Java area in the sea engagement off Java, the air units continued their reconnaissance and search for the enemy in the Surabaya area, but because few enemy aircraft or naval vessels were spotted, they returned to phase-two dispositions from the 6th onwards.⁽⁷⁵⁾ However, since it was necessary that the 2d Air Raid Unit, whose current number of fighter planes was inadequate, should from then on for a long period continue [the operation] to neutralize the enemy air forces in the Java area, nine fighter planes of the 3d Air Group of the 1st Air Raid Unit were incorporated in the 2d Air Raid Unit, while, due to the capacity of the Balikpapan base, one element of the land-based attack planes of the Takao Air Group was kept in Kendari

to be brought under the command of the 1st Air Raid Unit commander.⁽⁸¹⁾ Also on 4 February, seventeen carrier-based bombers and eighteen Type-0 fighter planes of the unit dispatched by the 2d Carrier Division, which had been incorporated to the 1st and the 2d Air Raid Units to carry out operations until the end of the Ambon operation, were withdrawn from Kendari and Balikpapan to Davao.⁽⁷⁵⁾

9. The Capture of Makassar (See Illustrations No. 25 and No. 26)

As previously told, the following had been decided at the Manila Conference:⁽⁵⁴⁾

1. [The operation to] seize Banjarmasin by sea shall be cancelled; the city shall be seized overland by the Army Sakaguchi Detachment as quickly as possible. As for the air base to be used for the air campaign against eastern Java, the air base on Bali Island shall be captured by the Army and the Navy in conjunction around 21 February (two days before the landing on eastern Java).
2. Makassar shall be seized single-handedly by the Navy on 9 February (Day X + 63).

This [agreement] meant that the plan conceived by the Navy would be implemented, i.e. that the air campaign to destroy the enemy air power in eastern Java before the Java landing operation should be conducted with Balikpapan and Makassar as the front line bases on the north and the east, and that after seizing Bali right before the landing in eastern Java, one element of the air unit should be pushed forward to the island to provide cover for the Java landing [operation] as well as to cut off the enemy from the rear.

Preparations for the Operation

On 24 January, Dutch East Indies Unit Commander Vice Admiral Takahashi announced the main points of the implementation of the operation to seize Makassar by Dutch East Indies Unit Order No. 9, the outline of which is as follows.^(54, 68, 72, 78) This operation was planned to be carried out after the enemy air power in the Java area had been neutralized.

1. Forces employed for the invasion (Commander: 1st Base Force Commander Rear Admiral Kubo)
Bulk of the 1st Base Force, the 21st Destroyer Division, one destroyer division of the 2d Destroyer Squadron, bulk of the Sasebo Combined Special Landing Force, 3d Construction Squad*
2. Support Units
The 2d Air Unit (the 11th Seaplane Tender Division as the core)
3. Outline of the operation
 - (1) The units of the 1st Base Force, which are engaged in [the operation to] seize Kendari, shall successively return to the Bangka anchorage after the completion of the operation.
 - (2) One destroyer division of the 2d Destroyer Squadron, the 21st Minesweeper Division and the 1st Subchaser Division shall return to the Bangka anchorage when the Ambon operation is for the most part completed.
 - (3) After assembling at the Bangka anchorage, the unit to seize Makassar shall depart on 5 February, sail westward on the Celebes Sea, turn southward into the Makassar Strait, and seize Makassar on 9 February.
 - (4) When the Ambon operation is for the most part completed, the 2d Air Unit shall return to the Bangka anchorage and support the Makassar operation.

* According to pp. 249, 381, *5th and 6th Construction Squads*.

4. Others

Among the forces of the 1st Base Force, two minesweepers of the 21st Minesweeper Division and the *Myōkō-maru* shall return to Cam Ranh Bay by 10 February to be incorporated into the 3d Escort Unit to participate in the Batavia landing operation.

Then on 28 January, the 7th Destroyer Division (which had accompanied the 2d Carrier Division) was added to reinforce the Dutch East Indies Unit. The Dutch East Indies Unit Commander Vice Admiral Takahashi decided to assign this division to [the forces] for the Ambon area and reassign another destroyer division currently assigned for the Ambon [operation] to [the operation to] seize Makassar, making the destroyer divisions [for the Makassar operation] two in total. On the 29th, he notified the 2d Destroyer Squadron commander that after the seizure of Ambon, the 8th and the 15th Destroyer Divisions, the 21st Minesweeper Division and the 1st Subchaser Division should come under the command of the 1st Base Force commander and participate in [the operation to] seize Makassar.⁽⁵⁴⁾

Originally, [the operation to] seize Makassar had been planned in such a way that [the ships] would sail from the Bangka [anchorage] around the west of Celebes to attack the city. However, the movements of the enemy since the time of the launch of [the operations to] seize Balikpapan and Kendari on 21 January had created a situation where compared to the Balikpapan area where the counterattacks were intense, from counterattacks by submarines to night attacks by surface vessels as well as air raids, there were almost no counterattacks in the Kendari area. Therefore, on 28 January, Dutch East Indies Unit Commander Vice Admiral Takahashi decided to conduct [the operation to] seize Makassar by sailing around the east and south of Celebes,⁽⁷⁸⁾ which also made it easier to divert forces from the Ambon operation [to the Makassar operation].

Judging that the diversion of forces [from the Ambon operation] would become easier [by sailing around the south of Celebes], Dutch East Indies Unit Commander Vice Admiral Takahashi contacted, after receiving the report of the success of the Ambon landing operation on 31 January, Eastern Attack Unit Commander Rear Admiral Takagi about advancing [the operation to] seize Makassar by one or two days.⁽⁷⁸⁾ The Eastern Attack Unit commander replied that it was feasible to move up the operation by one day and started to move up the operation from the 2d onwards, setting the date of the landing on Makassar on 8 February.⁽⁵⁴⁾ However, after that and contrary to their expectations, the ground operations as well as the minesweeping operations in the Ambon area got delayed and it was getting impossible to divert the forces one day earlier. On 2 February, the Dutch East Indies Unit Commander changed the date of the Makassar operation [again] to the 9th as originally scheduled.⁽⁷⁸⁾ Also, in view of the hard fight experienced by the 1st Kure Special Landing Force on Ambon, the Dutch East Indies Unit commander gave up [the idea to] have the *Chitose* participate in the Makassar operation and decided to deploy only the *Mizuho* in that operation. Following this decision and in order to make up for the shortage of reconnaissance seaplanes, it was decided to have the reconnaissance seaplane unit of the *Sanuki-maru*, which was then in Balikpapan (due to the damage she had sustained in the [enemy] air strike on 27 January), support the [Makassar operation].⁽⁵⁴⁾

Then, as a result of the (previously mentioned) sinking of Minesweeper No. 9 and the accidents, which crippled Minesweepers Nos. 11 and 12 on the afternoon of 2 February in the bay of Ambon, Dutch East Indies Unit Commander Vice Admiral Takahashi judged it impossible to dispatch one element of the 21st Minesweeper Division to Cam Ranh Bay (i.e. he

had planned to have two of the minesweepers participate in the operation to invade western Java). On the 3d, he decided to incorporate two torpedo boats of the 21st Torpedo Boat Division of the 2d Base Force into the 3d Escort Unit (the western Java invasion unit) to replace those minesweepers.⁽⁵⁴⁾ On 4 February, the Dutch East Indies commander also decided to bring in the minesweeper division of the 2d Base Force and the destroyers of the 4th Destroyer Squadron, which had been [temporarily] brought under the command of the 2d Base Force and stationed in Balikpapan, in order to make up for the shortage of minesweepers and also to support the Makassar operation unit. This unit had been scheduled to arrive in Jolo around the 13th or the 14th to provide escort for the eastern Java landing unit.⁽⁵⁶⁾ (Fourth Destroyer Squadron Commander Rear Admiral Nishimura had already left Balikpapan on 30 January, leading the *Naka* and the 2d Destroyer Division, heading for Lingayen Gulf to prepare for the Java invasion operation.)

Plan of Operations, etc.

Assessment of the Enemy Movements Centering on Makassar

The assessment of the enemy movements by the Makassar invasion unit around 5 February when the unit had assembled in Kendari was by and large as follows:^(54, 78)

1. The [enemy] air power in eastern Java has suffered a major loss through the air campaign of our land-based air units from Kendari and Balikpapan in early February.
2. The enemy air power in the Kupang area has been pushed toward western Java and Port Darwin because of our daily air attacks conducted from the bases in Ambon and Kendari; [the enemy power in] the Dutch East Indies is being divided by our air campaign to neutralize their power.
3. Since our land-based air units' attack on the main force of the enemy combined fleet to the east of the Madura Strait on 4 February, we have not seen powerful enemy surface naval vessels operate on the Java Sea east of Surabaya.
4. Enemy submarines frequently appear in the Makassar Strait area. Despite the clearing operations, which were carried out several times, they are still rampant; it is quite dangerous for low-speed convoys to sail the strait.
5. It seems that one or two enemy submarines are constantly deployed in the Kendari area as well as at the entrance of Staring Bay to keep an eye on our units coming and going, while seeking an opportunity to make a surprise attack.
6. Before the opening of hostilities, the [enemy] strength on the ground around Makassar was reported to be about 1,500 men, but thereafter it is unclear.

The Plan of Operations of the 1st Base Unit

On 1 February, 1st Base Unit Commander Rear Admiral Kubo announced the plan of operations of the unit by Signal Order No. 6,⁽¹¹⁰⁾ a summary of which is as follows:

1. Outline of the advance toward Kendari
 - (1) Distribution of units
 - {1} Main unit (directly led by the 1st Base Force commander): the *Nagara*
 - {2} 1st Echelon (led by the 21st Destroyer Division commander): the 21st Destroyer Division (minus the *Hatsuharu*), the *Hokuriku-maru*, the *Nankai-maru*, the *Kinai-maru* (the above [three] carrying the main force of the Sasebo Combined Special Landing Force)

- {3} 2d Echelon (led by the captain of the *Tsukushi*): the *Tsukushi*, the *Aotaka*, the *Ikushima-maru*, Submarine Chasers No. 3 and No. 14, Patrol Boats No. 1 and No. 2, the *Matsué-maru*, the *Montevideo-maru*, the *Yamashimo-maru*, (the above [three] carrying the 5th and the 6th Construction Squads), the *San Clemente-maru* (supply ship for the operation unit)
- (2) Main points of the operation
 - {1} The 1st and the 2d Echelons shall depart [from the Bangka anchorage] at 0800 on 2 February, and pass the Greyhound Strait (west of the Sula Islands) with each echelon in a group. They shall advance to Kendari on the morning of 4 February.
 - {2} The main unit (the *Nagara*) shall leave the Bangka [anchorage] at 1600 on 2 February and arrive at Kendari early in the morning on 4 February.
- 2. Distribution of forces (omitted by the author)
- 3. Actions of the units
 - (1) Transport Convoy

It shall leave Kendari (Staring Bay) around 2100 on the 6th of February, and enter the anchorage of Makassar around 0000 on the 9th, via Buton Channel and the channel to the south of Selayar Island.
 - (2) Main Unit

It shall depart from Kendari almost at the same time as the transport convoy and take charge of clearing the route ahead of the convoy while supporting it.
 - (3) Supply unit (omitted)
 - (4) The entry into the anchorage and the guarding (omitted)
- 4. Others (omitted)

The Plan of Operations of the Sasebo Combined Special Landing Force⁽⁶⁸⁾

- 1. Assault Unit ([consisting of] about two and a half companies of the 2d Sasebo Special Landing Force)

The unit shall embark in Patrol Boats Nos. 1 and 2, go ashore at the coast of Aeng Batu Batu ahead of the main force, rapidly advance and promptly secure the bridge over the [Jene]berang River, a strategic point, which leads to the airfield as well as to the urban area of Makassar. After that, as the advance guard of the main force, it shall advance toward the Maros airfield and seize it.
- 2. Main Unit ([consisting of] the Sasebo Combined Special Landing Force headquarters unit, the 2d Sasebo Special Landing Force (minus three companies), one company of the 1st Sasebo Special Landing Force)

The unit shall land at the coast of Aeng Batu Batu in the wake of the assault unit; while covering the advance of the assault unit, it shall seize the Maros airfield.
- 3. Detached Unit ([consisting of] the 1st Sasebo Special Landing Force (minus one and a half company))

The unit shall land along with the main unit. After crossing the [Jene]berang River, it shall head for the Sungguminasa area. [From there,] it shall charge into the urban area of Makassar, seize it and clear it of the enemy.
- 4. Afterwards, the force shall be assigned to mop up the enemy in Makassar and vicinity and guard the area.

The Plan of Operations of the 2d Air Unit

Only the *Mizuho* had been scheduled to participate in the Makassar operation. However, after the occupation of the Laha airfield by the 1st Kure Special Landing force at 0630 on 3 February, it became no longer necessary to keep the *Chitose*, the flagship of the 11th Seaplane

Tender Division, at Ambon until the 9th. Thus, the plan was changed so that the 11th Seaplane Tender Division should participate in the Makassar operation with its entire force. The plan after the change was as follows:

The *Mizuho*, Patrol Boat No. 39 and three cutters shall head for Kendari, leaving the Kelang anchorage at 1500 on the 3d, while the flagship *Chitose*, Patrol Boats No. 34 and No. 38 shall stay engaged in the Ambon operation until the 6th of February. They shall leave Piru Bay and reach a point south of Selayar Island around the sunset of the 6th. At 0700 on the 8th, they shall join the *Mizuho* at a point southeast of Selayar Island, to be in charge of the direct escort of the convoy, the guarding against enemy submarines and aircraft as well as the guarding of the anchorage.

The Plan of Operations of the Land-Based Air Units

First Air Raid Unit Commander Rear Admiral Tada's plan to support the Makassar operations was in outline as follows:⁽⁸¹⁾

1. During the advance from the Bangka anchorage to Kendari (2-4 February), the patrol for the Makassar invasion unit against enemy submarines shall be carried out from the Kema base (Menado) as designated by the Tōkō Air Group commander.
2. The guard against enemy aircraft and submarines at Kendari (Staring Bay) shall be provided during the 4th and the 6th of February by Type-0 fighter planes of the 3d Air Group and Type-0 fighter planes and carrier-based bombers of the unit dispatched from the 2d Carrier Division, as designated by the 3d Air Group commander.
3. Orders for the subsequent operations shall be given later.

The Launch of the Operation

Neutralization of the Enemy Air Power and the Sailing of the Convoy

On 17 January, the 1st Air Raid Unit had launched a covert reconnaissance of Makassar from Menado with one land-based reconnaissance plane of the 3d Air Group, while on 20 January the 2d Air Raid Unit had launched its reconnaissance of Makassar from Tarakan with one land-based reconnaissance plane of the Tainan Air Group.⁽⁷¹⁾ After that, land-based reconnaissance planes and Type-0 fighter planes of the Tainan Air Group and the 3d Air Group as well as carrier-based bombers of the 2d Carrier Division carried out reconnaissance attacks on Makassar, while flying boats of the Tōkō Air Group provided guard against enemy submarines for the convoy heading for Kendari, and the 2d Carrier Division and Type-0 fighter planes of the 3d Air Group patrolled the air above the Kendari anchorage. The enemy was hardly seen during this period, and along with the results of Operation Z, it was concluded that the Japanese forces had largely secured command of the air in that area.

The damage to the flagship of the 1st Base Unit *Nagara*, caused by the previously mentioned collision with the *Hatsuharu* off Kendari* [p. 202], was being repaired by the repair ship *Akashi* at Davao from 27 January onwards and was completed on 1 February. The *Nagara* immediately left Davao and arrived at the Bangka anchorage at 1600 on 2 [February].⁽⁵⁹⁾ In the meantime, the 21st Destroyer Division (*Wakaba* and *Nenohi*), which had escorted the damaged *Hatsuharu* to Davao [and arrived there] on the 29th of January, departed from Davao on the next day, the 30th, leaving the *Hatsuharu* in Davao for repair, and arrived in the Bangka

* The text mistakenly has *Balikpapan*.

anchorage on the 31st.⁽⁵⁹⁾ As for the unit that had seized Kendari, the first batch of units withdrawn [from Kendari] and the *Hatsushimo* ([of] the 21st Destroyer Division) with 1st Base Force Commander Rear Admiral Kubo on board had returned to the Bangka anchorage on the 29th, which was followed by the second batch on the 1st of February.⁽⁵⁹⁾

At 0800 on 2 February, the Makassar invasion unit left the Bangka anchorage and headed for Kendari, scheduled to sortie from Kendari on the 5th and land in Makassar on the 8th.⁽¹¹⁰⁾ As previously told, after its departure from the anchorage, the operation to seize Makassar was postponed for one day, and [accordingly] the departure from Kendari was changed to 6 February. The 1st Echelon arrived at Staring Bay (a bay to the east of Kendari) around 2230 on the 3d, the *Nagara* at 0330 on the 4th, and the 2d Echelon around 0600 on the same day.^(59, 110) As for the units diverted from Ambon, the *Mizuho* and Patrol Boat No. 39 arrived in Staring Bay on the evening of the 4th, the 15th Destroyer Division at 2030 on the 4th, the 21st Minesweeper Division and the 1st Subchaser Division early in the morning on the 5th, and the 8th Destroyer Division on the morning of the 5th. Also, Submarine chaser No. 14, which had left the Bangka [anchorage] on 3 February, arrived at the bay on the afternoon of the 5th. This completed the advance to Kendari of the whole force of the Makassar invasion unit.^(59, 68)

From the 4th onwards, while replenishing supplies at Staring Bay by mooring one ship after another alongside the *San Clemente-maru*, the unit had ample discussions about the operation until the sortie on the 6th.⁽⁹³⁾ During that time, at 1830 on the evening of the 4th, the *Suzukaze* ([of] the 24th Destroyer Division [of] the main unit), came under a torpedo attack by an enemy submarine while patrolling outside Staring Bay. Hit by one enemy torpedo at her starboard bow, she sustained leaks in the fore boiler room and returned to the bay to have emergency repairs.⁽⁶⁸⁾

On the evening of 6 February, the Makassar invasion unit sailed from Staring Bay.^(68, 93) At 0140 on the 7th, the 15th and the 8th Destroyer Divisions, which sailed ahead, spotted a surfaced [enemy] submarine, but let her slip when she submerged.⁽⁹³⁾ At 0845, the *Michishio* ([of] the 8th Destroyer Division), while clearing the route ahead, detected an enemy submarine, carried out an attack with antisubmarine depth charges and reported the result as confirmed.⁽⁶⁸⁾

The *Natsushio* Torpedoed; the Landing

The convoy passed south of Selayar Island around noon on 8 February, changed course to the northwest to head toward the southwest of Celebes.⁽⁶⁸⁾ Although it was partly sunny with a slight breeze from the northwest and a calm sea in the morning, the weather got worse as the convoy approached Makassar in the afternoon while visibility became poor.⁽⁹³⁾ Around 1630, out of concern about sailing with poor visibility as well as the guarding against the enemy whose movements were unknown, 1st Base Unit Commander Rear Admiral Kubo gave the following instructions to the units under his command [summary]:⁽¹¹⁰⁾

1. In order to confirm the position of the ships, commanders shall take such appropriate measures as detaching certain ships, etc.
2. Due to the poor visibility, some ships shall be sent ahead to guide the echelons. However, if visibility worsens, the measures to be taken are in outline as follows.

- (1) [The ships] shall enter [into the anchorage at Makassar] as far as is navigable, [temporarily] drop anchor and launch large-sized motorized [landing] craft, which shall further advance, guided by submarine chaser(s). The echelons shall follow the craft.
- (2) Depending on the situation and if unavoidable, the landing point shall be changed to [a point further] south.
- (3) When the circumstances make it inevitable, the landing shall be postponed for one day.

Troubled by poor visibility, the transport echelons managed toward sunset to reach the waters about fifteen nautical miles south of Tanakeke Island and changed formation to enter into the anchorage. At 2030, the echelons entered the depth zone of 200 meters or less, about ten nautical miles southwest of Tanakeke Island, and the 21st Minesweeper Division started sweeping mines on the route ahead.⁽⁶⁸⁾ At 2210, the 1st Patrol Boat Division, which had sailed ahead, entered the planned anchorage, and the following convoy [also] changed course to the northeast and headed toward the port of Makassar under poor visibility and a drizzle that blanketed the surface of the sea. The ships kept exchanging signals and put on identification lights in order to maintain formation. During these moments, it seemed as if there was a total absence of alertness against the enemy.⁽⁹³⁾ At 2215, the *Natsushio*, the 1st ship of the 15th Destroyer Division, which was following the echelon in its wake, was hit by a torpedo on her starboard quarter, flooding her engine room and crippling her. While she worked on stopping the flooding on the spot, the fellow destroyers *Oyashio* and *Kuroshio* provided guard on the waters nearby, but no enemy submarines were detected.⁽¹¹¹⁾ Meanwhile, the first landing unit of the commando unit of the Sasebo Combined Special Landing Force, which had entered into the 2d anchorage, made a successful landing on the coast of Aeng Batu Batu at 2340.⁽¹¹⁰⁾

At 0800 on that day [8 February], the element of the 2d Base Unit stationed in Balikpapan but assigned to support the Makassar operation ([i.e.] the 1st Section of the 24th Destroyer Division, the 9th Destroyer Division (minus the *Yamagumo*), the 30th and the 11th Minesweeper Divisions and Patrol Boat No. 36) departed from the port of Balikpapan under the command of 2d Base Force Commander Rear Admiral Hirose (on board of the *Natsugumo*). It crossed the Makassar Strait, reached the waters off Cape William [Tanjung Rangas] on the west coast of Celebes around 2100, and headed for [the waters] off Makassar. At 2130, the *Minegumo* ([of] the 9th Destroyer Division) spotted a surfaced enemy submarine and attacked her with antisubmarine depth charges after illuminating and shelling her, results unconfirmed.⁽¹¹²⁾

On 9 February, the second landing unit of the commando unit of the Sasebo Combined Special Landing Force landed on [the coast] of Aeng Batu Batu around 0050, which was followed by the main unit of the Sasebo Combined Special Landing Force around 0340.⁽¹¹⁰⁾ The landing units reached the [Jene]berang River at 0400 and the Telo River at 0810, charged into the urban area of Makassar at 1130, completely seized the area at 1230, and seized the Maros airfield at 1900.^(67, 68) The military gains of this land combat were seventy-seven abandoned bodies and eighty-five men taken prisoners, while the loss sustained [by the special landing force] was four killed and five injured.^(67, 68)

In the meantime, based on the judgment that the torpedoed *Natsushio* was not likely to sink, it was decided that the *Kuroshio* should tow the *Natsushio* to Kendari.⁽⁹³⁾ From 0330 on the 9th, the *Kuroshio* began towing [the *Natsushio*] and started sailing, escorted by the *Oyashio*. However, after three hours of towing, the wind direction suddenly changed south of



Japanese Special Landing Forces Rushing Forward, Picking Their Way Through the Bamboo Spears Set Up Against Paratroopers

Tanakeke Island, and at 0840 the *Natsushio* ended up sinking (with five men killed and six seriously injured). Cdr. (later Capt.) Nagai Sumitaka, [then] captain of the destroyer *Natsushio*, recalled that the failure of the towing was due to an overoptimistic judgment of the damage.

After rescuing the crew of the *Natsushio*, the 15th Destroyer Division (the *Oyashio* and the *Kuroshio*) reached their designated patrol area, while the 8th Destroyer Division departed for Jolo to provide escort for the Bali invasion unit, departing at 0600 on the 9th as scheduled. Just after its departure, the 1st Section of the 24th Destroyer Division and the 9th Destroyer Division (minus the *Yamagumo*) from the Balikpapan unit arrived and started to patrol the area.⁽⁶⁸⁾ With no enemy attack on the anchorage, the disembarkation made smooth progress on the 9th.⁽⁶⁸⁾

The Support Unit (the *Nachi* and the *Haguro*), which had left Davao at 1800 on 6 February, entered the Banda Sea via the Ceram Sea on the 8th and took charge of the support for the Makassar operation at 150 nautical miles southwest of Ambon. It discontinued the support operation on the evening of that day, judging that the operation was more or less completed, and entered Staring Bay at 1030 on 10 February.

The Redeployment of the [Makassar] Invasion Units

Judging that that operation was more or less completed after the seizure of the Maros airfield on the evening of the 9th, 1st Base Unit Commander Rear Admiral Kubo had the 15th De-

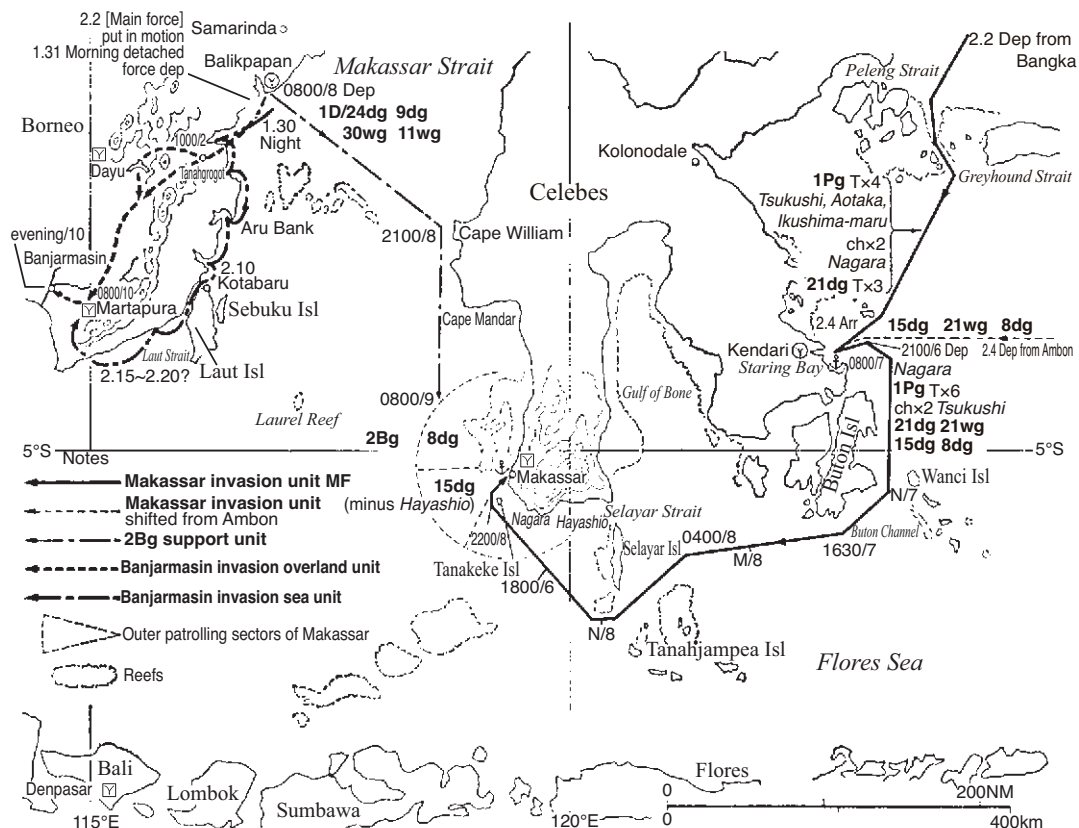


Illustration No. 25 — The Movements of the Units to Seize Makassar and Banjarmasin

stroyer Division (minus the *Natsushio* and the *Hayashio*) depart for Kendari at 0800 on the 10th in order to participate in the Kupang operation.⁽⁶⁸⁾ The minesweeping of the anchorage [at Makassar] was carried out by the 21st, the 11th and the 30th Minesweeper Divisions, the 1st Patrol Boat Division, and the motor launches as well as the large-sized motorized [landing] craft of the [1st Base] Unit. However, no mines were snagged, and the transport ships shifted from the 2d anchorage to that inside the port around 1600.⁽¹¹⁰⁾ After the minesweeping mission was completed, the 30th and the 11th Minesweeper Divisions returned to their original unit, while the destroyers of the 2d Base Unit also discontinued their support and headed for Jolo one after another to cooperate in escorting the eastern Java invasion units.⁽¹¹²⁾

Although on 11 February the Sasebo Combined Special Landing Force was still mopping up the enemy in the neighborhood, it was decided that two platoons of the force should participate in the Kupang operation. They embarked on the ships of the 21st Minesweeper Division and the 1st Patrol Boat Division, both of which were also supposed to take part in the Kupang operation, and left Makassar at 0700 for Kendari.^(59, 110) The *Hayashio* of the 15th Destroyer Division also left her patrol area at 1500 for Kendari to take part in the Kupang operation. At 1600, 1st Base Unit Commander Rear Admiral Kubo entered into the port of Makassar, leading the *Nagara*, and gave the necessary instructions and notifications.^(68, 78)

At 0600 on the 12th of February, the commander left Makassar on the *Nagara*, and returned to Staring Bay at 1700 on the 13th.⁽⁵⁹⁾ In the meantime, the 21st Minesweeper Division, the

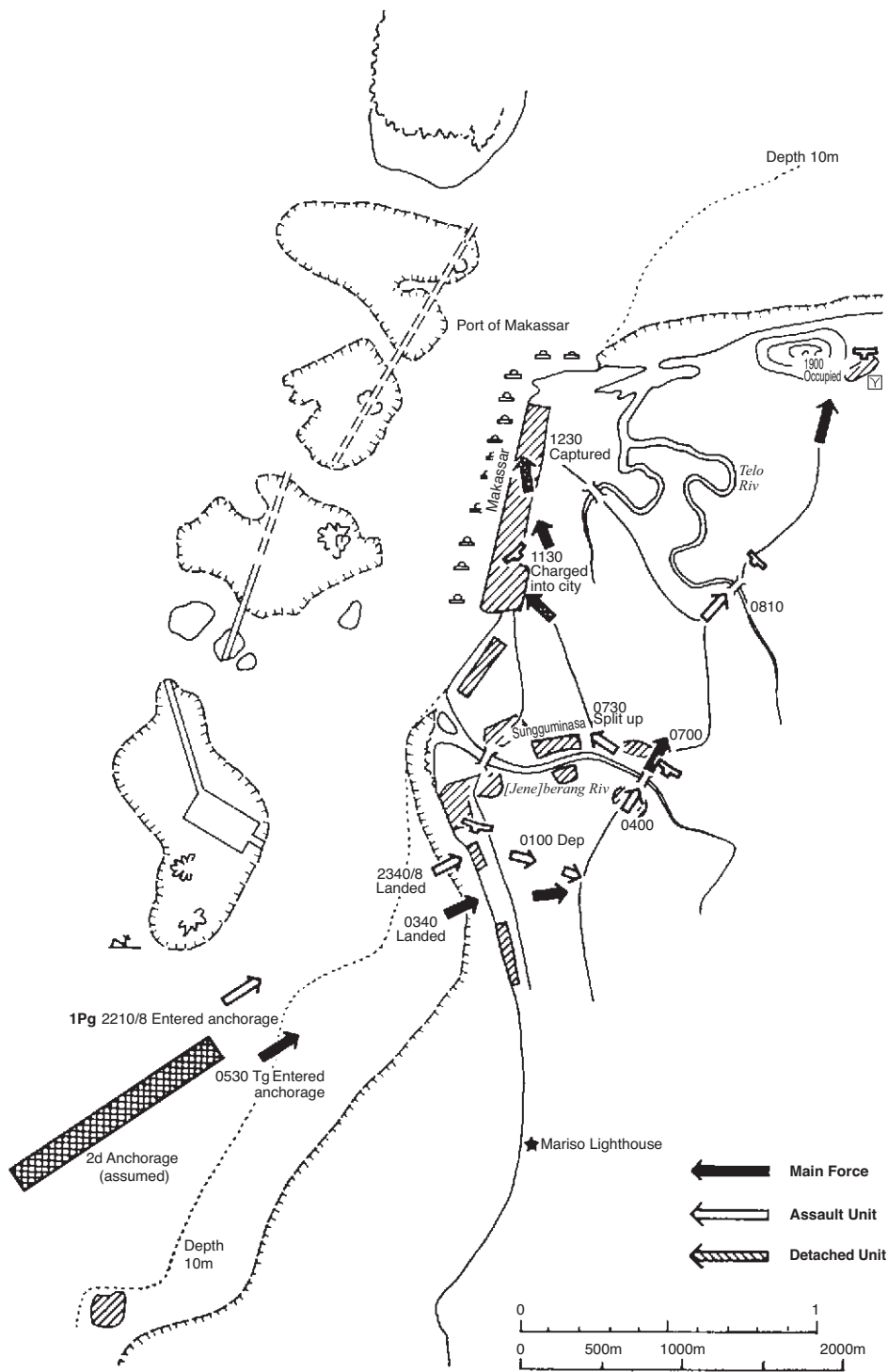


Illustration No. 26—The Operations of the Sasebo Combined Special Landing Force in the Attack on Makassar

1st Patrol Boat Division and the *Hayashio*, which had left Makassar earlier, returned to Staring Bay on the evening of the 12th,⁽⁵⁹⁾ where the 1st Base Unit started on the preparations to capture Bali, while the others began their preparations to seize Kupang.⁽⁵⁹⁾ Makassar was located at a distance of about 450 nautical miles from eastern Java, about 400 nautical miles from Kupang, and about 330 nautical miles from Bali, and [the seizure of] this [place] completed the network of air bases enveloping eastern Java.

The Operations of the Air Units

From the departure of the convoy until the completion of the capture operation, the 1st Air Raid Unit, the 2d Air Unit and the *Sanuki-maru* were engaged in patrolling against enemy aircraft and submarines as well as patrolling the route ahead and the flanks of the sailing route, while searching for enemy in the vicinity and clearing the Makassar Strait of enemy submarines as well as supporting the land combat. [However,] except for a raid by enemy aircraft at 0340 on 10 February (causing no damage) on the tender ships of the 2d Air Unit, which were conducting operations at anchor to the southwest of Bulunrue Island, no enemy was seen at all.^(71, 81) At 1920 on the 10th, the *Chitose*, Patrol Boats No. 34 and No. 38 discontinued the operation and headed for Jolo to prepare for the subsequent eastern Java landing operation,⁽⁶⁸⁾ while the *Mizuho* [also] left at 1900 on the 11th for Kendari along with Patrol Boat No. 39 and Submarine chaser No. 2, to prepare for the operation to capture Bali.⁽⁶⁸⁾ Meanwhile on the 10th, the reconnaissance seaplane units of the *Sanuki-maru* advanced to the coast of Parepare ([near] Makassar) to be engaged in operations there.⁽⁷⁶⁾ On the 15th, two Type-0 fighter planes of the 3d Air Group advanced to Makassar from Kendari for the first time, which was followed by seven on the 17th ([no advance was made] on the 16th due to bad weather.)⁽⁷¹⁾

Conversely, the allied forces were thrown in total confusion by the Japanese air attacks (Operation Z) from 3 to 5 February. Although U.S. submarine S-37, being deployed outside the port of Makassar, retaliated by sinking the *Natsushio*, no other air or naval counterattacks were made. Even on land, after some resistance put up by a garrison consisting of merely two companies, the strategic point Makassar was given up.^(85, 86, 113)

10. The Seizure of Banjarmasin (See Illustration No. 25)

[See also Vol. 3, pp. 391-394]

On 25 January, after having returned to Gaoxiong from the Manila Conference, Sixteenth Army Commander Lieutenant General Imamura, conform to the arrangements made at the conference, issued the order to seize Banjarmasin overland. In line with this order, Detachment Commander Sakaguchi drew up the following outline of the operation to seize Banjarmasin:^(88, 99) (Summary)

1. Forces employed for the invasion operation

Commander: 146th Infantry Regiment Commander Col. Yamamoto Kyōhei

Strength of the overland task force: one infantry battalion, one artillery battery, and one engineer company as the core

Strength of the seaborne task force: one infantry company, one engineer platoon and one independent engineer platoon as the core

2. Outline of the operation

(1) Overland operation

[The unit shall] leave Balikpapan in the evening of 30 January, go ashore near Tanahgrogot at dawn on the 31st, and push through the jungle-covered Meratus mountains into the plain of Banjarmasin, from where the unit shall rapidly advance and seize the Martapura airfield as well as the urban area of Banjarmasin.

(2) Seaborne operation

The unit shall leave Balikpapan at night on 30 January in large- and small-sized motorized [landing] craft. By day it shall hide in inlets along the coast under the dense forest to conceal its movements. Only at night it shall maneuver ahead and via Tanahgrogot, Pamukan, Kotabaru, and Laut Strait, land on the coast southeast of Martapura to seize the airfield there. On its way, it shall conduct a night raid on Kotabaru [on Laut Island] to obtain military supplies and gather information.

(3) Cooperation by the Naval units

[1] The Navy 2d Base Unit shall dispatch one pilot officer to the seaborne task force.

[2] Aviation fuel and ammunition as well as a skeleton crew for preparing the airfield shall be dispatched by the Eleventh Air Fleet and transported to Banjarmasin by sea in fishing boats. One element of the fishing boats shall accompany the seaborne task force.

On 30 January, the [Army] seaborne task force left Balikpapan in four large- and two small-sized motorized [landing] craft as well as in fishing boats (the number of the latter is unknown) along with one element of the naval units. The force reached Adang Bay at dawn on the 31st. Then via Apar Besar Bay, Pamukan Bay and Klumpang Bay, it seized Kotabaru at the northern tip of Laut Island on 10 February.^(89, 114) Meanwhile, the advance unit of the overland task force left Balikpapan on the morning of 31 January, seized Tanahgrogot on the morning of 1 February, while its main force left Balikpapan on the next day the 2d and arrived in Tanahgrogot on the 3d. After that, the overland task force entered the mountains covered with rain forest. While being attacked by swarms of mosquitoes, land leeches and other insects, they clambered up steep mountains, threw temporary log bridges over deep gorges and pushed their way through the mountains for about 100 kilometers. After having driven off a small enemy unit, which the force had encountered on its way, it rushed into the plain of Banjarmasin. At 0900 on 10 February, the vanguard of the overland task force finally reached the Martapura airfield and seized it.⁽⁸⁹⁾

[Then,] taking command of the units of the overland task force, which arrived one after another at Martapura, Regimental Commander Yamamoto completely seized the urban area of Banjarmasin on the evening of that day. The officers and men of the overland task force had marched about some 400 kilometers over bad tracks (of which 100 kilometers had consisted of jungle). As many as about 80% of them developed malaria, which at one point even made it difficult for the force to operate, but they attained their goal in the end.⁽⁸⁶⁾

The seaborne task force reached Banjarmasin around 15 – 20 February; the naval base unit reinforcements around the 20th.⁽¹¹⁵⁾ After that, the conditioning of the airfield was started, but the Navy air units did not immediately advance to the base; only one element of the 23d Air Flotilla advanced there on 25 February. Thereafter the base was used as a staging base for the advance to Bali.⁽⁷¹⁾

Prior to this, and after having launched a reconnaissance of Banjarmasin with one land-based reconnaissance plane of the Tainan Air Group on 18 January, the 2d Air Raid Unit had attacked Banjarmasin with Type-0 fighter plane[s] and land-based reconnaissance plane[s]

on the 20th, the 25th, and the 27th and reported having set four PBV flying boats and four B-17 heavy bombers ablaze. However, no more enemy planes had been spotted since then. After the departure of the Army units, [the 2d Air Raid Unit] had reconnoitered the Army front lines day after day and completed the operations as of 15 February.⁽⁷¹⁾

11. The Invasion of Southern Sumatra

(See Attached Illustrations No. 1 and No. 2 [omitted], and Illustration No. 28)

On 31 January, the Army units in the Malay theater rushed into Johor Bahru on the bank opposite of Singapore. In the meantime, the southern Sumatra invasion [operation] (to capture Bangka and Palembang; Operation L), which had been set on 6 February (Day X + 60)* in the Cam Ranh meeting on 29 December, was postponed for four days till 10 February (Day X + 64) as a result of the Manila Conference ([held] between 21 and 23 January), as previously told.⁽³⁴⁾

In accordance with this result, on 31 January,** the Arrangement on the Air [Operations] in Operation L was concluded between the commander in chief of the First Southern Expeditionary Fleet, the Sixteenth Army commander, and the [Army] Third Air Force commander. Furthermore, an Arrangement for Operation L was concluded between the commander in chief of the First Southern Expeditionary Fleet and the [Army] 38th Division commander,⁽¹¹⁶⁾ both of which were [in outline] as follows:⁽¹¹⁷⁾

Arrangement on the Air [Operations] in Operation L

Arrangement on the Air [Operations] in Operation L between the First Southern Expeditionary Fleet Commander in Chief, the Sixteenth Army Commander and the Third Air Force Commander

First Southern Expeditionary Fleet Commander in Chief, V. Adm. Ozawa Jisaburō
Sixteenth Army Commander, Lt. Gen. Imamura Hitoshi
Third Air Force Commander, Lt. Gen. Sugawara Michiō

I. Name of Operation and Basic Dates

1. The operations against Bangka Island and Palembang shall be called Operation L.
2. The day when the advance party of the 38th Division lands in Mentok shall be indicated as Day L, and is scheduled for 10 February. In case a change of date for Day L is required due to the progress of the air operations, weather conditions or enemy movements, a decision shall be made by 1200 on Day L – 6 upon deliberation between the First Southern Expeditionary Fleet commander in chief and the Sixteenth Army commander.

However, regarding [matters involving] air operations, the Sixteenth Army commander shall consult the Third Air Force commander.

II. Forces to be employed

1. Navy
 - 1st Air Unit: About 100 land-based attack planes, about 30 fighter planes, and 6 land-based reconnaissance planes.
 - Malaya Unit: About 40 seaplanes.
2. Army
 - About 9 command reconnaissance planes,⁺ about 40 Type-1 fighter planes,⁺ about 30 Type-97 fighter planes,⁺ about 9 assault planes,⁺ about 20 twin-engine light [bombers],⁺ and about

* The text mistakenly has *Day X + 10*.

** On pp. 274, 278, and Vol. 3, p. 265: 28 January. However, Vol. 3, p. 272 also 31 January.

30 heavy bombers.

* Indicates aircraft to be advanced to the airfield[s] in southern Sumatra. Depending on the condition of the airfields, the above number of aircraft shall be slightly changed.

III. [Air] bases to be used and distribution of forces

1. Navy

(a) When the Ledo [airfield] is fit for use:

Ledo and Kuching [airfields]: 2 air groups of land-based attack planes, about 30 fighter planes and 6 command reconnaissance planes.

Kuantan: about 30 land-based attack planes.

Sungai Petani: about 10 planes.

(b) When [the airfields in] Ledo and Kuching are unusable, [aircraft] shall be advanced in the following way:

Kuantan: about 60 land-based attack planes and one element of the fighter planes.

Kahang: about 30 fighter planes.

About 30 land-based attack planes may use [the airfield] as an advance base for refueling. If the XX Unit (note by the author: the [paratroop] raiding unit) should use [the airfield], [the use by the land-based attack planes] shall be only until and including Day L – 3 or on Day L + 1* and onwards.

Sungai Petani: about 10 land-based attack planes.

Kota Bharu: about 40 land-based attack planes.

2. Army

Kahang: about 25 Type-1 fighter planes and about 45 transport planes.

The remaining units to be employed for Operation L shall use the Kluang, Batu Pahat, Kuala Lumpur, Ipoh, Ketil and other airfields. Depending on the readiness and other circumstances of the airfields, the above disposition and the forces to be deployed will be changed.

3. The Army shall be charged with readying the Mentok and Palembang [air] bases. In the preparation of Mentok, the Navy shall cooperate with the Army. In the initial days after the seizure of the Mentok and Palembang [air] bases, Mentok shall be shared [by the Army and the Navy] in the following way, whereas Palembang shall be used by the Army:

Navy fighter planes and others: about 30 planes.

Army fighter planes: about 30 planes.

When possible, the Army shall assist the Navy in the transport of its aviation fuel. The later use of this [air] base shall be newly arranged between the Army and the Navy commanders concerned.

IV. Outline of the operation

1. We shall be determined to swiftly destroy the enemy air power in Sumatra as well as neutralize the enemy air power in Java. The areas assigned to [the Army and the Navy] are roughly decided as follows. However, [both] shall attack the enemy in the other's area as occasion may require.

Navy: [the area] east of the line connecting Mentok and Palembang ([the line] included).

Army: [the area] west of the above-mentioned line ([the line] included).

2. The Navy shall be in charge of attacking enemy naval ships.

3. Covering of the transport convoy

(1) Under sail

(a) Direct cover on Day L – 1 by [both] Army and Navy fighter planes in conjunction shall be provided as follows:

Until 1400: the Navy.

From 1400 onwards: the Army. In case XX Unit (note by the author: the [paratroop] raiding group) is used, the cover [will be started] roughly from 1700 onwards.

* The text mistakenly has *Day L – 7*.

In case XX Unit (note by the author: the [paratroop] raiding group) is used, the Navy fighter planes shall provide cover [for the convoy] on its own as much as possible.

(b) The guarding under sail other than the above shall be charged to the Navy.

(2) At the Mentok and Palembang anchorages and while sailing upstream

The guarding against enemy aircraft after both the Army and the Navy fighter planes are advanced in the area shall be provided by both forces in conjunction; the guarding other than the above shall be assigned to the Navy.

(3) Support for ground [operations] and for the operations to sail upstream

Support for the operations to sail upstream to Palembang shall mainly be assigned to the Navy. Support for ground operations after that shall be assigned to the Army. However, the Navy shall assume this [task] until the Army aircraft are advanced to the area.

V. Exchange of Information

The Army shall make efforts to reconnoiter the movements of the enemy air forces in the Batavia area and provide the Navy with the information.

Arrangement on Operation L ⁽¹¹⁸⁾

The arrangement on Operation L was in outline as follows:

1. Forces

(1) Army: 38th Division

(a) Advance party: two infantry battalions and two artillery batteries as the core, [in] eight ships.

Mentok landing unit: half an infantry battalion as the core.

River-ascending Unit [up to] Palembang: one and a half infantry battalion and two artillery batteries as the core.

(b) Main force: two infantry battalions and one artillery battalion as the core, [in] fourteen ships.

(2) Navy

(a) Forces to escort the advance party: the main force of the 3d Destroyer Squadron ([consisting of] the (light cruiser) *Sendai* and four destroyers), a few minesweepers and submarine chasers.

(b) Forces to escort the main force: the (light cruiser) *Yura*, the (coastal defense ship) *Shimushu*, four destroyers of the 3d Destroyer Squadron and other small naval vessels.

(c) Supporting surface forces: the main force of the surface unit of the Malaya Unit ([consisting of] five heavy cruisers (the flagship *Chōkai*, and the *Kumano*, the *Suzuya*, the *Mikuma* and the *Mogami* of the 7th Cruiser Division), one aircraft carrier (the *Ryūjō*), two auxiliary seaplane tenders (the *Kamikawa-maru* and the *Sagara-maru*), six destroyers, etc.).

(d) Air force: the 22d Air Flotilla in full force.

(e) River-ascending Unit for Palembang: the main force of the 9th Base Force ([consisting of] auxiliary minesweeper[s], cutter[s], fishing boat[s], etc.).

2. Schedule for the departure of the transport ships from the assembly point and the start of the landing ([and] going upstream)

Advance party:

- Mentok Landing Unit ([in] two ships): shall depart from the assembly point on the evening of Day L – 6, arrive at the Mentok [anchorage] before daybreak, and swiftly go ashore at Mentok.

- River-ascending Unit [up to] Palembang ([in] six ships): shall depart from the assembly point on the evening of Day L – 6, arrive at the Mentok [anchorage] before daybreak and

after shifting to [landing] craft and reaching the mouths of the Musi, the Telang and the Saleh rivers, start going upstream early in the morning.

Main force ([in] fourteen ships): shall depart from the assembly point on the evening of Day L – 4, and reach the mouth of the Musi River before daybreak on Day L + 2. Landing and debarkation is expected [to be completed] in about ten days for the Mentok landing unit, and about two weeks for the River-ascending Unit [up to] Palembang and the main force of the division.

3. Support for the landing and disembarkation, and cooperation concerning the waterway of the Musi River

(1) Small Navy vessel[s] shall lead the way when the [Army] advance party maneuvers craft from the Mentok anchorage to the mouth of [each] river to go upstream.

(2) Members of the Navy Special Minesweeping Unit shall borrow fifteen large- and small-sized motorized [landing] craft from the Army at the Mentok anchorage, in which they shall clear the waterway of the Musi River and sweep the river sailing upstream from the river mouth up to Palembang.

4. Others

Details of escort at sea, entry into the anchorage[s], guarding at the anchorage[s] and the waterway shall be arranged between the 38th Division commander, the 3d Destroyer Squadron commander and the 9th Base Force commander.

The Plans of Operation, etc.

The Plan of Operations of the [Navy] Malaya Unit

On 1 February, in accordance with the previously mentioned arrangements, the [Navy] Malaya Unit Commander Vice Admiral Ozawa announced the plan of operations for Operation L at Cam Ranh Bay by Malaya Unit Operation Order No. 17, which was in outline as follows:⁽¹¹⁹⁾

1. Operational aim

To swiftly put ashore the 38th Division at Bangka and near Palembang and seize the strategic places in the neighborhood

2. Operational policy

(1) This operation shall be immediately launched when the enemy air power in the Malaya area, southern Sumatra, western Borneo and western Java has been more or less neutralized.

(2) The transport ships shall stand by at Cam Ranh Bay and depart under the escort of the escort unit at an opportune time.

3. Disposition of Forces

(As shown in the following table)

Disposition		Commander	Forces	Main Tasks
Main Unit		1st Southern Exp Fleet Cdr in Chief	<i>Chōkai</i> , 7th Cruiser Div, 5 destroyers of 3d Destroyer Sqdn	Support for the operation on the whole
Escort Units	1st Escort Unit		3d Destroyer Sqdn (minus 8 destroyers), 1st Minesweeper Div, 11th Subchaser Div (minus 1 submarine chaser)	Direct escort for the advance party

Escort Units	2d Escort Unit	1st Southern Expeditionary Fleet Cdr in Chief	3d Destroyer Sqdn Cdr	Capt of the <i>Yura</i>	<i>Yura</i> , <i>Shimushu</i> , 2 destroyers of 3d Destroyer Sqdn, 41st Minesweeper Div 1st Section, 1 submarine chaser of 11th Sub-chaser Div	Direct escort for the main force of the transport convoy
1st Air Unit			22d Air Flotilla Cdr		22d Air Flotilla, Kanoya Air Gp (minus half a gp), 8th Construction Squad, one element of ground patrol section of 91st Guard Unit	1. Destroying enemy naval vessels and air power 2. Escorting the transport convoy and guarding it at sea 3. Preparation of air bases in the Malaya area
2d Air Unit			Capt of the <i>Kamikawa-maru</i>		<i>Kamikawa-maru</i> , <i>Sagara-maru</i> , 2 reconnaissance seaplanes of the <i>Chōkai</i> , 8 reconnaissance seaplanes of the 7th Cruiser Div, 91st Subchaser Div (minus 1 auxiliary boat for chasing submarines)	1. Escort for transport ships 2. Guard of the Bangka and Palembang anchorages 3. Support for the operation to sail upstream to Palembang
3d Air Unit			4th Carrier Div Cdr		4th Carrier Div (the <i>Ryūjō</i>), 1 destroyer of the 3d Destroyer Sqdn	Attack on enemy naval vessels
Base Units	River-ascending Unit for Palembang		9th Base Force Cdr		<i>Hatsutaka</i> , <i>Eikō-maru</i> , <i>Rumoi-maru</i> , <i>Otowa-maru</i> , 8 auxiliary cutters, and 4 fishing boats. One element of the 91st Guard Unit and one element of the 91st Signal Unit	1. Clearing of waterways to sail upriver to Palembang 2. Depending on the situation, mine-sweeping and guarding [the waters near] Bangka Island as well as the mouth of the Musi River

Base Units	Anambas Base Unit	1st Southern Expeditionary Fleet Cdr in Chief	9th Base Force Cdr	Capt of the <i>Kashii</i>	<i>Kashii</i> , 44th Minesweeper Div, 41st Minesweeper Div 2d Section, 91st Guard Unit (minus one element), 91st Signal Unit (minus one element), the <i>Chōsa-maru</i> , <i>Nojima-maru</i> , and <i>Chōkō-maru</i> ([of] the 91st Subchaser Div)	1. Securing the supply base 2. Minesweeping the sailing routes near the Anambas Islands
	Singora Base Unit			Capt of the <i>Eifuku-maru</i>	<i>Eifuku-maru</i> , 2 reconnaissance seaplanes of the <i>Sagara-maru</i> , one element of the 91st Guard Unit, one element of the 91st Signal Unit	1. Guarding the Singora Base 2. Protection of shipping lanes 3. [Maintaining] communication with the Army on site
Penang Base Unit			11th Submarine Base Unit Cdr	11th Submarine Base Unit	Providing supplies for submarines	
Submarine Unit			4th Submarine Sqdn Cdr	4th Submarine Sqdn	Cutting off enemy escape routes and support for landing operations	
Saigon Base Unit			11th Special Base Force Cdr		Bulk of the 11th Special Base Force	Continuing the previous tasks
Cam Ranh Bay Base Unit				Capt of the auxiliary ship <i>Asahi</i>	<i>Asahi</i> , one element of the 11th Special Base Force	
Borneo Base Unit				2d Yokosuka Special Landing Force Cdr	2d Yokosuka Special Landing Force, 4th Construction Squad	1. Preparation of air bases in Borneo 2. Cooperation in the preparation of the Mentok air base

Attached Units	1st Southern Expeditionary Fleet Cdr in Chief	10th Special Base Force, 101st Navy Arsenal	Preparation to advance into Singapore
		1st Southern Expeditionary Fleet Special Meteorological Detail	Meteorological observations
		<i>Erimo, Nichiei-maru, Tsurumi, Kōryū-maru, Kisogawa-maru, and Kasuga-maru No. 2</i>	Supply
		<i>Seiha-maru, Muroto, and Tatsumiya-maru</i>	[Providing] repair, medical treatment and transport

4. Outline of the tasks of each unit

Unit	Outline of tasks
Main Unit	It shall leave Cam Ranh Bay at an appropriate moment and timely act depending on the enemy movements; [assigned to] support operations on the whole.
1st Escort Unit	- Escorting the advance party, it shall leave Cam Ranh Bay on Day L – 6 (the 1st Minesweeper Div and the 11th Subchaser Div (minus 1 submarine chaser) shall join the 1st Escort Unit from [the waters] near the Anambas Islands), and act in line with the Army-Navy agreement. - After [the party] enters into the anchorage, it shall take charge of guarding the anchorage as well as the north and the south entrances of the Bangka Strait.
2d Escort Unit	- Escorting the transport convoy, it shall leave Cam Ranh Bay on Day L – 4 (the 41st Minesweeper Div 1st Section shall join the 2d Escort Unit from [the waters] near the Anambas Islands), and act in line with the Army-Navy agreement. - After the convoy enters into the anchorage, the <i>Shimushu</i> shall act as designated by the 9th Base Force Cdr, while the rest shall take charge of guarding the area surrounding the anchorage.
1st Air Unit	- By making use of air bases in the Malay Peninsula as well as in the western part of Borneo, it shall conduct search and attack on enemy naval vessels in the Malacca Strait, on the waters southeast of Singapore and on the western part of the Java Sea. - It shall be assigned to destroy the enemy air power in the western part of Borneo and the Bangka and Palembang areas, while neutralizing the enemy air power in western Java. - On Day L – 1 (until 1400, or the whole day if [Army] paratrooper units shall be employed), it shall take charge of guarding the advance party against enemy aircraft with fighter planes. - The Type-0 fighter plane unit(s) shall advance to the Mentok land base when the base is ready for use.

2d Air Unit	1. It shall escort the transport convoy; [first] it shall guard the advance party against enemy submarines and aircraft on Day L – 2 and against enemy submarines on Day L – 1; then it shall guard the main force of the transport ships against enemy submarines on Days L and L + 1. 2. It shall be assigned to guard the anchorage near Mentok against [enemy] aircraft. 3. It shall cooperate in the operation to sail upriver to Palembang, while supporting the land combat.
3d Air Unit	1. The unit shall by and large operate along with the main unit, while taking charge of attacking enemy naval vessels as well as attacking and driving off enemy aircraft. 2. It may be assigned to guard the advance party against enemy aircraft on Day L – 1 and the morning of Day L by separate orders.
Base Forces	1. The unit to sail upstream to Palembang shall be on standby at the Anambas [base], and by and large follow in the wake of the 1st Escort Unit (while timely capturing the light ships at the mouth of the Musi River, and obtaining the documents concerning the waterways). [Then] it shall launch the operation to sail upstream to Palembang in line with the Army-Navy agreement. The <i>Eikō-maru</i> shall cooperate in transporting base personnel and matériel of the 2d Air Unit on her sail from the Anambas Islands to Mentok. [She shall also cooperate] in setting up the base. 2. The Anambas Base Unit shall be in charge of securing the Anambas base, while searching for and clearing mines on the sailing routes in the Anambas areas. The Anambas Base Commander shall take command of the 1st Minesweeper Division, the 41st Minesweeper Division 1st Section, the 11th and the 91st Subchaser Divisions while they are at anchor [at the Anambas Islands]. 3. The Singora Base Unit shall continue its previous tasks.
Penang Base Unit	[It shall] continue its previous tasks.
Submarine Unit	1. One submarine each shall be deployed at the north and the south entrances of the Sunda Strait as well as [the waters] near the southern entrance of the Lombok Strait. 2. The remaining [submarines] shall make preparations for the subsequent operations as designated by the 4th Submarine Squadron commander.
Others	Units other than those assigned with particular tasks shall continue their previous tasks.

5. Communications (omitted)

6. Replenishments (omitted)

Outline of the Plan of Operations of the Army Units (Excluding the [Army] Air Units)

On 5 January at Saigon, Sixteenth Army Commander Lieutenant General Imamura received [Southern Army] Operation Order Classified No. 32 from Southern Army Commander in Chief General Terauchi. On 15 January, in accordance with the order, he concluded an arrangement on Operation L with First Southern Expeditionary Fleet Commander in Chief Vice Admiral Ozawa at Cam Ranh Bay (it was a general agreement with no details provided).⁽¹²⁰⁾ Then on 17 January at Hongkong, he issued an order to the 38th Division (minus the Itō and the Shōji Detachments) to capture Mentok and Palembang.⁽¹²¹⁾

In accordance with this order, 38th Division Commander Lt. Gen. Sano Tadayoshi drew up a plan of operations, which was in summary as follows*:(117)



3d Destroyer
Squadron
Commander R. Adm.
Hashimoto Shintarō

1. Disposition of forces

(1) Advance party ([in] 8 transport ships)

Commander: 229th Infantry Regiment commander (Col. Tanaka Ryō-saburō)

Mentok Landing Unit

Commander: 229th Infantry Regiment 1st Battalion commander (Capt. Orita Masaru); [consisting of] half an infantry battalion as its core.

Musi River Ascending Unit

Commander: 229th Infantry Regiment commander; [consisting of] one infantry battalion and one artillery battery as its core.

Saleh River Ascending Unit

Commander: 38th Engineer Regiment commander (Lt. Col. Iwabuchi Tsuneo); [consisting of] one infantry company, one artillery battery and one engineer company as its core.

Telang River Ascending Unit

Commander: 229th Regiment 2d Battalion commander (Maj. Miyazawa Shigezō); [consisting of] half an infantry battalion and one artillery section as its core.

(2) Main force of the [38th] division ([in] 14 transport ships)

[Consisting of] two infantry battalions, one artillery battalion and one engineer company as its core.

2. Outline of the conduct of the operation

(1) The Mentok landing unit

[The unit shall] carry out a surprise landing on the shore south of the Mentok airfield around 0300** on Day L. After seizing the airfield [first], it shall seize strategic points on Bangka Island.

(2) The river-ascending units [up to] Palembang

After shifting to [landing] craft at the Mentok anchorage, the main force of the advance party shall start sailing upstream from the mouth of the rivers around 0700 on Day L. In cooperation with the paratrooper unit, which [will land in Palembang] ahead of them, it shall first seize the airfield, resources and facilities in Palembang and its vicinity. After that, while swiftly seizing the Martapura and the Tanjungkarang airfields as well as the oil producing regions around [Talang] Abab and Limau, it shall prepare for [the operations] to destroy and clear the enemy naval bases in the Lampung and Semangka Bays. The seizures of Martapura and Tanjungkarang are scheduled for Day L + 6 and Day L + 9 respectively.

(3) The main force of the division shall reach the mouth of the Musi River on Day L + 2, ascend the river in its [transport] ships [without changing ships], land at Palembang and extend the military gains of the advance party.

Detailed Arrangements Between the 38th Division Commander and the 9th Base Force Commander

On 1 February, both commanders concluded detailed arrangements on Operation L at Cam Ranh Bay in accordance with the afore-mentioned arrangement between the First Southern Expeditionary Fleet commander in chief and the Sixteenth Army commander, and that be-

* See also Vol. 3, pp. 270-71.

** The text has 0200.

tween the First Southern Expeditionary Fleet commander in chief and the 38th Division commander as well as the operation orders of the senior commanders.⁽¹¹⁸⁾ The contents of the arrangements are omitted [here] because they overlap the plans of operation of the units.

The Plan of Operations of the Escort Unit

In line with the plan of operations of the Malaya Unit, 3d Destroyer Squadron Commander R. Adm. Hashimoto Shintarō announced on 1 February at Cam Ranh Bay by means of 1st Escort Unit Operation Order No. 3 the main points of Operation L to be implemented by the 1st and the 2d Escort Units.⁽¹¹⁸⁾

Malaya Unit 1st Escort Unit Order

1. In conformity with Malaya Unit Operation Order Classified No. 17, the 1st and the 2d Escort Units of the Malaya Unit shall strive to accomplish the following tasks:

- (a) 1st Escort Unit

[The unit shall] escort the transport ships of the Army advance party for Operation L from Cam Ranh Bay to a point off Mentok, and put ashore [one element of] the party at Mentok, while guiding and escorting the [landing] craft and boats [of the main force of the advance party] to the mouths of the Musi and the Saleh rivers.

- (b) 2d Escort Unit

[The unit shall] escort the transport ships of the Army main force for Operation L from Cam Ranh Bay to the mouth of the Musi River.

2. Distribution of Forces (Note by the author: [as shown in] the table below)

Unit		Commander	Forces	Main Tasks
1st Escort Unit	Direct Escort Unit	1st Escort Unit Cdr	<i>Sendai</i> , 11th Destroyer Div, <i>Asagiri</i> , 11th Subchaser Div (minus Submarine Chaser No. 9)	1. To escort the transport ships of the advance party of the [Army] 38th Div (from Cam Ranh Bay to Mentok and the mouth of the Musi River) 2. Guarding of the anchorage and its vicinity
	Minesweeper Unit	1st Escort Unit Cdr 1st Minesweeper Div Cdr	1st Minesweeper Div	Guiding and escorting the units maneuvering in [landing] craft a) Minesweeping on the sailing route ahead of the transport ships as well as at the anchorage b) Searching for and clearing of mines in the northern part of the Bangka Strait
2d Escort Unit		Capt of the <i>Yura</i>	<i>Yura</i> , <i>Shimushu</i> , 20th Destroyer Div (minus <i>Asagiri</i>), 41st Minesweeper Div 1st Section, Submarine Chaser No. 9	1. Escorting the transport ships of the main force of the 38th Div (from Cam Ranh Bay to the mouth of the Musi River) 2. Guarding of the anchorage and its vicinity

3. The outline of operations of each unit

- (a) The 1st Escort Unit

At the sortie from Cam Ranh Bay	Direct Escort Unit, Guide ships: <i>Shirayuki</i> [for] the 1st Section <i>Asagiri</i> [for] the 2d Section	1. <i>Sendai</i> shall leave Cam Ranh Bay at 1830 on Day L – 6, leading the transport ships, while clearing enemy submarines around the mouth of the bay with her aircraft. 2. The 11th Destroyer Div (minus <i>Shirayuki</i>) shall leave Cam Ranh Bay at 1800 on Day L – 6, and take charge of clearing the waters outside the bay of enemy submarines. At an appropriate moment, it shall directly escort the transport ships, taking up their positions in the 1st protective sailing order. 3. The guide ships shall leave port at 1900 on Day L – 6, and guide the transport ships in the order of the number of the section. They shall sortie from the north waterway, and adopt the 1st sailing formation without separate orders. 4. The 11th Subchaser Div (minus Submarine Chaser No. 9) shall be on standby at the Anambas base.
	Minesweeper Unit	[The unit] shall be on standby at the Anambas base.
While the transport ships are under sail	The naval ships of each unit	1. <i>Sendai</i>, the 11th Destroyer Div and <i>Asagiri</i> shall directly escort the transport ships (in the 1st sailing formation) by adopting the 1st protective sailing order (C), and advance on the 1st sailing route at a normal speed of 8 knots. The aircraft of the <i>Sendai</i> shall provide guard against enemy submarines on the sailing route ahead of the transport ships as much as possible, using Puolo Condore and the Anambas Islands as their bases. 2. The 1st Minesweeper Div and the 11th Subchaser Div (minus Submarine Chaser No. 9) shall leave the Anambas base at an appropriate moment, join the transport ships at a point 48 nautical miles 25° of Point C at 1200 on Day L – 3, and take up their positions in the 1st protective sailing order without separate orders. Two minesweepers shall change places with the <i>Shirayuki</i> and the <i>Asagiri</i>, and guide the transport ships. 3. When relieved the of task of jointly guiding [the transport ships] by the 1st Minesweeper Div and the 11th Subchaser Div (minus Submarine Chaser No. 9) at 1200 on Day L – 3, the 11th Destroyer Div and the <i>Asagiri</i> shall sail to the Anambas base to load a full amount of fuel and join the transport ships at 0800 on Day L – 2. All units and naval ships shall adopt the 1st protective sailing order (A); the <i>Shirayuki</i> and the <i>Asagiri</i> shall take over the task of guiding the ships. 4. When reaching Point D around 1200 on Day L – 2, the 1st Minesweeper Div shall carry out a simplified sweeping of the sailing route ahead of the transport ships (using large minesweeping devices in a single-ship manner at a depth of 8 meters). 5. At Point W (14 nautical miles north of Point J), all naval vessels shall take up their positions in the 2d protective sailing order. 11th Subchaser Div (minus Submarine Chaser No. 9) shall leave the line, sail ahead toward Mentok, and take charge of reconnoitering and guarding the anchorage. 6. At Point V (8 nautical miles north of Point J), the 1st Minesweeper Div shall start sweeping mines on the sailing route ahead (using large minesweeping devices in a pair-ship manner at a depth of 7.5 meters) without separate orders, and advance along the planned sailing route.

At the time of the transport ships' entry into the anchorage	The naval ships of each unit	1. [Each naval ship] shall operate according to "the main points regarding entry into the anchorages" stated in the memoranda attached to the Army-Navy agreement. The time to drop anchor at the Mentok anchorage is 0000 on Day L. 2. Patrol areas of each naval ship (omitted by the author) 3. Submarine chasers shall take charge of relief operations at sea as well.
After the transport ships' entry into the anchorage	11th Subchaser Div (minus Submarine Chaser No. 9)	1. While on guard, the submarine chasers shall take up position near the <i>Tajima-maru</i> and the <i>Kinugawa-maru</i>. When the [landing] craft of the river-ascending unit [up to] Palembang are ready (around 0300 on Day L), they shall guide and escort the latter respectively to the mouths of the Saleh and the Musi rivers. After that, they shall guard the Mentok anchorage (Sector M). 2. From the time when the transport ships (minus the <i>An'yō-maru</i> and the <i>Alaska-maru</i>) shift to the anchorage at the mouth of the Musi River on the evening of Day L until the time [they start] sailing upriver on the early morning of Day L+1, one submarine chaser shall be dispatched to the anchorage to guard there.
	<i>Sendai</i> and the destroyers	1. [The unit] shall be in the patrol areas and keep guard according to the outline on the attached sheet[s]. 2. The aircraft of the <i>Sendai</i> shall timely advance to the Mentok seaplane base when the latter has been made ready (on the morning of Day L), and guard the anchorage and surrounding areas.
	Minesweeper Unit	1. The unit shall sweep for mines at the northern part of the Bangka Strait, [the waters] off the Mentok pier, and the anchorage at the mouth of the Musi River, in accordance with the outline given on the attached sheets. 2. When the minesweeping at the anchorage at the mouth of the Musi River is completed on Day L, one of the minesweepers shall guide the transport ships (minus the <i>An'yō-maru</i> and the <i>Alaska-maru</i>) and have them shift to the [new] anchorage by the sunset of the day. 3. When the tasks in the above items are completed, [the minesweepers] shall go to their patrol areas and keep guard according to the outline on the attached sheets.

(b) The 2d Escort Unit

- (1) [The unit] shall depart from Cam Ranh Bay at 1800 on Day L – 4, escort the transport ships carrying the main force of the 38th Division in conformity with the arrangements between the Army and the Navy, and have them enter into the anchorage at the mouth of the Musi River around 0000 on Day L + 2.
- (2) After the above transport ships have arrived at the anchorage at the mouth of the Musi River, [the unit shall] keep guard in the Bangka Strait according to the outline given on the attached sheet[s].
- (3) At the time of the departure of the transport ships carrying the advance party of the 38th Division from Cam Ranh Bay on Day L – 6, two destroyers [of the unit] shall cover the departure of these ships.
4. The Army-Navy arrangements (omitted by the author)
5. Communications (omitted by the author)
6. Replenishment (omitted by the author)

The Plan of Operations of the Base Units⁽⁶⁸⁾

- 1. The River-Ascending Unit for Palembang
[The unit], which consisted of the main unit, the minesweeping unit and the supply unit, was supposed to carry out the following tasks under the command of the 9th Base Force Commander R. Adm. Hiraoka Kumeichi.
 - (1) Replenishment support for the minesweeping units
 - (2) Clearing the enemy on the land
 - (3) Setting buoys to show the sailing route
 - (4) Minesweeping and disposal of controlled mines and booms [at harbor entrances and in the rivers]
 - (5) The transport and supply of matériel for the Mentok seaplane base
- 2. The Anambas Base Unit and the Singora Base Unit
[The units] shall carry out the tasks designated by the commander in line with Malaya Unit Operation Order Classified No. 17 (the abovementioned plan of operations of the Malaya Unit).



9th Base Force Commander R. Adm. Hiraoka Kumeichi

The Plan of Operations of the 1st Air Unit

On 31 January, Malaya Unit Commander Vice Admiral Ozawa issued the order concerning the deployment [of air units to the newly-acquired] bases by Malaya Unit Telegraphic Operation Order No. 108, which was in outline as follows:⁽¹¹⁸⁾

- 1. The Genzan Air Group and the Yamada Type-0 Fighter Plane Unit shall advance to the Kuching base on 3 and 5 February respectively; [both] shall advance to the Ledo base when the latter has been made ready for use.
- 2. The Mihoro Air Group shall advance to the Kuantan base on 6 February.
- 3. The Kanoya Air Group shall promptly advance to the Kuantan base, and [further] advance to the Ledo base when the latter has been made ready for use.



22d Air Flotilla Commander R. Adm. Matsunaga Sadaichi

In accordance with this [order], 1st Air Unit Commander R. Adm. Matsunaga Sadaichi gave orders for the [air unit's] plan of operations for Operation L, which was in outline as follows. (Since the relevant materials are [no longer] extant, the author has reconstructed the plan from action records, action reports and other documents.)

- 1. Disposition of Forces (as shown in the following table)

Unit			Commander			Forces	Tasks
Malaya Unit	1st Air Unit	Air Raid Unit A	1st Southern Expeditionary Fleet Cdr in Chief	22d Air Flotilla Cdr	Genzan Air Gp Cdr	36 Type-96 land-based attack planes and 3 Type-96 fighter planes of the Genzan Air Gp	A, B, C, D

Malaya Unit	1st Air Unit	Air Raid Unit B	1st Southern Expeditionary Fleet Cdr in Chief	22d Air Flotilla Cdr	Mihoro Air Gp Cdr	36 Type-96 land-based attack planes and 9 Type-96 fighter planes of the Mihoro Air Gp	A, B, C, D, E
		Air Raid Unit C			Cdr Yamada Yutaka	A Type-0 fighter plane unit led by Commander Yamada, [consisting of] 30 Type-0 fighter planes, one element of the ground patrol section of the 9th Base Force (about 30 men), 8th Construction Squad	B, C, D
		Air Raid Unit D			Kanoya Air Gp Cdr	27 Type-1 land-based attack planes of the Kanoya Air Gp	A, B, D

Note by the author:

A = Destroying [enemy] naval vessels

B = Destroying the enemy air power in the area east of Bangka and Palembang as well as in the western part of Borneo while neutralizing the enemy air power in western Java

C = Providing escort for transport ships

D = Patrolling

E = Preparing air bases in Malaya

2. Deployment [of air units to the newly-acquired] bases

- (1) [Deployment of air units to the newly-acquired air bases shall be carried out] in accordance with Malaya Unit Telegraphic Operation Order No. 108, (as previously told.)
- (2) When the air base in Mentok has been seized and readied, Air Raid Unit C shall advance to the base.
- (3) The subsequent deployment [of air units] shall be ordered later.

The Plan of Operations of the 2d Air Unit

On 31 January, 2d Air Unit Commander Rear Admiral Imamura* issued the following order by 2d Air Unit Operation Order No. 1 (summary):⁽¹²²⁾

1. The outline of tasks and actions of each naval ship (as shown in the following table)

Name of the ships	Main tasks	Actions
<i>Kamikawa-maru</i>	Preparations for the subsequent operations Support for the [set-up] work of the Anambas base and the guarding of the base	At anchor near Cam Ranh Bay base by the 13th; then, she shall leave Cam Ranh Bay on the afternoon of the 14th to advance to the Anambas [base] on the afternoon of the 16th.

* In the table on p. 262, the captain of the *Kamikawa-maru* (Capt. Shinoda Tarohachi) is listed as the commander of the 2d Air Unit of the Malaya Unit. He replaced Rear Admiral Imamura as of 1 February.

<i>Sagara-maru</i>	Support for the [set-up] work of the Anambas base and the guarding of the base	At anchor near the Anambas [base].
One auxiliary submarine chaser (designated by the commander)	Transport of the base personnel and the guarding of the Mentok base	After the departure of the aircraft units on Day L, she shall leave Anambas for Mentok.
Ditto	Guarding of the Anambas base	She shall appropriately operate on the waters surrounding the Anambas base.

2. Actions of the aircraft units

On Day L – 2, [the units shall] provide the advance party with direct escort against enemy submarines and aircraft, while guarding the sailing route ahead of it as well as the sailing route ahead of the main unit. On Day L – 1, [the unit shall] guard the sailing routes ahead of the advance party as well as of the main unit. On Day L, [the unit shall] provide the main unit with guard against enemy submarines, while shifting their base from Anambas to Mentok.

After having advanced to the Mentok base, the unit was supposed to take upon itself the task of guarding the area around the anchorage against enemy aircraft and submarines, while supporting the river-ascending and landing operation to Palembang.

The Plan of Operations of the 3d Air Unit

After having completed Operation S (the operation to put the 18th Division ashore on Endau), the 4th Carrier Division (minus the 2d Section, i.e. the *Ryūjō* and the *Shiokaze*; led by R. Adm. Kakuta Kakuji) had entered into the port of Cam Ranh Bay at 1130 on 30 January and was engaged in training, maintenance and replenishment for the subsequent operations.⁽⁷¹⁾ By Malaya Unit Operation Order Classified No. 17 on 1 February, the unit was ordered to [also] participate in Operation L,⁽¹²²⁾ and undertake the task of attacking enemy naval vessels and of attacking and driving off enemy aircraft while operating by and large along with the main unit. The unit was also charged with the task of guarding the advance party against enemy aircraft on Day L – 1 and on the morning of Day L by separate orders. Furthermore, it was decided that the one destroyer of the 3d Destroyer Squadron that was to form the 3d Air Unit along with the 4th Carrier Division would be the *Shikinami*.⁽¹²⁰⁾

The Plan of Operations of the Submarine Unit

Having been informally informed on 24 January of the Malaya Unit's plan of operations for Operation L, and learning that the intended support and strength for that operation would consist of three submarines (one at the south entrance of the Sunda Strait and one each at the north and the south entrance of the Lombok Strait), the Submarine Unit commander (4th Submarine Squadron Commander R. Adm. Yoshitomi Setsuzō) announced his plan of operations on 26 January, which was in outline as follows:⁽¹²³⁾

1. The outline of the operation

[The unit] shall support Operation L by deploying three submarines at strategic points in the rear of the enemy in order to destroy fleeing [enemy] units, while at the same time making preparations for the coming Java operation with the other five submarines.

2. The outline of operations of the unit supporting Operation L

[The unit shall] depart from Cam Ranh Bay in order to be deployed at the following points by Day L – 2.

I-55 ([of] the 18th Submarine Division): at the south entrance of the Lombok Strait

I-56 ([of] the 19th Submarine Division): at the south entrance of the Sunda Strait via the Lombok Strait

Ro-34 ([of] the 21st Submarine Division): at the north entrance of the Lombok Strait

However, 4th Submarine Squadron Commander Rear Admiral Yoshitomi had on 27 January been ordered by Malaya Unit Telegraphic Operation Order No. 103* to lead [among others] the *Kinu*, the *Fujigawa-maru*, the *Tatsumiya-maru* and two destroyers of the 3d Destroyer Squadron and advance to the Ledo area to carry out the operation to transport personnel and matériel for the base there, and on 1 February he was still engaged in that operation (the details of which will be described later [p. 274]).⁽¹²³⁾ Therefore, because it was impossible to hand him Malaya Unit Operation Order No. 17 concerning Operation L in person, the assignment of the submarine units was announced by Malaya Unit Telegraphic Order No. 113 on 2 February.⁽¹²³⁾ [However,] in this order, the previously decided deployment of two submarines at the Lombok Strait and one at the Sunda Strait was changed in such a way that two submarines should be deployed at the Sunda Strait and one at the Lombok Strait. In accordance with this order, the submarine unit commander left the deployment of *I-55* and *I-56* as he had planned, and changed the deployment of *Ro-34* from the north entrance of the Lombok Strait to the north entrance of the Sunda Strait.



4th Carrier Division
Commander R. Adm.
Kakuta Kakuji



4th Submarine
Squadron Com-
mander R. Adm.
Yoshitomi Setsuzō

The Plan of Operations of the Army Air Units⁽¹¹⁷⁾

By the end of January, the Army Third Air Force had already deployed its forces to the bases in Sungai Petani, Ipoh, Alor Setar, and Ketil on the Malay Peninsula, and was preparing for the operation against Sumatra by searching out the enemy air power as well as by attacking enemy airfields from time to time. On 30 January, the Southern Army decided to employ the 1st [Paratroop] Raiding Group (a paratrooper unit) and give priority to [the seizure of] the Palembang airfield, putting the unit under the command of Third Air Force Commander Lt. Gen. Sugawara Michiō. The unit was supposed to be employed in the following way:

1. The unit shall seize the Palembang airfield to facilitate Operations L and H (the operation against western Java) and, if possible, seize and secure the Palembang oil refineries before the enemy destroys them.
2. The first drop or landing shall be carried out on the morning of Day L – 1; the operation shall be aborted if the weather does not permit it.
3. The dropped or landed unit shall be put under the command of the Sixteenth Army commander after the arrival of the main force of the 38th Division at Palembang.

* The text mistakenly has 10.

The Launch of the Operation

Postponement of the Operation Schedule (See Illustration No. 27)

As previously told, at the Manila Conference the Navy had made a draft arrangement [with the Army] on 22 January that in principle it would chiefly use the Ledo airfield, which was [still] an unknown quantity, and that it would use the Kuantan and the Kahang airfields for the time being if the Kuching and the Ledo airfields were unusable; also Day L was set on 10 February (Day X + 64, which meant a four-day postponement [from the schedule decided on in the Cam Ranh Agreement]). Then on 28 January, the (previously described) Arrangement on the Air [Operations] in Operation L was concluded. Meanwhile, the Kawaguchi Detachment had seized the Ledo airfield at 1000 on 27 January. The seaplane(s) of the *Kamikawa-maru* sent the following report after reconnoitering the Ledo airfield.⁽¹²²⁾

1. The [main] Ledo airfield is located about five kilometers east of Ledo, with three runways; one which runs from north to south is about 2,500 meters long, another which runs from east to west is about 1,200 meters long, and the other which runs in between is about 1,200 meters long. There are about seventy-nine large and small holes blasted by landmines, which are currently being repaired by army units. The soil [appears] to be red clay, with some patches of grass; the ground appears to be in comparatively good condition. No obstacles were found in the perimeter.
2. A dozen or more bridges on the road[s] from Singkawang to Ledo have been destroyed. Also a dozen or more holes probably blasted by landmines were spotted on the road.
3. No Japanese forces were spotted other than large-sized motorized [landing] craft in Pemangkat and the army in Ledo.

As previously told, by means of Malaya Unit Telegraphic Order No. 103 on 27 January, the 4th Submarine Squadron commander had been given the task to transport the personnel and matériel to be advanced to the Ledo air base.⁽¹²³⁾ In accordance with this order, 4th Submarine Squadron Commander Rear Admiral Yoshitomi launched the Ledo transportation operation, departing from Saigon at 1400 on 30 January with [among others] the *Fujigawa-maru* (carrying the personnel and matériel of the Genzan Air Group) and the *Tatsumiya-maru* (carrying the advance personnel and matériel of the Kanoya Air Group for the Ledo base). On the early morning of 2 February, escorted by the *Kinu*, the 44th Minesweeper Division and the *Murakumo*, the transport ships entered the port of Pemangkat, but it was decided to redirect them to Pontianak because the conditions for the overland transport [from Pemangkat] were bad. However, as a result of an investigation on the 3d of the actual conditions [for an overland transport from] Pontianak, it became clear that the transport conditions from Pemangkat were better, so the transport ships sailed back again to Pemangkat on the 4th.⁽¹²³⁾

However, the main roads to Ledo and the bridges on them were thoroughly destroyed, and moreover the roads were dangerously steep; it was extremely difficult to repair them for motorized traffic. In the end, among the several roads leading to Ledo, two routes, one which connected Singkawang, Montrado, Bengkayang, and Ledo, and another which connected [the sea and] Ledo via the Sambas river ([using] the waterway up to Sanggau) were selected. However, on 1 and 2 February it was expected that the repair of the former route would take two weeks and the latter one week.⁽¹²³⁾ Although the Kawaguchi Detachment cooperated in the repair of the roads as well as in the disembarkation and transportation of

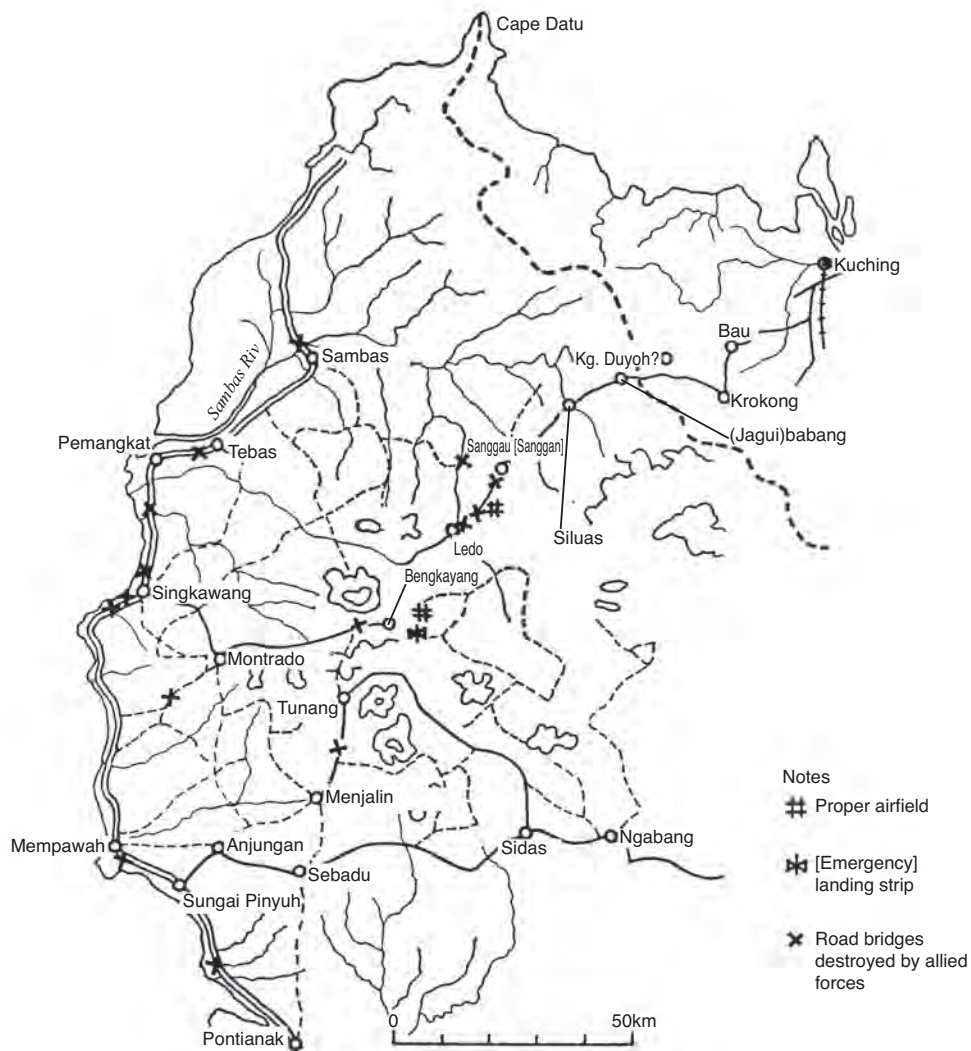


Illustration No. 27 — A Sketch Map of Western Borneo

fuel and ammunition with all its might, the fuel accumulated by 4 February was a mere 200 drums.⁽³⁴⁾ As for the airfield, the Kawaguchi Detachment reported on the same day that [a runway of] 100 meters wide and 1,000 meters long had been completed.⁽³⁴⁾

On 4 February, Malaya Unit Commander Vice Admiral Ozawa finally gave up the idea to use the Ledo airfield and decided to conduct the operations by using the Kuantan and the Kuching [airfields] (an assumption by the author based on the movements of the aircraft units and other factors). At 1900 on that day, the invasion unit [of Operation L] was supposed to leave Cam Ranh Bay. However, the Mihoro Air Group had not advanced to the Kuantan [airfield] yet (the advance was scheduled for 6 February). As for the Genzan Air Group, only twelve Type-96 land-based attack planes had advanced to the Kuching [airfield] (the advance had been scheduled for 3 February) and, moreover, the airfield's condition was bad. Having no other choice and running out of time, the Malaya Unit commander decided on his own

responsibility to postpone day L by two days and ordered the postponement to his subordinate units by telegram.⁽¹²²⁾

Without delay, Malaya Unit Commander Vice Admiral Ozawa conferred about the matter with the Army side through Cdr. Wakatsuki Ryōzō (a gunnery staff officer of the Third Fleet) who was seconded to the Sixteenth Army. On the afternoon of the 4th, Cdr. Wakatsuki visited the staff section of the Southern Army headquarters along with the Sixteenth Army staff officers and held talks on a two-day postponement of Operation L.⁽³⁴⁾ The Southern Army headquarters insisted that at the Manila Conference it had been mutually agreed to carry out the air campaigns by using airfields in the Malaya area in case the Ledo airfield was unusable, and that it was now too late to use the impracticability of the Ledo airfield as an excuse for a postponement of Operation L. The army sent the following telegram to the Navy Southern Task Force commander:⁽³⁴⁾

1. At the talks, which the OSAMU-SHŪDAN (note by the author: the Sixteenth Army) had with the First Southern Expeditionary Fleet at Cam Ranh Bay today, a request for a two-day postponement of the launch of Operation L was made by the First Southern Expeditionary Fleet because the airfields had not yet been made ready for use.
2. Presently, we have completed all our preparations and scheduled the start of our ground attacks against Singapore from the 7th onwards. As the surrender [of Singapore] is imminent, we would like to seize an opportune moment ahead [of the fall of Singapore] to carry out [Operation] L. We would like your consideration for the realization of the above.

In reply, Southern Task Force Commander Vice Admiral Kondo wired that “[We] would like a one- or two-day postponement be [decided] in talks between the Sixteenth Army and the First Southern Expeditionary Fleet.”⁽³⁴⁾ Having no other choice, the Southern Army obtained approval from the IGHQ Army Department and issued on the 5th an order to postpone [Operation] L for two days until 12 February.⁽³⁴⁾

During these negotiations [with the Army], another problem had arisen, which further worsened the worries of Malaya Unit Commander Ozawa. Namely, when in accordance with Malaya Unit Telegraphic Operation Order No. 108 of 31 January the advance team of the Mihoro Air Group arrived at Kuantan (assumed to have been on 2 or 3 February; the advance of the Kanoya Air Group to the airfield seemed to have been postponed), it turned out that the trees of the forest in front of the runway were so tall that the land-based attack planes could not take off from the airfield with a regular load of bombs unless the trees in zone of 200 meters wide and 300 meters long were cleared. Although the advance team hurriedly started cutting down the trees, it only managed in two days to fell the trees in a stretch of a mere twenty meters, because many of them were giant hardwood trees.⁽³⁴⁾ On the other hand, the Kuching airfield was located on a hill and difficult to enlarge, moreover its soil was bad.⁽¹²⁴⁾ Among the aircraft of the Yamada Unit (twenty-one Type-0 fighter planes and four land-based reconnaissance planes), which had advanced there on 5 February, two Type-0 fighter planes, two land-based reconnaissance planes, and one land-based attack plane (the latter was an aircraft of the Mihoro Air Group which had given assistance in the air transport) were badly damaged at the time of landing, causing slight injuries to four crew members. It was reported that due to these incidents, the repair of the airfield would not be completed before the 7th.⁽¹¹⁸⁾



The Felling of the Giant Trees Surrounding the Kuantan Airfield

Realizing that the use of the Ledo airfield was beyond hope, that the felling of the trees at the Kuantan airfield would require more time, and that, moreover, the condition of the Kuching airfield was bad, the Malaya Unit commander judged that it would take another four or five days before the land-based attack planes could be deployed. On the 5th, he made a decision to postpone Operation L for another four days (the departure of the invasion units was scheduled on the evening of the 6th); (a reconstruction by the author based on the *Sagara-maru* Action Report and the Ishii documents). Consequently, the commander sent a telegram to the Southern Army, which read: "We will dispatch our Chief of Staff R. Adm. Sawada Torao (accompanied by Senior Staff Officer Captain Tomari) to Saigon on 6 February to discuss Operation L." [See also Vol. 3, p. 300.] This telegram reached the Southern Army headquarters just after it had issued the order for a two-day postponement of Operation L.⁽³⁴⁾

At 0800 on the 6th, Malaya Unit Commander Vice Admiral Ozawa wired the Malaya Unit by means of Classified Telegram No. 628: "Day L shall be postponed until specifically ordered otherwise."⁽¹²⁵⁾ [See also Vol. 3, p. 304.] On that afternoon, First Southern Expeditionary Fleet Chief of Staff Sawada and Staff Officer Tomari sought an approval for the postponement of Operation L at the Southern Army headquarters in Saigon in the following way:⁽³⁴⁾ "Yesterday on the 5th when [land-based] attack planes and fighter planes landed on [the] Kuching [airfield], four aircraft were damaged because of bomb craters. We were informed that the repair [of the airfield] should be completed on the 7th, which we consider very doubtful. As for the Ledo airfield, on the other hand, the transport routes are long and poor, and the accumulation of fuel and ammunition has yet to be completed. Furthermore, the Kuantan airfield in Malaya, to which the [Navy land-based] medium-sized attack planes have advanced (note: thirty-six land-based attack planes and nine Type-96 fighter planes of the Mihoro Air Group

had advanced to the airfield on 5 February) is surrounded by a tall forest, and the trees in a zone of two hundred meters wide and three hundred meters deep need to be cut down. However, we have managed to clear only twenty meters in two days, as many of the trees are enormous. We fear that it will further take as much as ten days [if we continue] at this pace. As the Navy [has decided to] have aircraft maintenance personnel as well engage in the work of felling the trees, we would like you to approve at least another four days, that is, in total a postponement of six-days.”*

Responding to this request, the Southern Army mainly accused the Navy of having made insufficient preparations.⁽³⁴⁾ “In the arrangements for the air [operation] on 28 January concluded after the Manila Conference, the Navy was supposed to advance to both the Kuantan and the Kahang airfields for Operation L if the Ledo airfield was not fit for use. The Navy should have thoroughly examined [the practicality of] the airfields. It is a terrible lack of preparation [to say] at this time that the trees are an obstruction.” It was certainly a fault of the Navy. Since the Kuantan airfield was supposed to be used [anyway] even when the Ledo airfield was put to use, the Navy certainly should have surveyed it without delay. However, the Navy had been confident [that the airfield could be used] because Army aircraft could use it without problems.⁽¹²⁴⁾ (Note: That Army aircraft could use it was caused by a difference in performance between the Army and the Navy aircraft.)

Although they did not come to an understanding after all, it was decided that the Southern Army would for the time being postpone the departure of the convoy of the 38th Division scheduled for the evening of that day till the evening of the 7th, and check up on the situation at Ledo. Meanwhile, considering that those trees had to be cut down the sooner the better, it was [also] decided to dispatch about fifty men, mainly consisting of the cadre of a company of the 20th Independent Engineer Regiment, which had been assigned to the Third Air force and was fortunately assembling near Kahang, and have them cooperate in the felling of the trees. In the meantime, the Navy arranged to immediately send about three tons of dynamite from Saigon to Kuantan.⁽³⁴⁾

On the 6th, the Combined Fleet headquarters stationed on Hashira-jima in the Inland Sea learned that the Malaya Unit headquarters and the Second Fleet headquarters were confronting each other [about the Sumatra operation], with the former insisting that Sumatra landing operation should be [postponed and] carried out around the 16th due to the delay in the preparation of the bases in Kuantan, Kuching, Ledo, etc., while the latter was pressing the former to carry out the operation [as scheduled] from the point of view of the entire operation and without worrying about the damage. After having communicated with central command regarding the matter, the chief of staff of the Combined Fleet sent [his opinion] to the chief of staff of the Second Fleet that it should not be [carried out] in such a rush.⁽⁴⁶⁾

On the night of the 6th, the Southern Army headquarters sent the following telegram to the IGHQ Army Department. **⁽³⁴⁾

1. Today, we received another request for a further postponement of four days from the First Southern Expeditionary Fleet. The main reason for this was that trees in (some) place(s) around the Kuantan airfield needed to be cut down, and even though the work had been started two days ago, the amount of work was too much to tell when it would be finished.

* See also Vol. 3, p. 301.

** See also Vol. 3, p. 302.

2. Although we were frustrated by this request, as it was made after such a long time since the conclusion of the arrangements for Operation L, we immediately arranged the assistance of [Army] engineers, and [at the same time] based on the concluded arrangements, urged [the Navy] to use the Kahang airfield and took measures to let [the Navy aircraft] use army fuel, etc. However, it was decided to determine a new date for Day L by tomorrow, the 7th, upon careful examination of all the factors that the Navy said were still unclear.

Because of troubles with telegrams, etc., only fifteen engineers were transported on the 7th, and it was decided that the remainder would be transported on the 8th. On that day [the 7th], the Malaya Unit commander officially proposed to the Southern Army commander in chief that "We would like to postpone [Operation] L for another four days. However, we would like to have [the convoy] depart as soon as the preparations for the air operation have been completed."^{*(34)} From the point of view that the strength of the allied forces was being increased day by day and that it was considered advantageous to conduct Operation L before the completion of the capture of Singapore, the Southern Army headquarters were against a postponement of Operation L, but reluctantly approved the request.⁽¹²⁷⁾ At 1925 on that day, Malaya Unit Commander Vice Admiral Ozawa wired the following order.⁽¹²⁶⁾ "On the 7th, the following arrangement was made with the [Southern] Army: Day L will be postponed for another four days. However, [the operation shall be] launched as soon as the preparations for the air operations are complete."^{***}

On the 8th, the Southern Task Force headquarters sent the Southern Army headquarters a telegram to request a change in the invasion schedule as follows:⁽³⁴⁾ "L: on Day X + 70; H (note by the author: eastern Java): on Day X + 81; I (note by the author: western Java): no later than Day X + 81 (to be arranged between the Third Fleet and the Sixteenth Army)." Having no choice, the Southern Army headquarters approved it, too.⁽³⁴⁾

On 8 February, [Army] engineers and [Navy] maintenance personnel started blowing up the trees in front of the runway of the Kuantan airfield.⁽¹²⁸⁾ On that afternoon, 1st Air Unit Commander Rear Admiral Matsunaga ordered the land-based attack plane unit of the Mihoro Air Group to advance from the Kuantan airfield to the Kahang airfield and attack Java⁽¹²²⁾ (which was called off later). Meanwhile the preparations of the land-based attack plane units and Type-0 fighter plane units at the Kuching airfield was completed, and it was decided that the Naval air units should launch the air operation to destroy the enemy air power in the Batavia area from the 9th onwards.⁽¹²⁹⁾ Accordingly, it became possible to move up the departure of the invasion unit scheduled for the 10th by one day.⁽³⁰⁾ At 1400 on the 9th, Malaya Unit Commander Vice Admiral Ozawa issued the following order.^{***(122)}

1. The date of L is set for 15 February.
2. Each unit shall operate as planned.

Little Progress in the Prior Neutralization of the [Enemy] Air Power

Having advanced in succession from Saigon to Kuching with its first nine planes on 30 January, the land-based attack planes of the Genzan Air Group launched a search and attack on the enemy in the Karimata Strait from 1 February onwards.⁽⁷¹⁾ Meanwhile, the Mihoro Air

* See also Vol. 3, p. 304.

** See also Vol. 3, p. 304.

*** See also Vol. 3, p. 305.

Group stationed in Kota Bharu ([on] the Malay Peninsula), having advanced one element to Sungai Petani ([on] the Malay Peninsula) on 17 January, also started its search and attack on the enemy in the Karimata Strait on 1 [February]. However, due to the bad condition of both airfields, the aircraft were only allowed to load one fourth (i.e. one 250kg bomb or four 60kg bombs) of their regular load of bombs, while the Type-1 land-based attack planes of the Kanoya Air Group were unable to advance [their bases] from Thủ Dầu Một (an [air] base north of Saigon). The general situation of [the progress of] the neutralization of the enemy air power from the 1st until the departure of the invasion unit was as follows.⁽⁷¹⁾

1 [February]: Five land-based attack planes each of the Genzan and the Mihoro Air Groups bombed the industrial zone on Belitung Island as well as Mentok, setting ablaze warehouses and powder magazines. They also reported having spotted one [enemy] destroyer, one gunboat and six merchantmen at Mentok as well as on the waters near the Bangka Strait and sunk a 6,000t-class merchantman. All of the aircraft returned to base.

2 [February]: Nine land-based attack planes of the Genzan Air Group and ten land-based attack planes of the Mihoro Air Group carried out a search and attack mission on the enemy in the Bangka Strait and on the west coast of Sumatra. They reported having spotted two [enemy] destroyers and six merchantmen and inflicted serious damage to one 4,000t-class merchantman and also some damage to one 2,500t-class merchantman. All of the aircraft returned to base.

3 [February]: Eight land-based attack planes of the Genzan Air Group and nineteen land-based attack planes of the Mihoro Air Group carried out a search and attack mission on the enemy in the areas of the Bangka Strait and Mentok. They reported having spotted eight [enemy] light cruisers, six destroyers, twenty-four merchantmen and one auxiliary ship ([note by the author] a considerable number of ships were counted twice) and sunk a 10,000t-class merchantman, a 7,000t-class armed merchantman, and a 6,000t-class merchantman. All of the aircraft returned to base.

[Meanwhile,] nine land-based attack planes of the Mihoro Air Group (of which one returned to base due to a breakdown) carried out an attack on Singapore and bombed its commercial port. They reported having scored a large number of direct hits on three 10,000t-class merchantmen and the military facilities on the wharf. Seven planes were marked with bullets, one made an emergency landing on the Kluang airfield used by the Army, but the others returned to base.

4 [February]: Nine land-based attack planes of the Genzan Air Group and six land-based attack planes of the Mihoro Air Group carried out a search and attack mission on the enemy in the Bangka Strait. They reported having spotted one [enemy] heavy cruiser, one light cruiser, four destroyers, one escort naval ship, one small naval vessel and six merchantmen, and sunk two 20,000t-class merchantmen and the escort ship. Two of the planes sustained hits and made an emergency landing on Ledo, while others returned to base.

5 [February]: Five land-based attack planes each of the Genzan and the Mihoro Air Groups carried out a search and attack mission on the enemy in the Bangka area. They reported having spotted two [enemy] cruisers, two destroyers, two auxiliary gunboats, one fishing boat (500 ton class), and one sailboat (200 ton class), and scored near hits on one auxiliary gunboat, the fishing boat and the sailboat. All of the aircraft returned to base.

Four land-based attack planes of the Mihoro Air Group attacked the coastal areas of northern Sumatra. They reported having spotted one [enemy] destroyer and two merchantmen and scored near hits on the merchantmen. All of the aircraft returned to base.

Twenty-one Type-0 fighter planes and four land-based reconnaissance planes of the Yamada Unit advanced from Kota Bharu to Kuching. However, due to the bad condition of

the airfield, two Type-0 fighter planes, one land-based reconnaissance plane and one land-based attack plane, which had assisted with the transport, were seriously damaged (as previously told) in this advance. Meanwhile, the aircraft that had advanced to the Kuching airfield were three Type-96 fighter planes, four land-based reconnaissance planes, twenty-one Type-0 fighter planes and eighteen Type-96 land-based attack planes.

The Army air units in the Malaya area had completed their deployment for the air campaign to destroy the [enemy] air power in the Palembang area.⁽¹¹⁷⁾

- 6 [February]:** Thirty-six land-based attack planes of the Mihoro Air Group (full force) advanced from Kota Bharu and Sungai Petani to the Kuantan base. Also, nine Type-96 fighter planes of the group advanced to Kuantan from Kota Bharu.

The Army air units launched their air campaign to completely destroy the [enemy] air power in the Palembang area.⁽¹¹⁷⁾

- 7 [February]:** No operations were conducted.

- 8 [February]:** The 22d Air Flotilla headquarters advanced to Kuching from Saigon.⁽⁷⁵⁾

Six land-based attack planes of the Genzan Air Group carried out a search and attack mission on the enemy [on the waters surrounding] Bangka Island. They reported having spotted two destroyers and two merchantmen and sunk one 10,000t-class merchantman out of them. All of the aircraft returned to base.

The Mihoro Air Group did not conduct operations due to the felling of the trees in the extension zone of the runway.

One land-based reconnaissance plane of the Yamada Unit carried out a reconnaissance of the Batavia area. After spotting two battleships (which were later amended to 'not battleships'), twenty large merchantmen in the port and six large and twenty-seven small aircraft on the airfield, as well as one Buffalo, one Spitfire and others in the air, it returned to base.⁽¹²⁹⁾

Army aircraft spotted one [enemy] cruiser, two destroyers and twenty transport ships, which had sortied from Batavia and were sailing northward, as well as one [enemy] destroyer and seven transport ships, which were sailing southward on the waters north of Java. From the 6th onwards, the Army air units reported having brought down or damaged around 100 aircraft of the enemy air forces in the three-day air campaign to destroy the enemy air power.⁽¹¹⁷⁾

On this day, the Navy air units (the Genzan, the Mihoro Air Groups and the Yamada Unit) finally completed preparations to conduct attacks from the advance bases, and it was decided to launch the air campaign to destroy the enemy air power in the Batavia area from the 9th onwards.

- 9 [February]:** One land-based reconnaissance plane and fifteen Type-0 fighter planes of the Yamada Unit carried out an attack on Batavia. All of the aircraft returned after reporting having shot down twelve enemy aircraft and strafed eight, which were set ablaze. However, one Type-0 fighter plane was seriously damaged when landing. The [enemy] movements reconnoitered at Batavia were as follows:⁽¹²⁹⁾

1. Naval ships at anchor in Batavia

One *Renown*-class battleship, about twenty large merchantmen, and about twenty small merchantmen.

2. Kemajoran airfield

Two large and seventeen small aircraft

3. Cililitan airfield

Four Blenheim bombers and ten small aircraft

One land-based attack plane of the Kanoya Air Group conducted a survey of the Kuantan base from Thủ Dầu Một and concluded that it was unusable as an operation base for Type-1 land-based attack planes.⁽¹¹⁷⁾ On that day, the invasion unit left Cam Ranh Bay.

The Sailing of the Convoy

At 1900 on the 9th, the 1st Escort Unit and the convoy carrying the Army advance party left Cam Ranh Bay.⁽¹¹⁸⁾ Earlier, in view of the movements of enemy surface units in the Bangka area for the past several days, Malaya Unit Commander Vice Admiral Ozawa had judged that it was highly likely that his units would encounter powerful enemy surface units in the coming Operation L. Therefore, in order to reinforce the support surface force, he had decided to put the *Yura* of the 2d Escort Unit into the main unit and the *Kashii* into the 2d Escort Unit instead of the *Yura*, and on 8 February he had changed the disposition of his forces in the following way.⁽¹¹⁸⁾

1. The *Yura* shall be removed from the 2d Escort Unit and added to the main unit.
2. The *Kashii* shall be removed from the Anambas Base Unit and added to the 2d Escort Unit; accordingly the captain of the *Kashii* shall become the 2d Escort Unit commander.
3. The 91st Guard Unit commander shall become commander of the Anambas Base Unit.

The force, which left Cam Ranh Bay on the 9th, consisted of the following [ships].⁽¹¹⁸⁾

The *Sendai* (the flagship of the 3d Destroyer Squadron), the 11th Destroyer Division (the *Hatsuyuki*, the *Shirayuki*, and the *Fubuki*), the *Asagiri*, and eight Army transport ships

At 1920 when departing from Cam Ranh Bay, the *Fubuki* detected and attacked [an] enemy submarine, with unknown results.⁽¹¹⁸⁾ After that, the ships smoothly continued their sailing southward. On that evening, the *Uranami* and the *Murakumo*, which had been engaged in the Ledo operation, broke off the operation and left Pamangkat for the Anambas Islands. The 1st Section of the 41st Minesweeping Division also returned to the Anambas Islands. In the meantime, on the early morning of the 9th, the Army units had successfully landed on Singapore Island and launched an all-out attack.

Around 1000 on the 10th, the 1st Escort Unit crossed the 10° N line and changed course south southwestward toward the Anambas Islands. At 1800 on that day, the main unit and the 3d Air Unit left Cam Ranh Bay as scheduled. This force consisted of the following [ships]:⁽⁶⁸⁾

Main unit: The *Chōkai* (the flagship of the First Southern Expeditionary Fleet), the 7th Cruiser Division (the *Kumano*, the *Suzuya*, the *Mikuma*, and the *Mogami*), the *Yura*, the 1st Section of the 19th Destroyer Division (the *Ayanami* and the *Isonami*), and the 12th Destroyer Division (the *Shirakumo*)

The 3d Air Unit: The 4th Carrier Division (the *Ryūjō*) and the *Shikinami*

On the 11th, the 1st Escort Unit still continued sailing south and by the evening reached a point as close as about two hundred nautical miles north of the Anambas Islands.⁽¹¹⁸⁾ The main unit and the 3d Air Unit sailed after the 1st Escort Unit, closing in on it at sunset at a distance of about seventy nautical miles behind. At sunset, the main unit spotted two torpedo trails. Carrier-based attack planes of the 4th Carrier Division, the *Yura* and the *Shirakumo* carried out an attack, but with unknown results.⁽¹¹⁹⁾ At 1800, the 2d Escort Unit left Cam Ranh Bay as scheduled, escorting the main force of the Army,⁽⁶⁸⁾ which consisted of the following [ships]:

The *Kashii*, the *Shimushu*, the 20th Destroyer Division (the *Yūgiri* and the *Amagiri*), Submarine Chaser No. 9 and fourteen Army transport ships

On that day, the *Kinu* returned to Cam Ranh Bay from the Ledo operation in order to prepare for the subsequent operations.⁽¹²³⁾

On the early morning of the 12th, the Main unit and the 3d Air Unit caught up with the 1st Escort Unit at a point about 150 nautical miles north northeast of the Anambas Islands.⁽¹¹⁸⁾ At that point, one element of the escort unit changed places with the unit that had sailed north from the Anambas Islands, and the former sailed to the Anambas Islands for refueling.⁽⁶⁸⁾ According to a subsequent air reconnaissance, one [enemy] cruiser, one gunboat and some vessels that looked like transport ships were spotted sailing south on the waters north of the Bangka Strait, and Malaya Unit Commander Vice Admiral Ozawa judged that the enemy was still in a full-fledged escape from the Singapore area.⁽¹¹⁹⁾ The commander decided to advance with a force consisting of the main unit, the 3d Air Unit and the 3d Destroyer Squadron to the waters of Bangka and catch and destroy the escaping enemy units before the invasion units would reach the area.⁽¹¹⁸⁾ From around 2000 or 2030, the units started sailing southward, increasing their speed to 18 knots; the *Chōkai*, the 2d Section of the 7th Cruiser Division, the *Ryūjō*, and the 19th Destroyer Division headed for a point about 130 nautical miles east of Singkep, while the *Sendai*, the *Yura*, the 11th Destroyer Division, the 1st Section of the 7th Cruiser Division and the 12th Destroyer Division headed for a point about 60 nautical miles east of Singkep.⁽¹¹⁹⁾ Around that time, the 1st Escort Unit was sailing southeast of the Anambas Islands, while the 2d Escort Unit was sailing south on the waters east of the island of Puolo Condore. In the meantime, the low speed unit of the Base Unit, [i.e.] the *Otowa-maru*, the *Rumoi-maru*, eight auxiliary cutters and four fishing boats, had left the Anambas Islands at 1500, and was sailing southward toward the Bangka area, intending to reach the mouth of the Musi River on the early morning of the 15th.⁽⁶⁸⁾

Around 0800 on the 13th, the units, which had advanced to catch the escaping enemy units, reached their respective positions, ready to meet the fleeing enemy vessels.⁽¹³⁰⁾ By the end of that day, the 3d Destroyer Squadron unit ([consisting of] the *Sendai*, the *Yura*, the 11th Destroyer Division and the *Asagiri*) reported the following military gains:⁽¹¹⁸⁾

1403: The *Hatsuyuki* and the *Shirayuki* sank one British 4,000t-class merchantman.

1404: The *Fubuki* and the *Asagiri* sank a ship, which looked like a British 2,000t-class auxiliary minelayer.

2245: The *Sendai* and the *Yura* sank a ship, which looked like a 3,000t-class auxiliary cruiser.

In the meantime, at 1845 one enemy aircraft came probing, which was followed by a raid of five aircraft at 1940; they strafed and bombed the *Fubuki* and the *Asagiri*, but no damage was sustained.⁽¹¹⁸⁾ The 7th Cruiser Division unit did not spot any enemy other than an enemy merchantman on fire, and at 1700, by an order of the Malaya Unit commander, [started] sailing north toward the waters east of Cape Jang to be ready against the enemy [in the zone] south of Singapore and north of Bangka Island. On that evening, the 1st Escort Unit and the 2d Escort Unit were sailing south, respectively at a point about forty nautical miles northwest of Tambelan Island and about a hundred nautical miles north of Great Natuna Island.

At 0045 on the 14th, the *Fubuki* and the *Asagiri* sank one British merchantman at thirty nautical miles east of Cape Jabung. At 0800, 1st Escort Unit Commander Rear Admiral Hashimoto decided the subsequent disposition of forces as follows:⁽¹¹⁸⁾

1. The *Sendai* and the 1st Section of the 11th Destroyer Division shall join the transport ships.
2. The *Yura*, the *Asagiri* and the *Fubuki* shall appropriately operate on these waters and attack enemy naval vessels under the command of the captain of the *Yura*, and operate in such a manner as to guard the area north of the transport ships as they sail south.
3. The *Fubuki* shall join the transport ships at 1800 (supposed to cover the transport ships sailing into the Bangka Channel).

At 0600, the transport convoy of the advance party reached a point about forty-six nautical miles east of Cape Jang and kept sailing southward. At 0800, three enemy aircraft came for a raid and dropped bombs but caused no damage. Between 0910 and 0950 in the course of joining the convoy, the *Sendai* and the 1st Section of the 11th Destroyer Division spotted three floating mines about ten nautical miles south of Saya Island and got rid of them. Also, the convoy [itself] spotted three floating mines and got rid of them between 1115 and 1230. The friendly fighter planes started the direct escort in the air [over the convoy] from around 1000 onwards. Although six enemy aircraft came for a raid in the air above the convoy around 1230, which was followed by four aircraft around 1450, friendly fighter planes and antiaircraft fire drove them off, and they caused no damage. The friendly fighter planes shot down some of the enemy aircraft. The friendly fighter planes withdrew their direct escort at 1545 and returned to base.⁽¹¹⁸⁾

At 1400, the transport convoy reached [the waters] about twenty nautical miles 200° [SSW] off Saya Island, set its course at 170° [SSE] and headed for the Bangka Strait. At 1600, 1st Escort Unit Commander Rear Admiral Hashimoto issued the following order:⁽¹¹⁸⁾ "When tonight entering into Mentok [anchorage], enemy merchantmen must not be attacked unless they do harm to us. [Also,] when attacking enemy merchantmen, you have to focus on crippling them and try as much as possible not to sink them." The order was issued in view of the experience that since the 13th, [the attack units], full of fighting spirit and too anxious to attack, had wasted ammunition against an enemy that had almost no pluck to fight back, and that, moreover, the penetrating power of the shells was so great that they just went right through the ships' sides without readily sinking them.⁽¹³¹⁾

Around 1815, the Army's small cargo ship unit sailing in the wake of the 1st Escort Unit at a distance of about twenty nautical miles encountered a 1000t-class British auxiliary gunboat and was coming under fire from the latter. However, the *Yura*, the *Fubuki* and the *Asagiri*, which were covering the rear, soon came in for support and sank the gunboat. One of the small cargo ships caught fire and was abandoned because there was no chance of extinguishing it.⁽¹¹⁸⁾ Around 1920, the convoy was strafed and bombed by eleven enemy bombers at a point about seventy nautical miles north of Palembang, and the 9th Base Unit sustained some damage.⁽⁶⁸⁾ The convoy reached Point J at 2100 and shifted to the formation for entering into the Mentok anchorage. While the *Hatsuyuki* and the *Fubuki*, which had sailed ahead, provided guard on the surrounding waters, it entered into the anchorage, guided by the *Shirayuki*. The *Hatsutaka* of the 9th Base Force separated [from the convoy] at some point near Point J to head for the mouth of the Musi River.⁽¹¹⁸⁾ In the meantime, when on that day [the 14th] the 1st Section of the 7th Cruiser Division was operating on the waters east of Cape Jang, it re-

ceived around 1430 a report from [an] aircraft of the *Ryūjō* [about spotting] one mid-sized [enemy] merchantman at ten nautical miles east of Cape Jang and headed for the target. Around 1620, the section spotted a ship, which looked like a British auxiliary minelayer, and fired at her, but let her get away because she escaped into shallow waters, which appeared to be a minefield. Meanwhile at 1120, a [scout] plane of the *Suzuuya* reported having spotted [an enemy] submarine on the waters west of Lingga Island and having attacked and sunk her.⁽¹¹⁴⁾ The main unit and the 3d Air Unit operated on almost the same waters as they had on the previous day. Although they came under a surprise attack by nine heavy bombers in the afternoon, they sustained no damage.⁽¹³⁰⁾ In the evening, a report came in: "The Army [paratroop] raiding unit has successfully landed at Palembang at 1125 today, the 14th."⁽¹¹⁴⁾

Between 0010 and 0100 on the 15th, the convoy entered into the Mentok anchorage as scheduled. Around 0020, the *Hatsutaka*, which had headed for the mouth of the Musi River [ahead], wired: "Spotted [a vessel], which looks like [an] enemy destroyer to the south of the light ship at the mouth of the Musi River. Request to drive her off." First Escort Unit Commander Rear Admiral Hashimoto ordered the 11th Destroyer Division to attack her, and the *Fubuki* headed for the mouth of the Musi River at 0055. Meanwhile, after guiding the transport convoy into the anchorage, the *Shirayuki* seized [an enemy] 1,500t-class armed merchantman and [a] 200t-class small merchantman to the south of the anchorage, led them to Mentok to hand them over to Submarine chaser No. 7, which seized from the ships nautical charts of the waters around Singapore.⁽¹¹⁸⁾

After entering into the anchorage, the transport convoy immediately launched the operation to land in Mentok as well as prepare for the operation to maneuver [landing] craft to the mouth of the Musi River. The Mentok landing unit and the [Musi River] landing craft task force respectively left the anchorage at 0205 and around 0300.⁽¹³²⁾ The [Army's] Saleh River-ascending Unit and the Musi River-ascending Unit (including the Telang River Unit) respectively reached the mouth of each river at 0545 and 0615.⁽¹³³⁾ In the meantime, the *Fubuki* searched for the enemy naval vessel at the mouth of the Musi River along with the *Hatsutaka*. However, unable to spot the vessel, she broke off the search at 0500 and returned to her patrol area.⁽⁶⁸⁾ Meanwhile, finally at 0450, the 1st Escort Unit commander received a report from the 11th Subchaser Division commander that the landing had been successfully carried out at 0220. At 0545, the [Navy] Base Unit's River-ascending Unit for Palembang (the unit to clear the waterways [to Palembang]) arrived at the mouth of the Musi River.⁽¹¹⁸⁾

The deployment of forces around the sunrise on 15 February was as follows:

The north entrance of the Bangka Strait: the *Sendai*, the *Hatsuyuki* and the *Fubuki*
[The area] to the south of Saya Island and the east entrance of the Berhara Strait: the *Yura* and the *Asagiri*

The Mentok anchorage:

The anchorage of the convoy: eight Army transport ships, the *Eikō-maru*, the *Kōryū-maru*, Submarine Chasers Nos. 7 and 8

The waters [requiring] minesweeping: 1st Minesweeper Division (in the course of sweeping mines)

The area south of the anchorage: the *Shirayuki*

The mouth of the Musi River: the *Hatsuyuki*, the *Otowa-maru*, the *Rumoi-maru*, eight auxiliary cutters, four fishing boats and the Army task force in their landing craft

At the mouth of the Saleh River: the Army task force in their landing craft

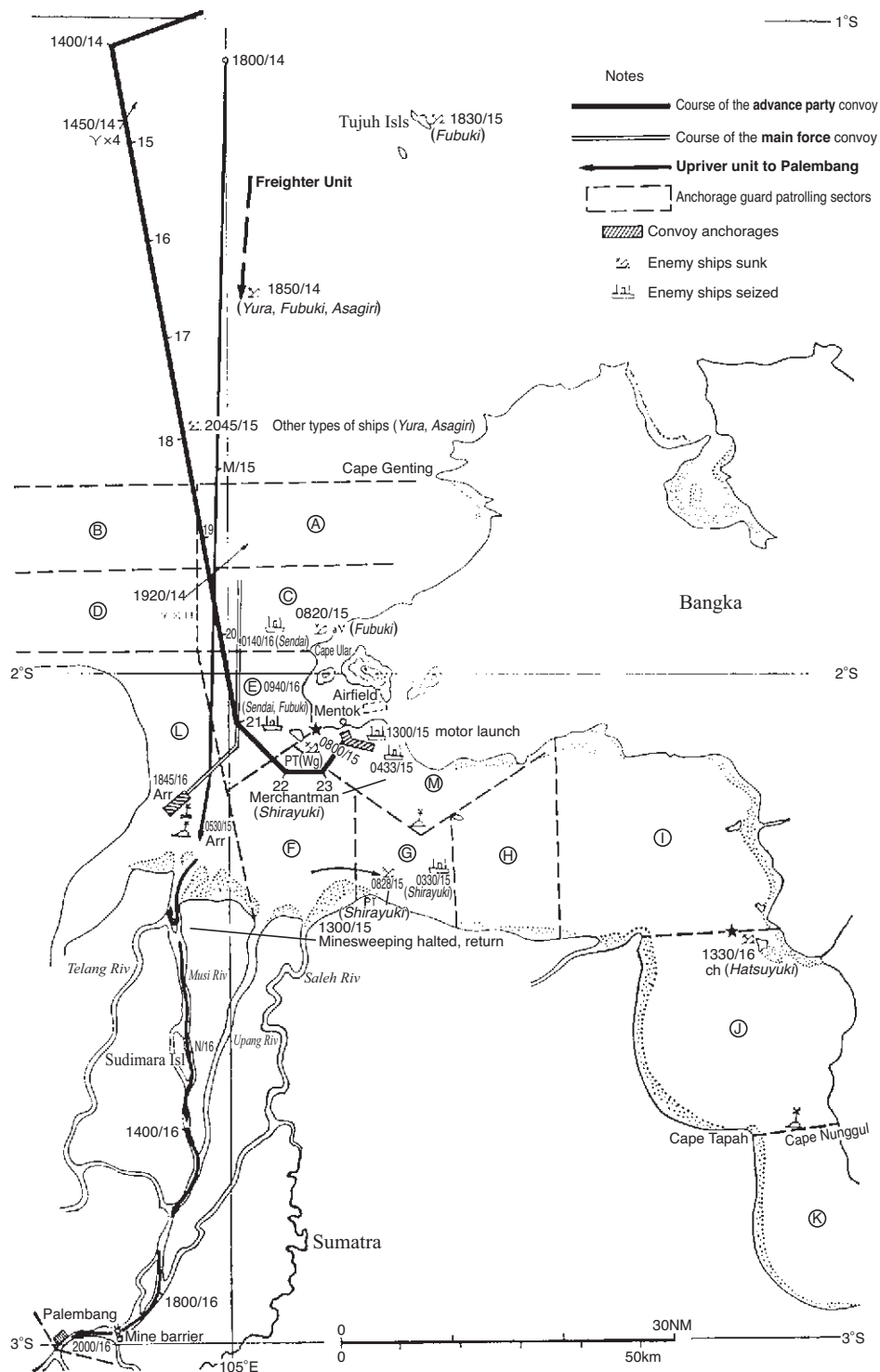


Illustration No. 28 — The Guarding at the Bangka Strait Anchorage and the Outline of the Operation to Sail Upstream to Palembang

At 0800, the 1st Minesweeper Division encountered one British torpedo boat off Cape Kelian and sank her. At 0830, the *Shirayuki* [also] sank [one] British torpedo boat in the area south of the Mentok anchorage. Around that time the *Fubuki* pursued a ship, which looked like a British minelayer, and ran her aground to the north of Cape Ular. At 0930, the 1st Minesweeper Division completed clearing the surrounding waters of mines (no tethered mines [found]). In the meantime at 0830, the Army river-ascending units (consisting of small shallow-draft [landing] craft, which did not need to worry about mines) started sailing upstream. Following that, the Navy River-ascending Unit for Palembang (for clearing waterways) started sailing upstream.⁽¹¹⁸⁾ At 1400 on 15 February, Singapore finally fell.

Missing an Opportunity to Destroy the Enemy Fleet (See Attached Illustration No. 4 [omitted])

On the morning of 15 February, the main unit ([consisting of] the *Chōkai*, the 2d Section of the 7th Cruiser Division, the 4th Carrier Division and the 19th Destroyer Division) and the 1st Section of the 7th Cruiser Division were operating on the waters about a hundred nautical miles east northeast of Mentok. At 1000, the following report from a scout seaplane of the *Chōkai* was sent:⁽¹³⁴⁾ “0938: Three enemy cruisers and five destroyers are sailing north in the Gaspar Strait.” “0950: The enemy seems to be directly escorted by six destroyers and accompanied by one battleship.” It was followed by a report, which came from the 4th Carrier Division:⁽¹¹⁹⁾ “1005: The [current] enemy position is thirty-five nautical miles 340° [NNW] of Liat Island and on a course of 0° [N] at a speed of 12 knots.” (The position was actually a mistake for twenty-five nautical miles 40° [NE of the island].) “No enemy aircraft carriers were seen at the rear of the enemy cruisers.” The enemy position as of 1000 was about 160 nautical miles 145° [SSE] of the main unit. It was partly sunny with a wind of ten meters [per second] from the north and a visibility of fifty kilometers, creating perfect weather conditions for an attack.

Malaya Unit Commander Vice Admiral Ozawa made roughly the following judgments and decisions:⁽¹¹⁹⁾

1. The enemy seems to have rallied a powerful unit and is heading northward in order to attack our Operation L units.
2. [Judging from] the reconnaissance reports of the Batavia area before the launch of Operation L as well as from the reports delivered by the aircraft of the *Chōkai*, it is certain that a battleship is among the enemy unit.
3. We shall pick up the enemy movements by keeping on probing the enemy as much as possible with our air force, and first of all attack them with our air units. Then, taking a favorable opportunity, our surface units shall rush at the enemy and destroy them.

At 1035, the Malaya Unit commander reversed course to head southeastward and issued the following orders, while beginning to assemble his main unit in line for approaching the enemy.⁽¹³⁴⁾ [First, he issued the following order] to the 22d Air Flotilla: “1035: Get ready for an attack with the full force of the land-based attack planes.” [Also,] to the main unit: “From 1200 onwards, stand by and be ready for immediate sailing at a speed of 28 knots and for the maximum battle speed in fifteen minutes.” Then at 1045, he ordered the 1st and the 3d Air Units to carry out repeated attacks on the enemy, while ordering the 2d Air Unit to probe the enemy fleet.⁽¹¹⁸⁾

The main unit did fourteen knots, taking by and large a southeastern course.⁽¹³⁴⁾ A little after 1100, a [scout] plane of the *Chōkai* reported as follows: “1108: The position of the enemy main force is at twenty-five nautical miles 50° [NE] of Cape Berikat.” [That is to say,] the enemy position as of 1100 was 115 nautical miles 140° [SE] of the main unit. Around that time, the following report of the 2d Escort Unit Commander Capt. Kojima Hideo came in:⁽¹¹⁸⁾ “The position of the 2d Escort Unit as of 1000 is 0°37’N, 106°16’E. If things carry on like this, it shall reach the mouth of the Musi River around 1100 on the 16th.” The 2d Escort Unit’s scheduled entry into the anchorage had been around 0000 on the 17th. However, its current position was forty-five nautical miles northeast of the main unit. Judging that it was dangerous to let the unit continue its course when a decisive battle with the enemy fleet was about to be launched, Malaya Unit Commander Vice Admiral Ozawa ordered at 1125: “The 2d Escort Unit shall temporarily evacuate to the north.”⁽¹¹⁹⁾ At 1135, the 2d Escort Unit reversed course and started to evacuate, setting its course at 0° [N].

At 1130, [an] aircraft of the 22d Air Flotilla sent in the following report:⁽¹³⁴⁾ “1100: The enemy main force consists of a battleship and three cruisers as its core and sails at a speed of 18 knots on a course of 300° [WNW], accompanied by eight destroyers.” It was followed by a report from [an] aircraft of the 4th Carrier Division: “1120: One battleship is among the main force of the enemy.” At 1155, 22d Air Flotilla Commander Rear Admiral Matsunaga reported: “1130: The attack [plane] unit has been launched.” After that, reports on the state of the enemy poured in one after another from friendly aircraft.⁽¹³⁴⁾ From a scout seaplane of the *Chōkai*: “1137: The enemy sails counting from the north in a line of five destroyers and three cruisers. All turned 270° [W] together, [sailing] at a speed of 20 knots.” From [an] aircraft of the 22d Air Flotilla: “1145: The position of the enemy main force is 50 nautical miles 0° [N] of Gaspar Island [and they are sailing] at a speed of 20 knots.” From [an] aircraft of the 4th Carrier Division: “1155: Spotted two enemy cruisers and one destroyer at 58 nautical miles 90° [E] of Cape Tuig. They are [sailing] on a course of 0° [N] at a speed of 14 knots.” It was followed by “1215: Correction: the enemy position is 22 nautical miles 2° [N] of Gaspar Island.”

The main unit was still approaching [the enemy fleet] at a speed of fourteen knots. Malaya Unit Commander Vice Admiral Ozawa informed his subordinate units of his overall judgment of the enemy situation as of 1240 as follows:⁽¹³⁴⁾ “The enemy main force consists of one battleship, three cruisers and eight destroyers. Its position is at 2°N 106°7’E and it is [sailing] on a course of 350° [NNW].” Again, the following reports came in: From a [scout] seaplane of the *Chōkai*: “1250: The position of the enemy main force is 55 nautical miles 105° [E] of Cape Tuig. [The enemy is] sailing on the course of 310° [NW] at a speed of 14 knots.” “1315: Add further two battleships to the force.” From the 4th Carrier Division commander: “1300: The enemy strength consists of five large cruisers and eight destroyers. They are [sailing] on a course of 310° [NW] at a speed of 14 knots.” From a scout seaplane of the *Kumano*: “1300: [The position of] the enemy main force is 45 nautical miles 0° [N] of Cape Berikat. It is [sailing] on a course of 310° [NW] at a speed of 18 knots.”

Although more than three hours had passed since the enemy was [first] spotted, friendly air units had not yet conducted any attacks. Malaya Unit Commander Vice Admiral Ozawa judged that if his unit would continue sailing southeastward, it was likely to meet head-on with an enemy fleet that was superior to his unit and included a battleship. At 1328, the commander changed his course northeastward at a right angle to the course of the enemy and [also] issued the following orders:

1. The *Sendai*, the *Yura*, the 11th Destroyer Division and the *Asagiri* shall join the main unit.
2. The main unit shall operate on the waters northeast of Cape Jang.
3. [The ships of] the 1st Escort Unit other than those above shall enter [and stay in] the mouth of the Musi River.

While assembling around 1500, the *Sendai*, the *Yura* and the other ships that were ordered to join [the main unit] started sailing north from the north entrance of the Bangka Strait. The convoy also raised anchor at 1500 to head for the mouth of the Musi River.⁽¹¹⁸⁾

Setting its course virtually to the north at 1350, the main unit sailed as if it was backing away from the enemy.⁽¹³⁴⁾ Then, it received the following reports: From a scout seaplane of the *Mikuma*: "By the bombing attacks of our forces at 1335 [1325?], one large cruiser is sending up black smoke. The formation of the enemy has lost coherence." It was the first bombing attack conducted on the enemy fleet by seven carrier-based attack planes of the 4th Carrier Division. At 1406, [by ordering the main unit] "Stand by and get ready for immediate sailing at 24 knots and at maximum battle speed in thirty minutes," the Malaya Unit commander eased the standby level of the engines. At 1430, he changed his course north northwestward and kept this course so that he would maintain a distance of more or less 65 nautical miles from the enemy. Right after that, friendly aircraft reported the enemy's course reversal as follows: From a scout seaplane of the *Suzuya*: "1417: The enemy reversed course." From [an] aircraft of the 4th Carrier Division: "1420: The enemy main force has reversed course. It is [sailing] on a course of 120° [ESE] at a speed of 24 knots." From a [scout] plane of the *Mogami*: "1430: The enemy changed course to starboard." From [an] aircraft of the 22d Air Flotilla: "1430: At 1405 [we] bombed the main force of the enemy but did not score direct hits."

Before the attacks of friendly air units had produced considerable military gains, the enemy started reversing course to withdraw. At 1450, the [Japanese] main unit set its course at 0° [N]. At 1500, it changed course again to the northeast, and then headed southeastward at 1513, but it still kept sailing at a low speed. Then, the following reports were received:⁽¹³⁴⁾ From a scout seaplane of the *Kumano*: "1515: The enemy has reversed course, [and sails] on a course of 145° [SE]. There are no battleships. A *Hawkins*-class cruiser was wrongly taken for a battleship. This is certain." From the 4th Carrier Division commander: "1550: A *Hawkins*-class cruiser was mistaken for a battleship." From the 4th Carrier Division commander: "1600: Based on the confirmed report from the aircraft that probed [the enemy], [I] partly revise the report on the enemy strength as follows: [the enemy consists of] seven cruisers (three *Emerald*-class, two *Danae*-class, and two *Hawkins*-class), and five destroyers. [There are] no battleships." Despite this report, Malaya Unit Commander Vice Admiral Ozawa did not yet abandon his judgment that [a] battleship was among the enemy [fleet].⁽¹³⁴⁾

Around 1600, there followed reports about the friendly land-based attack planes' bombing attacks, but the enemy still seemed to be evacuating on a course of 120° [SE] without having sustained fatal damage. From this situation, the Malaya Unit commander judged that the enemy had given up its plans due to the attack of our air units. Accordingly at 1620, the commander issued an order to the 2d Escort Unit, which was evacuating to the north: "The 2d Escort Unit shall operate as planned. Report your [current] position."⁽¹¹⁸⁾ In accordance with this order, the 2d Escort Unit reversed course: its position [at that time] was 102 nautical miles 39° [NE] of Cape Jang. [Meanwhile,] aircraft continually reported on the enemy movements.⁽¹³⁴⁾ Gathering from the reports, the distance to the enemy was expected to be 130 nautical miles or more by 1700. Judging that an engagement was hardly likely on that day, the

Malaya Unit commander ordered the 1st Escort Unit at 1700: "The 1st Escort Unit commander shall return to his original tasks at an appropriate moment."⁽¹¹⁸⁾ In accordance with the order, the 3d Destroyer Squadron unit returned to its deployment in the Bangka Strait area at midnight. At 1810, the aircraft reconnoitering [the enemy] reported that the enemy was still sailing south. After ordering the air unit at 1810 to have "all aircraft stop the reconnaissance," the Malaya Unit commander decided to have the main unit guard the present waters by appropriately operating there.⁽¹³⁴⁾

Although the enemy had sustained some damage by the attacks of the Japanese air units, which had caused two of the ships to send out black smoke, they sailed through the Gaspar Strait at 1900 to the Java Sea. The attacks of the air units on that day had scarcely been able to cause any serious damage, and the surface unit also missed an opportunity to have an engagement.⁽¹³⁴⁾ Capt. Tanaka Kikumatsu, then captain of the *Kumano* of the 7th Cruiser Division, criticized the conduct of the operation in his post-war memoir as follows:

If he [Vice Admiral Ozawa] had the intention to carry out a decisive battle with his main unit, he should at least have kept the enemy in sight. I understand that he attached greater importance to the air attacks, but by having the few bombers of the 4th Carrier Division carry out repetitive attacks the whole day, I wonder whether he did not depend too much on aircraft [attacks]. And it is regrettable that he ignored the positive statements by the aircraft of the *Kumano* (confirmed by Aviation Officer Lt. Itō Motoé himself) as well as by 4th Carrier Division Commander Rear Admiral Kakuta that there was no battleship among the enemy [fleet].

On the other hand, Malaya Unit Commander Vice Admiral Ozawa stated in his post-war memoir the following:⁽³⁸⁾

After this operation, 4th Carrier Division Commander Kakuta once asked me whether the surface unit should not have hotly pursued and closed in on the enemy when the enemy had been spotted. To that question, I answered in the following way:

1. The fleet should not distance itself too far from the transport convoy it was supposed to escort. In addition, it was supposed to continue its task to catch and destroy as much as possible enemy vessels escaping from Singapore.
2. I judged that the enemy fleet had come out to conduct a rescue operation and had anticipated our air raid to some degree. I never expected that at our first air raid the enemy would flee in total confusion.

As for the enemy battleship, it was concluded afterward that a battleship had not been included after putting together the reconnaissance reports and photos.

The Lack of Military Gains Produced by the Air Units

On 10 February, twenty-seven land-based attack planes of the Mihoro Air Group advanced from the Kuantan base to the Kahang base to prepare for the attack on Batavia. On the 11th, the land-based attack planes of the Mihoro Air Group headed for the attack on Batavia, each aircraft carrying seven 60kg bombs for use on land (about half [of the regular full load]) and fuel loaded to capacity. However, because the fighter planes to cover the attack could not take off due to bad weather at Kuching, the attack planes called off the [scheduled] attack and conducted a search and attack on enemy naval vessels in the Bangka Strait [instead].⁽¹²⁸⁾ The unit spotted three [enemy] cruisers, one destroyer and two merchantmen near Bangka

Island and carried out a bomb attack, but the attack produced very few results, because the evasive actions of the enemy were very skillful and because the unit had to use bombs for use on land (with impact fuses; the fuses for attacks on naval vessels had not yet arrived).^(71, 128) (It was reported that one cruiser and two merchantmen had been destroyed.)

On the 12th, seventeen land-based attack planes of the Genzan Air Group, twenty-six land-based attack planes of the Mihoro Air Group, and twenty-seven land-based attack planes of the Kanoya Air Group, seventy aircraft in total, carried out a search and attack on enemy naval vessels in the Bangka Strait. They spotted three merchantmen, one cruiser, three destroyers and two auxiliary vessels, and reported having destroyed one merchantman, one cruiser, and one auxiliary vessel.^(71, 81) On that day, eleven land-based attack planes of the Genzan Air Group advanced to Kuching, by which the total number of the aircraft advanced there became thirty-one.⁽¹³⁵⁾

On the 13th, twenty-seven land-based attack planes of the Genzan Air Group, twenty-eight land-based attack planes of the Mihoro Air Group and twenty-seven land-based attack planes of the Kanoya Air Group, eighty-two aircraft in total, carried out a search and attack on enemy naval vessels in the Bangka and Singapore Straits. They spotted some dozen merchantmen, one destroyer and one auxiliary vessel and carried out attacks on them, but only to report that they had only sunk one merchantman and seriously damaged another.^(71, 81) The poor bombing scores of the land-based air units were a big problem.

Note: "Yamada Takeo Hisōchō Nisshi" [The Journal of Chief Flight Warrant Officer Yamada Takeo] put it in the following way: "Today, all squadrons had poor scores. Because all bombs blanketed the [enemy] ships, at least one should have hit. But [the enemy] really must have had all the devil's luck that not a single bomb did hit them. Tomorrow, we are again scheduled to attack [enemy] naval vessels. We must score direct hits, for the honor of the Navy air units as well. The squadron commander is also racking his brains over how to correct the bomb run. He even said that he would award a prize to anyone who would offer him a good idea. All of us feel really exasperated." Furthermore, the entry on 14 February in the "Sanagi Chūsa Nikki" [Diary of Commander Sanagi] relates: "The Malaya Unit was trying hard to attack enemy naval vessels in the Singapore and Bangka Island areas with the entire force of its air units and surface vessels. However, it is deplorable when, like on yesterday the 13th, the mid-sized [land-based] attack plane units of the 22d Air Flotilla attacked an enemy transport convoy with seventy-one aircraft in total only to sink no more than a single ship. That should be called a worse than bad result."

On the same day, seventeen Type-0 fighter planes and one land-based reconnaissance plane of the Yamada Unit headed for an attack on Batavia but returned due to bad weather.⁽¹²⁹⁾

On the 14th, twenty-seven land-based attack planes of the Genzan Air Group, twenty-nine land-based attack planes of the Mihoro Air Group and twenty-seven land-based attack planes of the Kanoya Air Group carried out a search and attack on enemy naval vessels in the Bangka and the Singapore Straits. They spotted one [enemy] destroyer, four minelayers, three auxiliary vessels and eight merchantmen, and reported having sunk one minelayer and two merchantmen, run one minelayer aground and inflicted some damage to another, while having inflicted serious damage to two merchantmen, some damage to one and minor damage to another, and also run two merchantmen aground.^(71, 81) Meanwhile, the Yamada Unit provided direct escort in the air over the convoy for Operation L and reported that the unit had shot down ten enemy Lockheed bombers (almost all) that had come for a raid between

1235 and 1400 before they could bomb [the convoy]. Five Japanese aircraft were marked by bullets, but all returned.⁽¹²⁹⁾

[Concerning the operation for] the 15th, 1st Air Unit Commander Rear Admiral Matsunaga had issued orders that six land-based attack planes of the Genzan Air Group should take off at dawn and search for the enemy in the Bangka area, while the other aircraft should be on standby, primarily to be serviced. At 1000, a [scout] plane of the *Chōkai*, which had been searching for the enemy, reported having spotted an enemy fleet,⁽¹³⁴⁾ which was followed by orders of the Malaya Unit commander to prepare for an attack at 1035 and to implement the attack.⁽¹²²⁾ At 1040, the 1st Air Unit commander ordered all air raid units to attack the enemy with their full force.⁽¹²²⁾ All units hurriedly prepared for the attack. [However,] some units were unable to gather their full regular crew and [had to] conduct the mission with mixed crews.⁽¹²⁸⁾ Twenty-three land-based attack planes of the Genzan Air Group took off from Kuching at 1130, carried out bombings on the enemy fleet, whose formation had been broken by the bombings of the carrier-based attack-plane unit of the *Ryūjō* at 1335 [1325?]. However, without scoring direct hits, all returned with eight of them marked by bullets.⁽⁷¹⁾ However, this attack made the enemy fleet reverse course at 1417.⁽¹³⁴⁾ Twenty-seven land-based attack planes of the Mihoro Air Group took off from the Kuantan base at 1235 to attack the enemy fleet and carried out attacks from 1545 till 1634. They scored no direct hits either and all returned to Kuantan with twelve of them marked by bullets.⁽⁷¹⁾ The Kanoya Air Group also hurriedly prepared for attack. At 1230, the first team of nine aircraft departed from the Thủ Dầu Một base, which was followed by seventeen aircraft at 1342; they headed for an attack on the enemy fleet. The land-based attack planes of the Kanoya Air Group had been scheduled to land on the Kahang base after the attack. Having received a telegram from the 22d Air Flotilla Commander Rear Admiral Matsunaga, "1640: If it is not possible to return to base before sunset, the unit shall suspend the attack and return. Sunset: 2021," the 1st Squadron reversed course and returned to base.⁽¹³⁴⁾ However, the 2d and the 3d Squadrons continued their attack missions. Around 1842, they attacked the enemy fleet but none scored any direct hits and almost all aircraft were marked by bullets. While the commander plane returned to Thủ Dầu Một, six planes flew to Ledo, and ten to Kahang. Among the planes that had headed for Ledo, one made an emergency landing in a dense forest area near the Ledo [airfield] and caught fire, which killed all eight crewmembers.⁽⁷¹⁾ One of the aircraft which had landed on the Kahang [airfield] fell into a ditch on the left side of the runway and was seriously damaged.⁽¹²⁸⁾ In the meantime, the Yamada Unit conducted patrols over Kuching with Type-96 fighter planes, while supporting the attack on the enemy fleet with one land-based reconnaissance plane and six Type-0 fighter planes, but without spotting enemy aircraft, all returned.⁽¹²⁹⁾

The 2d Air Unit (seaplane unit) had carried out patrols over the anchorage as well as the convoy (after its departure from the port) against enemy submarines and also patrols [against enemy aircraft] day after day. However, no enemy was spotted other than some aircraft, which had come to raid the Anambas area. From the 12th onwards, the unit searched for the enemy [on the waters] south of the Anambas Islands and reported having spotted small enemy naval vessels and a large number of merchantmen. Then on the 15th, after the scout plane of the *Chōkai* had spotted the enemy, the unit reconnoitered the enemy fleet with its full force and reported useful information on the enemy movements.⁽¹²²⁾ In the meantime, the advance base personnel of the 2d Air Unit carried out a landing in front of the enemy at

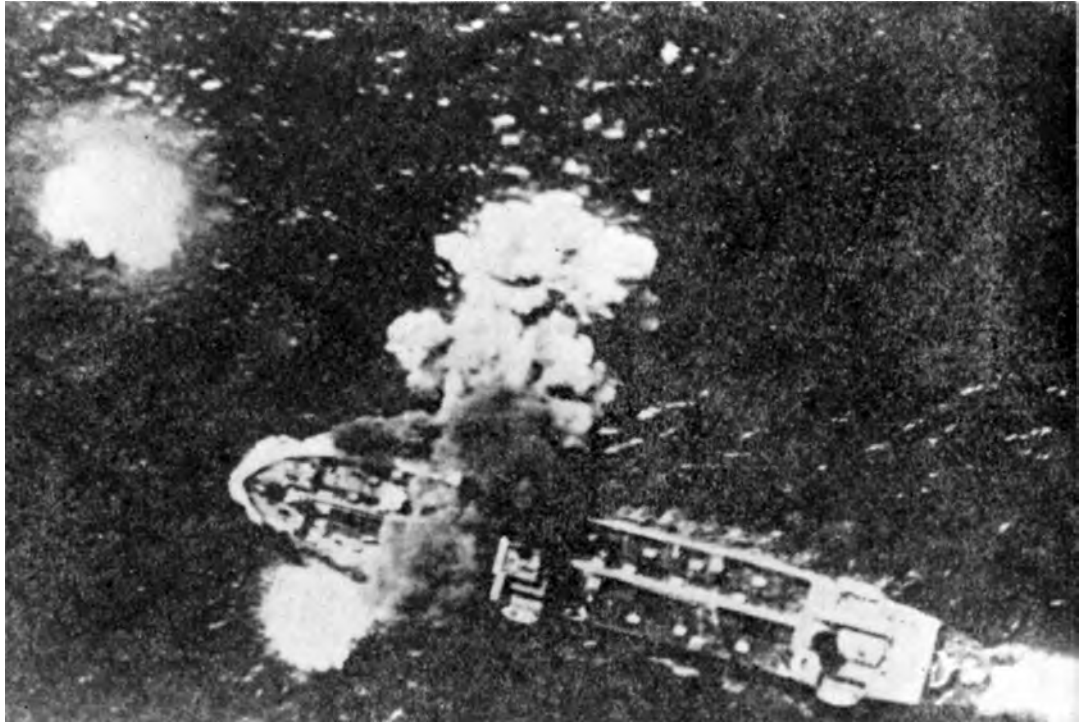


A Seaplane Base

inami) had left Cam Ranh Bay following the main unit of the Malaya Unit. At 0800 on the 13th, the unit advanced to [the waters] about 130 nautical miles 85° [E] of Singkep Island. Afterwards, the unit appropriately operated on the waters north of Bangka Island to be ready against the enemy in the Gaspar and Karimata Straits.⁽⁷¹⁾ The unit guarded the air over the main unit and the carrier with the carrier-based fighter planes, while patrolling against enemy submarines with carrier-based attack planes. Also, it carried out a search and attack mission on the enemy in the Bangka Strait with carrier-based attack planes; on the 13th, it reported military gains of having sunk one merchantman, setting two ablaze, inflicting serious damage to one, some damage to another, and minor damage to two, while having run another aground;⁽⁷¹⁾ on the 14th, it reported military gains of having sunk one torpedo boat tender in cooperation with a scout seaplane of the *Mogami*, and also having sunk an auxiliary vessel and a gunboat, destroyed one minelayer, while having sunk one merchantman and run another aground. There were no attacks by enemy aircraft or submarines.⁽⁶⁸⁾

Mentok along with the army unit and set up a seaplane base there.⁽¹²⁵⁾ At 1300, one element of the reconnaissance seaplane unit advanced to the Mentok [base] and carried out patrols over the anchorage against enemy submarines and aircraft, while supporting the river-ascending units to seize Palembang.⁽¹²⁵⁾ During this period, on the 14th, the unit reported having sunk an enemy submarine, inflicted minor damage to a gunboat and serious damage to a torpedo boat, setting the latter ablaze, and also destroyed one merchantman. It also produced a military gain of inflicting minor damage to an [enemy] merchantman and leading [a] friendly destroyer to her to sink her. Also on the 15th, the unit reported military gains of sinking an [enemy] auxiliary gunboat, inflicting some damage to one gunboat and minor damage to another, and setting a merchantman ablaze.^(119, 122, 125)

At 1800 on the 10th, the 3d Air Unit ([consisting of] the *Ryūjō*, the *Shiokaze*, and the *Shikinami*)



The Sinking of a Large Oiler in the Bangka Strait at 1600 on 13 February

On the 15th, the 3d Air Unit was following in the wake of the main unit of the Malaya Unit. At 0848, Type-96 carrier-based fighter planes on guard in the air drove off an enemy flying boat, which had probed the main unit. The [air] unit was in the course of carrying out a search and attack on the enemy in the Riouw and the Berhara Straits, while attacking enemy gunboat[s] in the Palembang area. Learning that a [scout] plane of the *Chōkai* had spotted an enemy fleet at 1000, the 3d Air Unit immediately separated from the main unit and started advancing toward the enemy.⁽³⁷⁾ At that time, it was partly sunny with a wind of ten meters [per second] from the north and a visibility of fifty kilometers, creating a perfect opportunity for an air attack.

Note: The topnotch crews had been culled from the 3d Air Unit for the attack on Hawaii and the unit was made up of scratch crews right before the opening of hostilities, so in fact they had barely had time for practice and their bombing or torpedo attack skills were far from polished. That is why Commander Kakuta left the cover provided by the main unit and boldly advanced toward the enemy alone, so it would be easier to conduct repeated attacks (by making it possible to conduct attacks from a close distance).⁽³⁷⁾

At 1105, the first attack unit of seven carrier-based attack planes of the 3d Air Unit took off. At 1325, the first attack unit bombed an *Exeter*-class cruiser, set her ablaze, and reported having sunk or seriously damaged the ship.⁽⁷¹⁾ At 1430 [1540?], the second attack unit of six carrier-based attack planes bombed the enemy fleet, but with no results. At 1630, the third attack unit (the second attack by the first attack [unit]) carried out a bombing, but with no results. At 1735, the fourth attack unit (the second attack by the second attack [unit]) took off. At

1900, the attack unit bombed a *Leander*-class cruiser and scored one to three near hits near the stern. All aircraft returned including two that had been marked by bullets. At 2120, 4th Carrier Division Commander Rear Admiral Kakuta reported the following:⁽¹³⁴⁾ "2120: The reconnaissance report by the fourth attack unit. As of 1703 the enemy fleet was heading south in the Gaspar Strait with thirteen ships sailing in a single line ahead, stretching for about twenty nautical miles, largely at a speed of twenty knots or more. The head is reaching a point twelve nautical miles 80° [E] of Liat Island. The two cruisers in the rear are sailing southward while [still] on fire."

Note: Cdr. Yoshitomi Shigema, the aviation staff officer [of the 4th Carrier Div], recollected the following reasons why the carrier-based attack planes had not carried out torpedo attacks:

1. The crews had not been given enough training.
2. The torpedoes had not been satisfactorily maintained or adjusted.

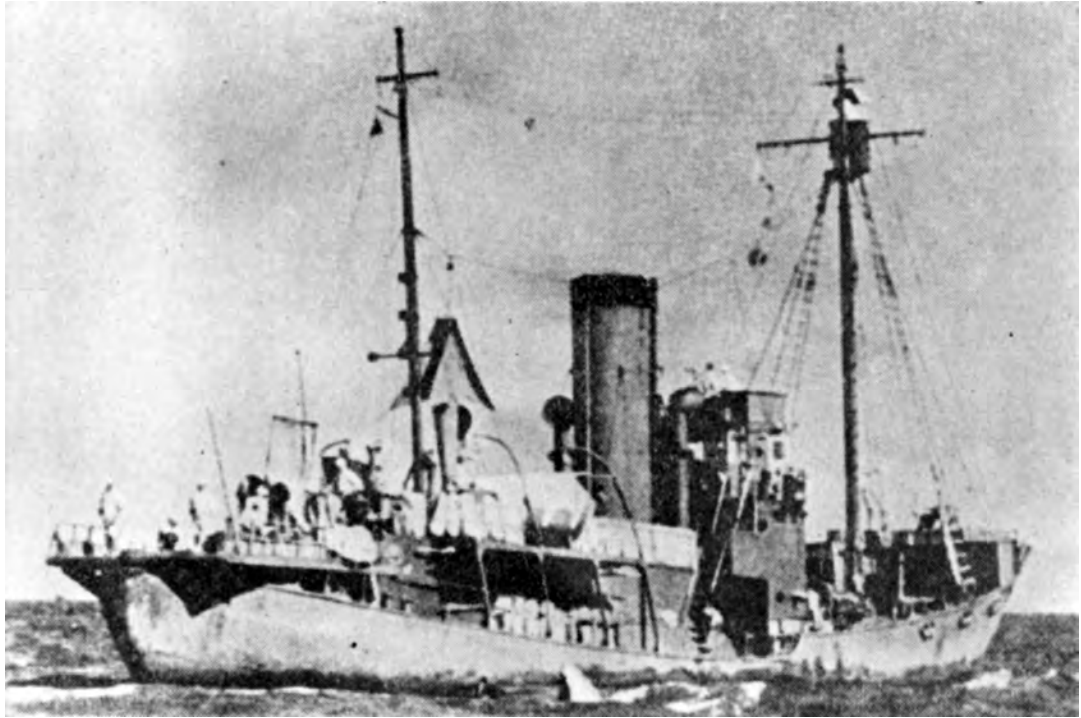
For those reasons, he was even less confident in torpedo attacks than in bombing attacks.

The reason why the land-based attack planes had not carried out torpedo attacks was because the condition of the airfields was so bad that they were not able to take off with a torpedo load.

Success of the Upriver Sail to Palembang

At 0530 on the 15th, the *Otowa-maru* and the rest of the Navy River-ascending Unit for Palembang (the *Otowa-maru*, the *Rumoi-maru*, eight auxiliary cutters and four fishing boats) arrived in the mouth of the Musi River and joined the *Hatsutaka* (carrying the Base Unit commander), which had sailed ahead. At 1000, the unit completed the preparation for the upriver minesweeping operation and started sailing upstream at 1030.⁽¹¹⁸⁾ (Note: The Army units going upriver to Palembang in [landing] craft had already started sailing upstream at 0830.) However, for about two hours right from the start of the upriver sail, a total of thirty-nine enemy aircraft came attacking [the Navy units] in twelve raids, and bombed and strafed the minesweeping unit in rapid succession. The unit was kept busy returning fire, and on top of that, many obstacles on the river bottom near the mouth of the river frequently severed the minesweeping cables, which only allowed the unit to completely sweep mines in a stretch of about ten nautical miles in the morning. At 1300, Base Unit Commander Rear Admiral Hiraoka called off the minesweeping for that day and ordered the [sub-]units to return to the mouth of the river. By 1500, the units returned to the mouth of the river and evaded the enemy air raids, which still went on persistently until the evening even after the units had taken cover. Although no damage of the ships was sustained in this antiaircraft engagement, it caused a few casualties.⁽⁶⁸⁾ At nightfall, Malaya Unit Commander Vice Admiral Ozawa incorporated three minesweepers of the 1st Minesweeper Division into the River-ascending Unit.⁽¹¹⁸⁾ At 1900 on that day, the Musi River Ascending Unit of the Army advance party reached Palembang and started landing.⁽¹³³⁾

On the 16th, with the support of three minesweepers incorporated as reinforcements and the seaplane units, which had advanced to the Mentok base, the River-ascending Unit changed the disposition of forces and restarted the minesweeping operation, sailing upriver at 0800.⁽⁶⁸⁾ Around 0900, Minesweeper No. 5 spotted vessels, which looked like enemy gunboats, immediately reversed course, engaged them and sank one and crippled another. On that day, fewer enemy aircraft interfered, and the minesweeping operation by and large made



Minesweeping on the Musi River (1)

smooth progress. That is, around 1430, the unit reached the confluence of the Upang River [with the Musi River], by and large the midpoint [between the mouth of the river] and Palembang. At 2030 the unit reached Palembang and for the most part completed the scheduled minesweeping operation.⁽¹¹⁸⁾ Meanwhile at 1845, the convoy of the Army main force in fourteen ships had reached the mouth of the Musi River, escorted by the 2d Escort Unit.⁽⁶⁸⁾

On the morning of the 17th, the *Shimushu*, to which the [Army] 38th Division headquarters had been transferred from the transport ship *Gin'yō-maru*, started sailing upriver, guiding nineteen Army transport ships. However, at a point around three nautical miles upstream of Borang Island, they encountered a yet-to-be-swept mine barrier, which made it impossible for the transport ships to sail upriver. Consequently, after having the transport ships temporarily drop anchor [there], the *Shimushu* [continued to] sail upriver alone; she reached Palembang at 1435 and disembarked the divisional headquarters. The minesweeping of that [barrier] was finally completed on the 19th (having disposed of twenty-eight mines), and the Army convoy at long last reached Palembang at 1500 on the 22d.⁽⁶⁸⁾ In the meantime, because at 1030 on the 17th, by means of Malaya Unit Telegraphic Operation Order No. 136, orders concerning the operation to clear the waterways in the Malacca Strait and the Singapore area had been issued, 9th Base Force Commander Rear Admiral Hiraoka in charge of the operation began preparations (i.e. by sending the minesweeping force to the Singapore area).⁽¹¹⁸⁾

The Operations of the Surface Units from the 16th Onwards

As of the early morning on the 16th, [the surface unit] was deployed as follows:⁽¹¹⁸⁾



Minesweeping on the Musi River (2)

[From the] Northeast of Cape Genting [to] the Berhara Strait: the *Yura* and the *Asagiri*
Off Cape Ular (the north entrance of the Bangka Strait): the *Sendai* and the *Fubuki*
The Mentok anchorage: Submarine Chasers Nos. 7 and 8, the *Eikō-maru*, the *Kōryū-maru*, and
three Army transport ships

The center of the [Bangka] Channel: the *Hatsuyuki*, the *Shirayuki* and Minesweepers Nos. 2 and 3
The mouth of the Musi River: the Base Unit, Minesweepers Nos. 1, 4 and 5, and five Army transport ships

On that day, the 1st Escort Unit seized or destroyed the following enemy naval vessels:⁽¹¹⁸⁾

0140: The *Sendai* attacked [a] British patrol boat off Cape Ular and destroyed her.

0825: The *Sendai* inspected a British cutter, disarmed her and led her to Mentok.

0900: Minesweeper No. 5 sank [an] enemy torpedo boat and disarmed [a] patrol boat.

0940: The *Fubuki* seized two British speed boats.

0945: The *Sendai* and the *Fubuki* seized a British tanker off the lighthouse of Cape Kelian.

1300: The 11th Subchaser Division seized [a] British cutter off Mentok.

1330: The *Hatsuyuki* destroyed a British submarine chaser at a point southeast of Nangka [Besar] Island.

1630: The *Yura* and the *Asagiri* seized a small British gunboat and led her to Mentok.

At 1430, four enemy bombers bombed the Mentok anchorage and caused some damage to the *Tajima-maru*. Another raid by six enemy bombers followed at 1645, but no damage was sustained.⁽¹¹⁸⁾

At 1800, Malaya Unit Commander Vice Admiral Ozawa issued an order to the 7th Cruiser Division and the 19th Destroyer Division (minus the *Isonami*) to sail to the Anambas [base] to replenish and stand by [there] for the coming Java operation. He also ordered the *Kashii* to sail to the Anambas [base] when the transport convoy had entered the anchorage at the Musi River. He further ordered Escort Unit Commander Rear Admiral Hashimoto to send the *Yura*, the 11th Destroyer Division and the 1st Minesweeper Division to the Anambas [base] by the 19th at the latest. At 1845 on that day, the 2d Escort Unit, which had escorted the Army main force, entered the anchorage at the mouth of the Musi River as much as five hours earlier than scheduled (as previously told).⁽¹¹⁸⁾

On the 17th, just as on the previous day, the escort unit [again] took charge of guarding the area surrounding the anchorage. They seized the following enemy [vessels] in the Bangka channel on that day:⁽¹¹⁸⁾

0730: The 1st Section of the 41st Minesweeper Division seized a British motor launch.

0830: Submarine Chaser No. 8 seized two British cutters.

1710: Patrol Boat No. 3 [actually Minesweeper No. 3] seized a British steam launch.

At 1140 on that day, the Southern Task Force issued telegraphic order No. 103, concerning changes of the disposition of forces (in accordance with the completion of the Malaya operation). Its contents were as follows:⁽¹¹⁸⁾

1. As of 21 February, the disposition of forces shall be changed as follows:
 - (a) [To be transferred] from the Malaya Unit to the Dutch East Indies Unit: The *Yura*, the 11th and the 12th Destroyer Divisions, the 1st Minesweeper Division, the *Kamikawa-maru*, two auxiliary submarine chasers, two fishing boats, and the *Tsurumi*.
 - (b) [To be transferred] from the Malaya Unit to the air unit: The 22d Air Flotilla (minus the Mihoro Air Group), a detachment from the 21st Air Flotilla and a detachment (minus Type-96 carrier-based fighter planes) from the 23d Air Flotilla.
2. The Malaya Unit shall cooperate in the western Java invasion operation, while staying engaged in its own mission.

Also on the 18th, the [surface unit] seized three small enemy boats in the Mentok area. In the meantime, the 11th Destroyer Division and the *Yura* withdrew from their patrol areas respectively at 0700 and at 1000, to head for the Anambas [base] to prepare for the Java operation. Also the main unit and the 3d Air Unit, concluding at 0600 that Operation L was largely finished, left the waters north of Bangka Island where they had conducted support operations, and headed for Cap Saint Jacques. Meanwhile, the *Ayanami* had its propeller damaged by an uncharted reef on the 17th. Judging that the she would not be able to participate in the Java operation, Malaya Unit Commander Vice Admiral Ozawa decided to keep the *Ayanami* in the main unit and have the *Isonami* participate in the Dutch East Indies operation instead (and transferred the latter to the Dutch East Indies Unit as of the 27th).⁽¹¹⁸⁾

From the 19th onwards, the units to participate in the subsequent Java operation left their patrol areas one after another, and by the 25th, only the *Shimushu*, two auxiliary cutters and two Army transport ships were left in Mentok. During this period, a small number of enemy planes sporadically raided [the anchorage], but no damage was sustained. On the 21st, the

shift in the disposition of forces was implemented as scheduled, and the units went into a major shift for the preparation of the subsequent operations.^(68, 118, 139)

The Operations of the Air Units from the 16th Onwards

On the 16th, all units of the 1st Air Unit performed maintenance.⁽¹²⁸⁾ A little after noontime on the 17th, a scout seaplane of the *Mogami*, which had been dispatched to the Mentok seaplane base, spotted a large enemy merchantman and a destroyer to the south of the Gaspar Strait. The air units carried out attacks on them; at 1615, fifteen land-based attack planes of the Genzan Air Group sank the merchantman, and ten carrier-based attack planes of the *Ryūjō* sank the destroyer at 1657.⁽⁷¹⁾ The enemy ships were [the destroyer] *HNLMS Van Nes* and [the transport ship] *Sloet van de Beele*, which were evacuating the personnel of the Bangka [and Belitung] Garrison Army to Java.⁽¹³⁶⁾

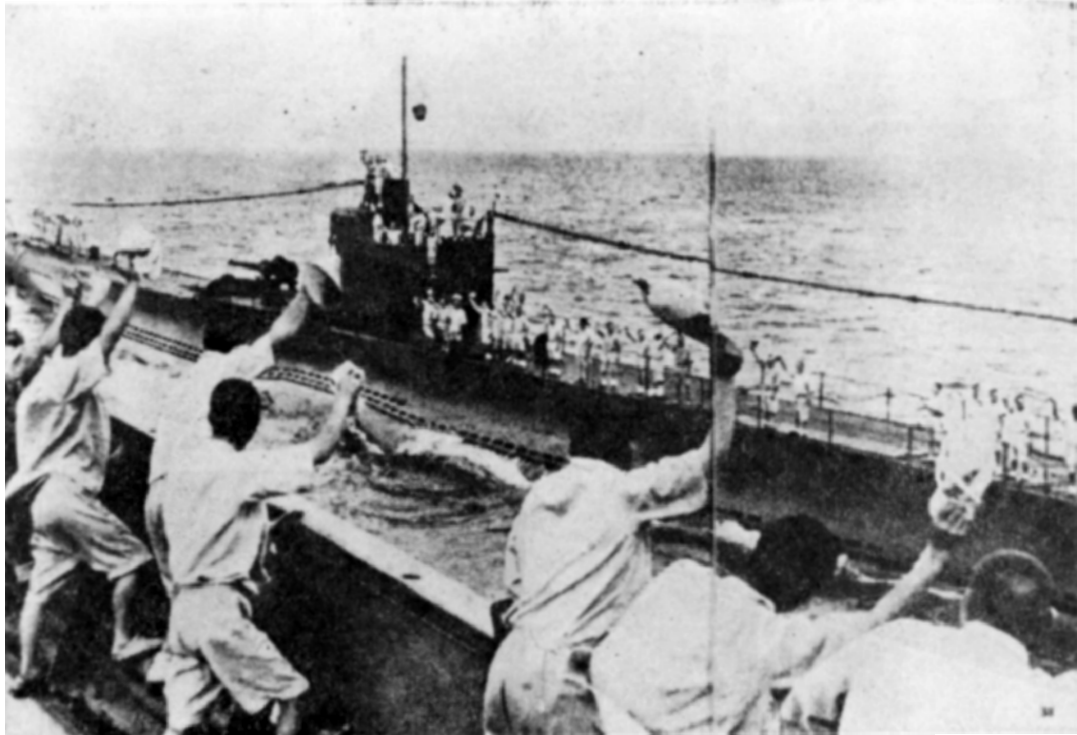
From the 16th through the 18th, the weather conditions around the Batavia area were bad, and did not allow land-based reconnaissance planes to reconnoiter [the area]. On the 18th, all units performed maintenance.⁽¹²⁹⁾ On the 21st,* the 1st Air Unit was transferred to the Dutch East Indies Unit, except for the Mihoro Air Group, and started on the preparations for the coming Java operations.⁽¹²²⁾ The 2d Air Unit continued its search for the enemy on the surrounding waters and the guarding of the anchorage against enemy aircraft and submarines also from the 16th onwards while supporting land combats; it attained considerable military gains. The aircraft units withdrew from the Mentok base on the 19th and the 20th to return to their [mother] ships in the Anambas base.^(119, 122, 125) As mentioned previously, the 3d Air Unit, which had been on the waters north of Bangka Island along with the main unit, concluded that the operation was largely finished and started sailing north toward Cap Saint Jacques.⁽¹¹⁹⁾ In the few days before its departure, the unit had reported to have sunk one [enemy] destroyer (as previously told), run one merchantman aground and seriously damaged another, while having shot down one PBY flying boat which had come for a raid.⁽⁷¹⁾

As for the 1st Air Unit, on the 21st, a Type-1 land-based attack plane of the Kanoya Air Group conducted a survey of the Palembang and Gelumbang [airfields] (the latter had been newly spotted about thirty-seven kilometers southwest of Palembang). Then on the 22d, a Type-96 transport plane of the Genzan Air Group also conducted a survey of the Gelumbang base. As a result, it was decided that the Navy should make use of the Gelumbang base because the Palembang base was small [and already full] by just accommodating the Army aircraft. From the 24th onwards, the 22d Air Flotilla advanced to Gelumbang and launched the Java operation in earnest from the 25th onwards, making use of this base.⁽¹³⁵⁾ In the meantime on the 23d, three land-based reconnaissance planes and fifteen Type-0 fighter planes of the Yamada Type-0 fighter plane unit advanced to the Mentok base and launched the operation against the Java area from the 24th onwards, thus completing the preparations for the invasion of western Java.

The Operations of the Submarine Units^(60, 123)

Submarines *I-55*, *I-56* and *Ro-34*, which had left Cam Ranh Bay for Operation L on 31 January and replenished at the Anambas [base] on 2 February, reached their respective patrol areas at the north entrance of the Lombok Strait, and the south and north entrances of the Sunda

* Actually the 19th. See p. 421.



The Sortie of a Submarine

Strait. Submarine *Ro-34* arrived in its patrol area at the north entrance of the Sunda Strait on 5 February. That evening, she spotted and attacked [an enemy] transport convoy and sank one escorting destroyer. As she reported having used up her torpedoes, Submarine Unit Commander Rear Admiral Yoshitomi [Setsuzō] ordered Submarine *Ro-34* to return to Cam Ranh Bay, while having Submarine *I-55* shift to the north entrance of the Sunda Strait. On the 15th, receiving the report on the spotting of the enemy fleet, the submarine unit commander decided to block off the escape routes of this fleet at the north entrance of the Sunda Strait. Accordingly, the commander ordered Submarine *I-55* as well as Submarines *I-53* and *Ro-33*, which were operating in areas nearby to take up positions for the coming Java operation, to take up positions in a skirmish line at the north entrance of the Sunda Strait. However, unable to detect the enemy fleet, the commander gave orders to call off the skirmish line at 1600 on the 16th. On 17 February, Submarines *I-55* and *I-56* left their patrol areas to return to Cam Ranh Bay [Staring Bay, pp. 332, 482]. During this period, the three submarines reported military gains of having sunk three merchant ships and sunk another with unconfirmed results apart from the previously mentioned [sinking of] a British destroyer.

The Engagements of the Army Air Units

The [Army] Third Air Force had been preparing for Operation L, while providing support for the Malaya operation of the Twenty-fifth Army. That is, the force [started] keeping an eye on the Medan airfield from 11 December onwards, and the airfields in Pekanbaru, Palembang and Mentok from the 17th onwards, while carrying out attacks on 28 December, 16, 17 and 23 January. On 4 February, the Third Air Force headquarters advanced to Kluang, and from

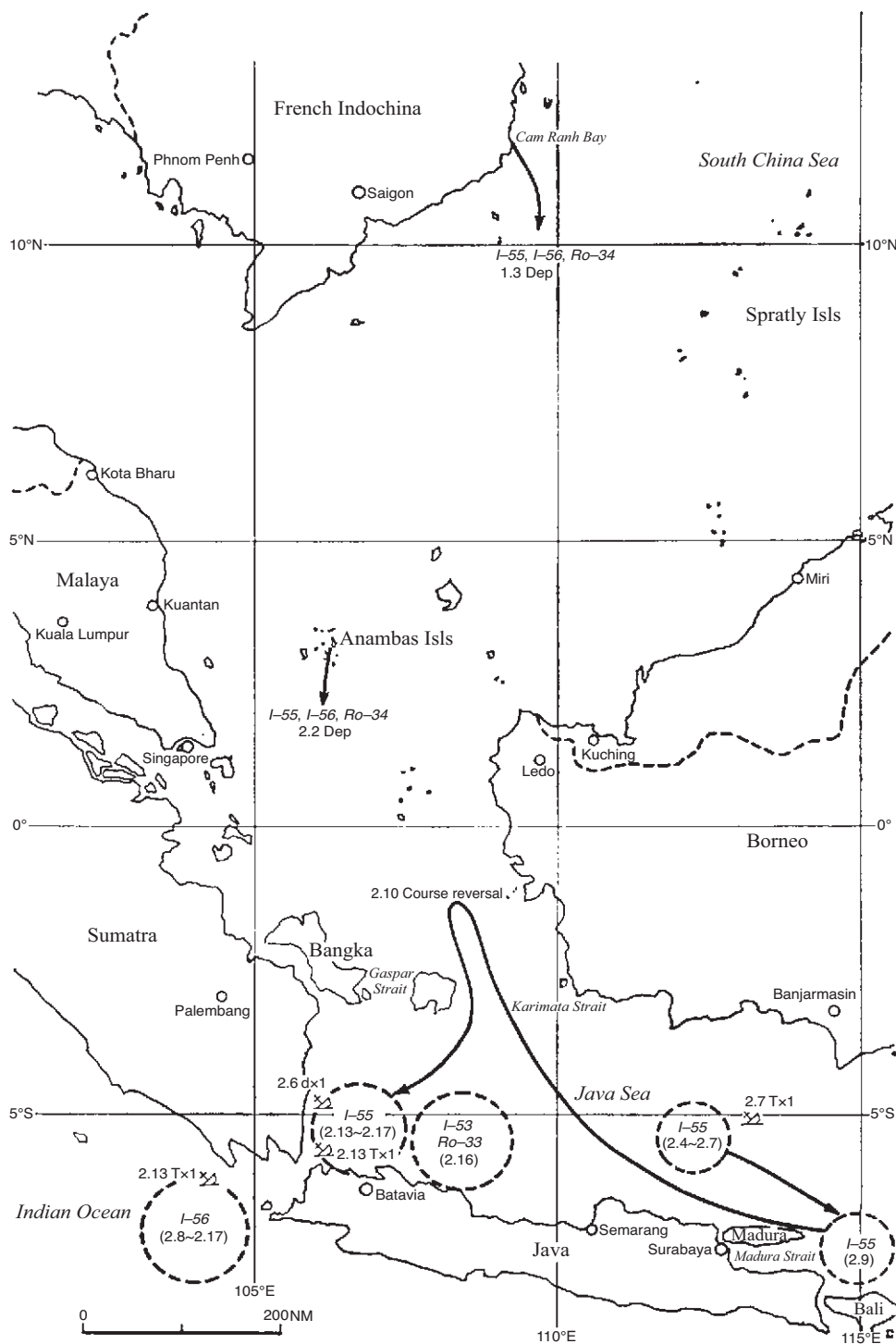


Illustration No. 29 — The Outline of the Operations of the Submarine Unit of the Malaya Unit During Operation L (30 January – 17 February, 1942)

the 6th onwards launched the air campaign to destroy the enemy air power mainly with its fighter planes. The military gains of the force were reported as follows: On the 6th, [the force] shot down fifteen [enemy] aircraft and destroyed eleven, on the 7th it shot down more than a dozen and destroyed twenty, on the 8th, it shot down two and destroyed nine, and on the 13th it shot down five and destroyed four. In these operations, five aircraft of the force did not return.⁽¹¹⁷⁾

At 1500 on the 13th, the first airdrop unit (commander: Maj. Kōmura Takeo) of the 1st Raiding Group (the parachute unit) had completed its deployment at the Kahang and Kluang airfields, while the second airdrop unit (commander: 1st Lieutenant Morisawa) was standing by at Sungai Petani. At 0830 on the 14th, the first airdrop unit took off from both airfields, and the airfield raiding unit and the oil refineries raiding unit completed their drops at 1126 and 1130 respectively. Whereas the airfield raiding unit seized the airfield by that evening, the oil refineries raiding unit [finally] seized all the distillation towers at 0100 on the 15th after fierce engagements. [Meanwhile] at 1130 on the 15th, * Raiding Group Commander Col. Kume Seiichi carried out a forced landing at about ten kilometers south of the airfield, advanced to the airfield the next morning, and took charge of the overall command after that. At 1300 on the 15th, the second airdrop unit also landed on the airfield without problems.^{** (117)}

At 1930, Raiding Group Commander Colonel Kume advanced into the city of Palembang. In cooperation with the advance party of the 38th Division, which had arrived in succession from around 2100 [1900], the [paratroop] raiding unit secured the airfield as well as the city of Palembang. Although the attack unit at the oil refineries area had suffered persistent counterattacks by the enemy all through the night, the enemy counterattacks tapered off after daybreak on the 15th, and the unit completed clearing the vicinity of the enemy by noon on the 15th. On the 16th, the Third Air Force pushed forward its command post to Palembang, and the fighter plane unit advanced twenty of its aircraft on the 16th and twenty-seven on the 17th [to the airfield]. Also, two command reconnaissance planes advanced there on the 17th, and on the 18th, practically the entire fighter plane unit (about forty aircraft [in total]) advanced to Palembang. After that, no large enemy [air units] were spotted in southern Sumatra except for sporadic air raids by small numbers of aircraft, and the Third Air Force mainly took on the task of communicating orders for the 38th Division while reconnoitering the routes ahead.⁽¹¹⁷⁾

The Operations of the Army Units (See Illustration No. 30)

The Mentok Unit

The first landing unit left the anchorage at 0205 on the 15th, and successfully landed around 0220 to 0230. There were no obstacles in the waterways or counterattacks with firearms from the shore in the area where they landed. Although many British soldiers, who had escaped from Singapore, were scattered over the area, none put up resistance. The main force seized the airfield at 0640 and the urban area of Mentok at 0830.⁽¹³²⁾ The lighthouse was also seized at 0730 without meeting with enemy resistance. After that, the main force was stationed near Mentok; they engaged in securing and readying the airfield as well as debarkation while clearing the island of the enemy with one element. The force completed mopping up the whole island by the 19th.⁽¹²¹⁾

* Actually the 14th. See Vol 3, p. 331.

** Vol. 3, pp. 316-333 gives a detailed description of the airdrop operation. In several places, dates and times differ. This also applies to the following summary of the operations of the 38th Division. See Vol. 3, pp. 333-345.

The [Army] River-Ascending Unit for Palembang

At 0830 [0800?] on the 15th, the [Army] river-ascending units all together started sailing upstream the Telang, the Musi and the Saleh Rivers, ahead of the naval vessels.⁽¹³³⁾ Despite the three [enemy] air raids en route, the Musi River Ascending Unit, directly led by the advance party commander Tanaka, reached Palembang at 1900 on the same day and started landing. On that day, no contact was established with the paratrooper units.* It was not until around 1100 on the next day, the 16th that contact with the paratrooper unit at the BPM oil refinery was finally established. As soon as having secured the urban area of Palembang and successfully made contact with the paratrooper units, advance party commander Tanaka immediately started marching southward. That is, he formed and sent off one company [Vol. 3, p. 337: platoon] on bicycles toward Tanjungkarang at 1200 on the 15th,** which was followed by one motor car company.⁽¹³³⁾ On the evening of the 16th, this advance party of the 38th Division spotted about thirty-seven kilometers west of Palembang a large secret airfield of the enemy (the Gelumbang base). [Meanwhile,] the Telang River Ascending Unit (the Miyazawa Battalion) had reached the northern side of Palembang on the evening of the 15th, come ashore, advanced to the Palembang airfield by the end of the day and made contact with the paratrooper unit. On the next day, the 16th, the unit reached the city of Palembang and joined the Musi River Ascending Unit.

The Saleh River Ascending Unit (the Iwabuchi Battalion) had sailed upriver, turned left from the midstream of the Musi River, and advanced to the vicinity of the Martapura airfield around 0400 on the 19th, seizing it after a minor engagement.^{***⁽¹³³⁾}

The Main Force of the Division

The 38th Division headquarters had embarked on the *Shimushu*, and reached Palembang around 1500 on the 17th.⁽⁶⁸⁾ After his arrival at Palembang, Divisional Commander Lieutenant General Sano took command of the Tanaka advance party as well as the paratrooper unit, putting the latter newly under his command, and told off the advance party to seize Tanjungkarang. While the vanguard unit of the party had already started heading south at 1200, the Miyazawa Battalion [also] left Palembang on the afternoon of the 17th. Advance party commander Tanaka left Palembang at 1200 on the 18th and arrived at the Martapura airfield at 0500 on the 19th, where he took command of the Iwabuchi and the Miyazawa Battalions. At 0200 on the 20th, the Tanaka advance party left Martapura, and its vanguard reached Tanjungkarang by daybreak on that day. At 1200 on that day, the rearmost unit of the enemy left the pier in two gunboats. Because his artillery had not yet arrived, the Tanaka advance party stood by idly and let them escape.^(133, 137)

On the next day, the 21st, Sixteenth Army staff officer Itoda Isamu located the Tanjungkarang airfield after great effort, but the airfield was still unfinished.⁽¹³⁸⁾ The Tanaka advance party promptly set to preparing the airfield and completed a runway of 800 meters by the 25th; on that afternoon, Type-97 fighter planes of the 12th Air Division advanced there.⁽¹¹⁷⁾

On the 20th, after the main force had reached Palembang, Divisional Commander Lieutenant General Sano told off forces to seize Bengkulu (the Kanki Detachment), while ordering the Orita Detachment on Bangka Island to shift to Palembang, leaving one element behind.⁽¹³²⁾

The Kanki Detachment ([consisting of] the 38th Mountain Artillery Regiment headquarters, one mountains artillery battery, one infantry battalion, and one tank company as its core) left

* According to Vol. 3, p. 337, they established contact with the airfield unit and Colonel Kume.

** According to Vol. 3, p. 337, the 16th.

*** The route taken by the Iwabuchi Battalion is unclear. The route given here implies that they went up the Saleh River, then turned right via the Kumbang River to the Musi River and just before Palembang turned left into the Kommering River to Martapura. The map and description in Vol. 3, pp. 336, 339 implies that they went all the way up the Saleh River and then made a right and left turn into the Kommering River.

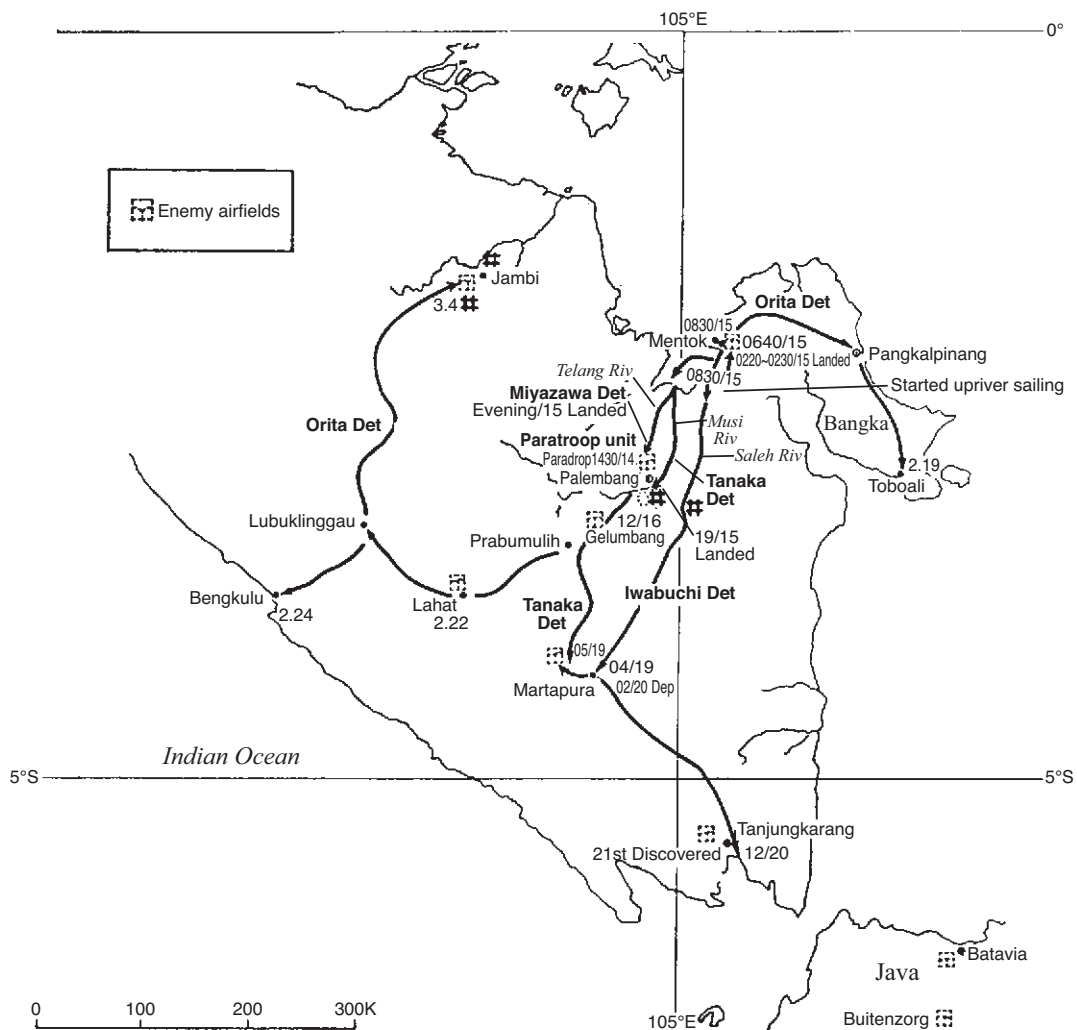


Illustration No. 30 — Outline of the Operations of the Army Units (38th Division)

Palembang on the 21st and seized Lahat and Bengkulu on the 22d and the 24th respectively. The Orita Detachment, which had shifted to Palembang, was ordered to seize the Jambi oilfields. On 4 March, the detachment seized Jambi; with this the main part of the Sumatra operation of the 38th Division was completed.⁽¹²¹⁾

The Failed Counterattacks by the Allied Forces

As of 1 February, the allied air strength in this area had consisted of about fifty bombers and about fifty fighter planes. However, due to the Japanese air attacks, which had started from the 6th onwards, their strength had been worn down day by day. Because powerful [Japanese] fighter plane [units] provided cover for the convoy, the [allied] bombers, which had headed to attack the convoy, were shot down before being able to do anything, not standing the slightest chance. The desperate attacks against the [Japanese Army] Musi River-ascending Unit on the 15th were also fruitless; that evening, as the Japanese ground units advanced, [the allied air

forces] eventually had to abandon the Palembang area, and by the 18th they had completely retreated to Java. The remaining strength that had managed to make it to Java consisted of only twenty-five fighter planes and eighteen bombers, forty-three aircraft in total.^(85, 139)

As for the [allied] surface unit, on the basis of information that the Japanese forces were on the verge of advancing to Bangka, the following strength had been assembled at Batavia by 13 February (under the command of Rear Admiral Doorman): the Dutch cruisers *HNLMS De Ruyter*, *HNLMS Java* and *HNLMS Tromp*, the British cruiser *HMS Exeter*, the Australian cruiser *HMAS Hobart*, the U.S. Destroyers *USS Bulmer*, *USS Barker*, *USS Whipple*, *USS Alden*, *USS [John D.] Edwards* and *USS Edsall*, the Dutch Destroyers *HNLMS Banckert*, *HNLMS Van Ghent*, *HNLMS Kortenaer*, and *HNLMS Van Nes*. On the early morning of the 14th, the allied task force departed from Batavia northward under the command of Rear Admiral Doorman of the Dutch Navy. However, since *HNLMS Van Ghent* ran aground and sank en route, which kept *HNLMS Banckert* behind to rescue her crew,⁽⁹²⁾ the force that sailed through the Gaspar Strait northward on the early morning of the 15th consisted of five cruisers and eight destroyers. Although from around noon until sunset on the 15th, the unit had come under persistent air attacks from the Japanese forces, the only damage sustained was some slight damage to the U.S. destroyers *USS Bulmer* and *USS Barker* by near hits. Commander Doorman gave up the attack halfway, reversed course and returned to Batavia on the next day the 16th.⁽⁹²⁾ This to the enormous disappointment and frustration of the allied headquarters.⁽⁸⁵⁾

Along with the landing of the Japanese forces on Bangka Island, the garrison army on the island had retreated to its southern coast. The unit had embarked on the Dutch destroyer *HNLMS Van Nes* and the transport ship *Sloet van de Beele* on the 17th to evacuate to the south. However, both ships were sunk on their way by an attack of Japanese aircraft, and only some survivors were rescued by Dutch flying boats.⁽⁵⁸⁾ The garrison army at Palembang had consisted of about 530 British, Dutch and Australian troops under the command of a Dutch colonel and been equipped with trucks, a large number of light-armored cars, thirteen antiaircraft guns, and five antiaircraft machineguns. The garrison stationed at the oil refineries had consisted of about 530 men under the command of a captain and been equipped with ten antiaircraft guns and five antiaircraft machineguns. These units of about a thousand men [in total] were neutralized by a far inferior Japanese paratrooper unit of about 300 men and retreated.⁽¹¹⁷⁾

12. The Capture by Surprise of Bali (See Illustration No. 31)

The Air Unit's Insistence on the Capture of Bali

The (previously related) decisions made at the Manila Conference on 22 January were as follows:⁽⁵³⁾

The seaborne capture [operation] on Banjarmasin shall be called off; Banjarmasin shall be seized overland solely by the Army. [Instead] around Day X + 75 (two days before the landing on eastern Java), Bali shall be seized [to be used] as an air base from which to launch air operations at the time of invasion of eastern Java.

The grounds for the Navy's claims at the Manila Conference were as follows:^(11, 34)

1. If the landing of Java is supposed to be conducted around 20 February as the Army insists upon, we cannot provide an escort force for the unit to seize Banjarmasin.
2. It is possible to adequately carry out the air campaign to destroy the enemy air power before the invasion of eastern Java from the line [connecting] Balikpapan and Makassar, ([which is at a distance of] about 450 nautical miles [from eastern Java]).

3. A comparison of the pluses and minuses of the capture of Banjarmasin against that of Bali prior to the invasion of eastern Java gives the following results:

Items compared		Bali	Banjarmasin
Condition of the airfield		⊕ Enemy documents about the airfield obtained in Tarakan confirm that the airfield is in good condition.	⊖ Since no documents have been obtained concerning the airfield, it is difficult to judge [its condition].
Distance of the invasion unit from Surabaya at sunset on the day before the invasion operation		⊕ It is possible to keep a distance of about 270 nautical miles [from Surabaya] when faster ships are used.	⊖ Even with faster ships, the unit will come as close as about 250 nautical miles [to Surabaya].
The distance of the anchorage of the invasion convoy from Surabaya		⊖ Since the distance is about 170 nautical miles, repetitive attacks by enemy air power are likely.	⊕ Since [the anchorage will be] about 290 nautical miles away [from Surabaya], counterattacks by enemy air power are relatively less likely.
Disembarkation	Condition of the anchorage	⊖ Deep sea with fast currents	⊕ Shallow sea, good [for anchoring]
	Difficulty of the disembarkation	⊕ Close to the airfield	⊖ 30 kilometers or more to the airfield
Neutralization of the enemy air power		⊕ It is easy to neutralize the enemy air power in eastern Java with fighter planes [from the airfield].	⊖ Since it is rather distant, it will be difficult to constantly conduct operations to neutralize [the enemy air power].
Cover of the convoy		⊖ The convoy will sail a long distance.	⊕ The convoy will sail a short distance.
Search of the enemy rear to cut off his escape routes		⊕ [The airfield can] effectively [be used] to search for the enemy to the south of Java and cut off his escape routes.	⊖ It will be difficult to search the enemy rear and cut off his escape routes.
Forces for escorting [the invasion unit]		⊕ It is possible to employ one element of the Makassar invasion unit.	⊖ If the invasion of eastern Java has to be carried out sooner, there will be no strength to spare [for the escort].

4. The above comparison shows that the risks of both invasions are pretty much the same. However, Bali is by far more advantageous, not only because of the certainty that the airfield is good, but also because its location is strategically superior.

[At the Manila Conference] this claim was most strongly asserted by the Eleventh Air Fleet headquarters in terms of the implementation of the air operation. Although the Dutch East Indies Unit headquarters had considerable concerns about the risks of the capture [operation], it approved its implementation considering the effectiveness of the airfield and its tactical value.⁽¹¹⁾ The Southern Army headquarters also approved of the Navy's proposal and decided to seize Banjarmasin overland, while specifically allocating fast ships for the Bali invasion.⁽³⁴⁾

The arrangements for the capture operation of Bali between the Third Fleet Commander in Chief Vice Admiral Takahashi and the Sixteenth Army Commander Lieutenant General Imamura were discussed in Manila on 23 January, following the Manila Conference. The [concluded] arrangements may be reconstructed as follows:^(53, 54, 68)

1. The date of invasion shall be set on 18 February ([or] Day X + 72; five days before the invasion of eastern Java).

Note: At the Manila Conference [the capture of Bali] had been scheduled two days prior to the invasion [of eastern Java], but that would not be early enough to use [the airfield] for the operation to neutralize the enemy air power before the invasion; at the most it would just be used as [a base to] cover the invasion convoy on the day before the landing. Therefore, after examining the details between them, they seemed to have concluded that it was possible to move up the operation by three days. If five days prior [to the invasion of eastern Java], the air units could be smoothly advanced there, the base could not only be used for the neutralization of enemy air bases right before the landing in Java, but also be effectively used for cutting off the enemy escape routes.

2. The Units Participating in the Operation

- (1) The Army

One detachment of one infantry battalion as the core shall be extracted from the 48th Division (currently in the Philippines) and employed [in the operation].

Note: Although in the Iwakuni Agreement, [the detachment] had been designated as one element of the Sakaguchi Detachment, it became impossible to employ the [Sakaguchi] Detachment because [the detachment] was already assigned to the overland operation to seize Banjarmasin as well as to the maintenance of public order in the Balikpapan area.

- (2) The Navy

The main force of the 1st Base Force and part of the destroyer divisions of the 2d Destroyer Squadron led by the 1st Base Force commander.

3. The Main Points of the Operation

- (1) The Army invasion unit shall leave Lingayen Gulf around 5 February, make the necessary Army-Navy arrangements at Jolo, load the necessary naval air base matériel, and advance to Makassar by 15 February.
 - (2) The Navy shall embark the advance team of the 5th Construction Squad and part of the construction matériel, [currently] located in Tarakan, onto the Army transport ships at Jolo.
 - (3) On the early morning of 17 February, the invasion unit shall leave Makassar under the escort of the Navy 1st Base Unit, enter into the Sanur anchorage of Bali before dawn on the 18th, and swiftly land to seize the Denpasar airfield and strive to make it ready for use.
 - (4) The main force of the 5th Construction Squad and the transport ships carrying the base matériel of the Eleventh Air Fleet shall reach Bali by 24 February under the escort of one element of the 1st Base Force, and disembark personnel and matériel.

From late January, the units concerned started preparations for the operation to seize Bali.⁽⁵³⁾ However, due to the delay in the southern Sumatra operation in early February, the Java landing operation was [re]set on 26 February (postponed for six days), which would expand the interval period between the eastern Java operation and the Bali invasion operation to eight days. On 14 February, Eastern Attack Unit Commander Rear Admiral Takagi offered his opinion concerning the matter, which was in outline as follows:⁽⁷⁸⁾

Due to the postponement of the schedule of the invasion of eastern Java, the interval between it and the date of the Bali invasion operation becomes eight days, which means that the second

operation to transport the base matériel will also be executed ahead of the landing in eastern Java. It also means that the invasion unit shall on its own be exposed to the enemy bases at close distance. Therefore it is necessary to thoroughly carry out search and attack missions with the air units on the enemy air power as well as naval vessels in the area from Surabaya to the Sunda Islands before the unit for the 1st [phase] of the Bali Raiding Operation leaves Makassar.

Dutch East Indies Unit Commander Vice Admiral Takahashi took the advice and requested the air units to intensify their air attacks in the area.⁽⁷⁸⁾

The Plan of Operations

The 1st Base Unit

The plan of operations of the 1st Base Unit was successively announced in accordance with the telegraphic orders and instructions of the Dutch East Indies Unit. The outline of the plan was in summary as follows:^(54, 78)

1. Disposition of Forces

(1) 1st [phase]: Raiding Operation

Unit		Commander	Forces	Main Tasks	
Support Unit		1st Base Force Cdr	The <i>Nagara</i> , and the 21st De- stroyer Div (minus the <i>Hatsu- haru</i>)	Support for the entire operation	
Invasion Unit			8th Destroyer Div Cdr	The 8th Destroyer Div, 5th Con- struction Squad, and one ele- ment of the 3d Military Supplies Dept ([in] two Army transport ships)	1. Direct escort for the Army in- vasion unit 2. Guarding of the anchorages and preparation of airfield.
Supply Unit	Makassar Strait Unit		Capt of the <i>Tsukushi</i>	The <i>Tsukushi</i> , the <i>Aotaka</i> , 2d Subchaser Div, Submarine Chaser No. 1	1. Defense and guarding of the anchorage 2. Protection of sea lanes 3. Replenishment
	Kendari Unit		Capt of the <i>Hakusan-maru</i>	The <i>Hakusan-maru</i> , the <i>Kimishima-maru</i> , the 52d Sub- chaser Div, the 1st Subchaser Div (minus Submarine Chaser No. 1), and the <i>Ikushima-maru</i>	

(2) 2d [phase]: Transport Operation

Unit	Commander	Forces	Main Tasks
Main Unit	1st Base Force Cdr	The <i>Nagara</i>	Support for the entire operation and destroying enemy naval vessels
Transport Echelons		The 21st Destroyer Div (minus the <i>Hatsuharu</i>), 2d Subchaser Div, 5th Construction Squad (the <i>Toyosaka-maru</i> and the <i>Hino-maru</i> No. 3), and 2 transport ships of the Eleventh Air Fleet	1. Direct escort for the transport ships 2. Destroying enemy naval vessels 3. Setting up the airfield
Supply Unit		The <i>Aotaka</i> , the <i>Hakusan-maru</i> , the <i>Kimishima-maru</i> , the <i>Ikushima-maru</i> , 1st, 52d, and 12th Subchaser Divs, and the <i>Tsukushi</i>	1. Defense and guard of the anchorage 2. Replenishment and protection of sea lanes 3. Cooperation with the 1st Escort Unit

2. The Operations of Each Unit and the Outline of Operations

(1) First [Phase]: Raiding Operation

- {1} The transport echelon [of the invasion unit] shall leave Makassar at 0100 on 17 February. From sunset on the 17th, the *Arashio* shall sail ahead and carry out a simplified clearing of the anchorage, after which [the echelon] shall enter the Sanur anchorage of Bali at 0000 on the 18th, and swiftly put ashore the army units.
- {2} After [the disembarkation of] the army units, the transport ships shall strive to disembark the base personnel and matériel as much as possible. They shall complete the disembarkation by and large by the evening of the 18th, and return to Makassar under the escort of the 8th Destroyer Division.
- {3} The main unit shall leave Makassar on the morning of the 17th, and appropriately operate on the waters north of Bali on the evening of that day to support the transport echelon.
- {4} After the return of the transport echelon to Makassar, the 8th Destroyer Division shall return to its original unit.
- {5} The supply units shall continue their tasks at each place.

(2) Second [Phase]: Transport Operation

- {1} The transport ships shall leave Balikpapan on 20 February under the escort of the 2d Subchaser Division, reach Makassar on the 22d, where they shall stay on standby.
- {2} By and large on the evening of the 23d, the main unit, the transport echelon and the support unit shall leave Makassar. The transport echelon shall enter the Sanur anchorage on the early morning of the 25th and carry out the disembarkation.
- {3} During the disembarkation operation, the main unit and other forces shall guard the area around the anchorage and also catch and destroy escaping enemy naval vessels.
- {4} The supply unit shall continue its previous tasks.

The Army Units

The following [Army] force and commander participated in this operation:⁽¹⁴⁰⁾

Force: The 3d Battalion (minus one company) of the 1st Taiwan Infantry Regiment, one mountain artillery section, one independent engineer platoon and others

Commander: 1st Taiwan Infantry Regiment 3d Battalion Commander Maj. Kanemura Matabē

The Kanemura Detachment was scheduled to embark on the *Sagami-maru* and the *Sasako-maru*, leave Lingayen Gulf on 5 February, reach Jolo on the 8th, Makassar on the 15th, and land on Bali on the 18th to swiftly occupy the Denpasar airfield and clear key places on the island of the enemy.

The [Navy] Air Units

In relation to the change of the outline of the operation to seize Banjarmasin on 29 January, which resulted in a reduction of the [prospective] use of the Banjarmasin base, the 2d Air Unit was deployed [also] to Makassar, and the lines of operation were changed as follows:⁽⁷⁵⁾

Tarakan — Balikpapan	$\left\langle \begin{array}{c} \text{Makassar} \\ \text{Banjarmasin} \end{array} \right\rangle$	Bali
----------------------	---	------

Eleventh Air Fleet Commander in Chief Vice Admiral Tsukahara decided that at the time of the operation to capture Bali, nine Type-0 fighter planes of the 3d Air Group of the 1st Air Raid Unit, then stationed at the Kendari base, should be advanced to Makassar to be incorporated into the 2d Air Raid Unit. Second Air Raid Unit Commander Rear Admiral Takenaka planned to advance nine Type-0 fighter planes and two land-based reconnaissance planes of the Tainan Air Group from the Balikpapan base to the Makassar base and, along with the [above] forces of the 3d Air Group, have them under his command provide guard in the air over the Bali invasion unit from the [Makassar] base.^(68, 71) The commander also planned to destroy the enemy surface naval vessels as well as air power in Surabaya and the Flores Islands area with the entire force stationed in Balikpapan and the forces in Makassar.⁽⁷¹⁾

The aircraft unit of the *Sanuki-maru* advanced from Balikpapan on 10 February to set up a base at Ujung Parapa near Makassar under the command of Aviation Officer Lt. Cdr. Kōzai Fusaichi, with five Type-0 observation seaplanes, one Type-95 reconnaissance seaplane, Patrol Boat No. 36 and two fishing boats. The aircraft unit was supposed to provide guard against enemy submarines for the Bali invasion units.⁽⁷⁶⁾

Assessment of the Enemy Movements Centered on Bali

(1) The enemy air power, with its main bases in Java, seems to be trying to get reinforcements from the Port Darwin area by way of Kupang and Bali. Although its main force has suffered substantial losses due to our frequent air attacks, considerable air counterattacks are to be expected because Bali is very close to the enemy air bases. (2) After the devastating damage caused by our air units in the Sea Engagement off Java on 4 February, powerful enemy naval surface units have not been seen. However, since Bali is located close to an enemy fleet base, it is necessary to be on an appropriate alert against surprise attacks by small naval vessels.

(3) Although the deployment of enemy submarines is unclear, it is necessary to be on alert against them as much as against naval surface vessels. (4) The Denpasar airfield on Bali is suitable for use by land-based attack planes. (5) A garrison army of about one battalion is stationed on Bali; it seems that the main force is stationed in Singaraja on its northern coast and that an infantry guard of about one company or so is guarding the Denpasar airfield.⁽¹⁴⁰⁾

The Launch of the Operation

The Prior Neutralization of the [Enemy] Air Power Made Little Progress

[An air campaign] by air units to preliminarily neutralize the [enemy] air power for the Bali invasion operation was conducted in the following way:^(71, 81)

14th [of February]: One land-based attack plane of the Takao Air Group reconnoitered weather conditions but returned due to bad weather.

15th: One land-based attack plane of the Takao Air Group reconnoitered weather conditions but returned due to bad weather.

Two Type-0 fighter planes of the 3d Air Group advanced from Kendari to Makassar, but the other seven planes called off the advance due to bad weather.

16th: Two land-based attack planes of the Takao Air Group reconnoitered weather conditions but returned due to bad weather.

As described above, the weather conditions in the Makassar Strait were very bad day in and day out, and from 10 February onwards, hardly any air attacks on eastern Java were carried out. [Even] the advance of fighter plane units to the Makassar [base] was not completed, either.⁽⁷¹⁾ In view of this situation, Dutch East Indies Unit Commander Vice Admiral Takahashi anticipated that the weather would not improve for another few days and on the 16th decided for the moment to postpone the Bali Operation for one day (so that [the invasion units would] enter into the anchorage on the 19th).⁽⁷⁸⁾

The weather was still bad on the 17th, and twenty-four land-based attack planes of the Takao Air Group gave up an attack on enemy naval vessels in the Surabaya area and returned. However, the seven Type-0 fighter planes of the 3d Air Group managed to advance from Kendari to Makassar.

Judging that any further postponement of the schedule would lead to a loss of opportunity [for making the attack], Base Unit Commander Rear Admiral Kubo decided to launch the invasion operation on the 18th as scheduled (and enter into the anchorage on the 19th).⁽⁷⁸⁾

The Sailing of the Convoy

At 0100 on the 18th, the invasion unit ([consisting of] the 8th Destroyer Division (the *Ōshio*, the *Asashio* and the *Michishio*), the *Sasako-maru* and the *Sagami-maru*) left Makassar as scheduled. After joining around 0400 on the waters southwest of Tanakeke Island the *Arashio*, which had sailed ahead since the previous evening to clear the route of enemy submarines, the unit sailed on a course of 245° [WSW] at a speed of 16 knots toward the eastern tip of the Kangean Islands.⁽⁶⁸⁾

From a little after sunrise (around 0715) onwards, the invasion unit proceeded under the protection of an antisubmarine patrol provided by the aircraft unit of the *Sanuki-maru* and

guarded by a fighter plane unit of the 3d Air Group against enemy aircraft. Around 1000, the convoy entered within the three hundred nautical miles range from Surabaya; it reached the waters near the Kangean Islands around 1530 and changed course toward the Lombok Strait.⁽⁶⁸⁾

On that day, other than one enemy flying boat, which came probing the invasion unit, there were no enemy attacks. Around sunset (about 1900), as scheduled, the unit came within the two hundred nautical miles range from Surabaya, where the *Arashio* sailed ahead in order to sweep the anchorage for mines. At 2300, the invasion unit arrived off Sanur without problems and started entering into the anchorage.⁽⁶⁸⁾

Around noon on that day, the 18th, Dutch East Indies Unit Commander Vice Admiral Takahashi advanced to Balikpapan from Jolo, leading the *Ashigara* and the *Yamakaze*.⁽⁷²⁾ Earlier, at 0100 on that day, the commander sent the following telegram to 1st Base Force Commander Rear Admiral Kubo: "[The invasion unit shall] turn back if the 1st Base Force commander judges the weather on the early morning of the 18th to be not suitable [for Navy aircraft] to fly. In such a case, Operation "HA" (note by the author: Bali Invasion Operation) shall be postponed for another day (so that the unit shall enter the anchorage on 20 February)." ⁽⁷⁸⁾ Having received the telegram, 1st Base Force Commander Rear Admiral Kubo replied at 0800: "The invasion unit for [Operation] "HA" has left Makassar at 0100 on the 18th, and is scheduled to enter [the anchorage at] Bali at 0000 on the 19th. This invasion [operation] shall be determinedly carried out according to the above schedule unless major hindrances are caused by [severe] weather, etc." On that day [the 18th], the air unit carried out an air raid on Surabaya with twenty-seven land-based attack planes and eight Type-0 fighter planes and reported having destroyed two [enemy] light cruisers and three destroyers and [also] shot down thirteen fighter planes.⁽¹⁰⁸⁾

On 19 February, the *Arashio*, which had sailed ahead and carried out a simplified minesweeping of the anchorage off Sanur, had found no tethered mines.⁽⁶⁸⁾ At 0015, the invasion unit entered the anchorage as scheduled. The first landing unit of the Kanemura Detachment left the anchorage in [landing] craft at 0100 and went ashore on the coast nearby, but met with no enemy resistance. The 8th Destroyer Division commander reported: "0100 on the 19th: Landing successfully made at the scheduled point. Met with no enemy resistance."⁽⁵⁴⁾ Following the first landing, the landing units started to quickly disembark personnel and matériel.

After sunrise at 0722, the invasion units came under continual enemy air raids as anticipated. First, around 0800, three enemy aircraft bombed the convoy, but caused no damage. Then around 0830, enemy heavy bombers (the number of aircraft unknown) came for a raid. Bombs directly hit the *Sagami-maru* amidships, which made her engines inoperable. Around 1000, four or five enemy heavy bombers raided the convoy, causing no damage, which was followed by another raid by three enemy flying boats and four heavy bombers between 1030 and 1100, but causing no damage either. After that, the enemy constantly kept on probing with one or two flying boats, and carried out repetitive attacks with aircraft in small numbers, only to cause minor damage to the *Sasako-maru* with near hits. From a later damage survey, it became clear that the *Sagami-maru* was able to sail using one propeller.⁽⁶⁸⁾

At 1630, the *Ōshio*, which was patrolling the area off the anchorage, spotted an enemy periscope. Then, four torpedoes attacked her; evading them, she carried out an attack with antisubmarine depth charges, but with unknown results. The disembarkation from the trans-

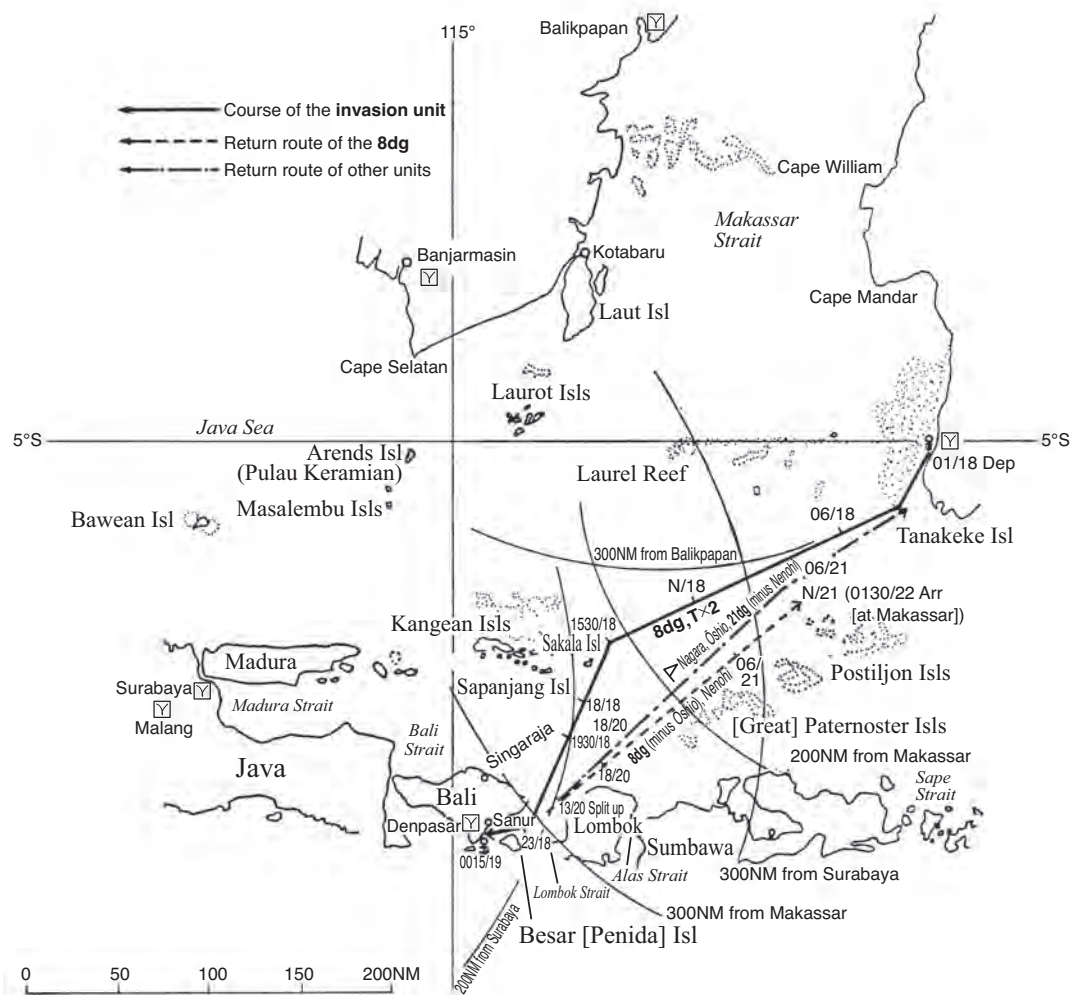


Illustration No. 31 — The Movements of the Invasion Unit and the Support Unit in the First [Phase] of the Bali Raiding Operation

port ships was mostly completed by around 1700. Although the *Sasako-maru* had not finished retrieving the [landing] craft, both ships raised anchor at 1725 and evacuated to the north of the entrance to the Lombok Strait in order to avoid enemy air raids as well as attacks by submarines. [From there] the *Sagami-maru* headed for Makassar at an actual speed of seven knots, escorted by the 2d Section of the 8th Destroyer Division. The *Sasako-maru* reversed course around 1930 and headed back to the Sanur anchorage to retrieve the landing craft. Around 2100, the ship entered the anchorage under the escort of the 1st Section of the 8th Destroyer Division.⁽⁵⁴⁾

On the morning [of the 19th], the Army units seized the Denpasar airfield, and the head of the [Navy] construction squad sent the following report concerning the condition of the airfield: "At the airfield, a runway of seventy meters wide and eight hundred meters long shall be ready by the end of the 19th. From the 20th onwards, it can be used by eighteen fighter planes, three land-based reconnaissance planes and nine land-based attack planes.

[A runway of] 1200 meters long can be additionally constructed for mid-sized land-based attack planes.”⁽¹⁰⁸⁾ In the meantime, [the units for] the air attack against Surabaya turned back due to bad weather again on that day; the land-based attack plane units returned after carrying out bombings on the Bawean Islands (about eighty nautical miles north of Surabaya) on their way back.⁽⁷¹⁾

The First Phase of the Sea Engagement off Bali^(54, 58, 68)

(From 2353 on 19 February till 0110 on 20 February) (See Illustration No. 32)

The 1st Section of the 8th Destroyer Division (the *Ōshio* and the *Asashio*) and the *Sasako-maru*, which had entered in the Sanur anchorage again at 2130 on the 19th and finished retrieving the landing craft around 2350, was about to start sailing. It was a dark cloudy night with the [crescent] moon of the fourth lunar day and visibility was barely eight kilometers. At 2353, the *Asashio* spotted the silhouettes of naval vessels on the waters about six kilometers to the south and soon spotted two *Java*-class cruisers sailing northward at high speed. The enemy vessels rapidly approached and at 0000 within a distance of 2,000 meters while launching flares opened up on the *Asashio*. The *Asashio* immediately returned fire and started a gun battle on a parallel course [with the enemy ships]. However, since she had just started sailing when she ran into them, the *Asashio* was unable to gain [sufficient] speed and lost sight of the enemy ships after an artillery duel of [just] two minutes. Assuming that the enemy had reversed course southward, the *Asashio* [also] turned southward while increasing her speed. In this phase of the battle, no damage was sustained except for a searchlight on the *Asashio* that was hit by shell fragments at 0001, while the effects of her gunfire remained unknown. The *Asashio* reported: “Engaging with *Java*-class enemy [cruisers] [in] the Lombok Strait.”

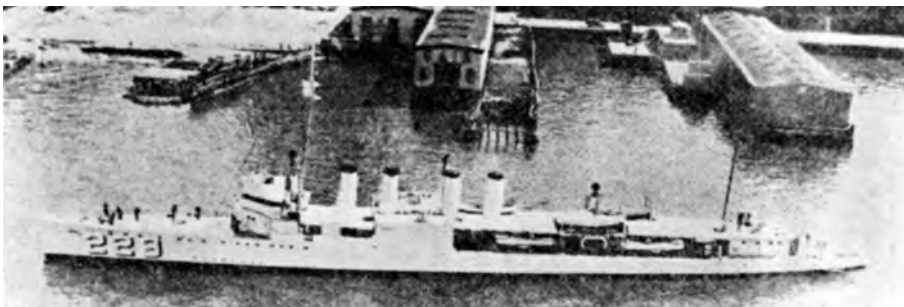
The *Ōshio*, who was two to three kilometers ahead of the *Asashio*, saw the engagement of the *Asashio* and started sailing to take part in the artillery duel, but she was too late. However, at that time, at 0005, she spotted at a distance of about 6,000 meters one [enemy] destroyer sailing northward while emerging from a smoke screen that trailed to the south, and she changed course southward to attack her. At 0011, the *Asashio*, who was sailing closer to the enemy [than the *Ōshio*], spotted on her starboard bow the [same enemy] destroyer sailing on a parallel course and opened fire at a close range of 1,500 meters. Since the [enemy] destroyer was trying to escape southward while laying a smoke screen, the *Asashio* fiercely pursued her. During the pursuit, she spotted [another] two [enemy] destroyers appearing in the distance. The *Asashio* ran the destroyer down and closing in to a distance of 1,000 meters launched torpedoes; at 0016 she confirmed that the torpedoes had hit and sunk the destroyer. While the *Asashio* was turning her bow to launch the torpedoes, the *Ōshio* appeared on the port bow of the *Asashio*. At 0024, the *Asashio* spotted enemy naval vessels in the smoke screen on her starboard side and fired at them, but she lost sight of them in the smoke screen. Both [the *Asashio* and the *Ōshio*] sailed southward in search for the enemy. In a few minutes, they spotted two U.S. destroyers sailing on a parallel course, and immediately opened fire. However, the enemy turned their bows to the far side while firing back at them, and disappeared laying a smoke screen. It seemed that [the *Asashio* and the *Ōshio*] had inflicted considerable damage to these enemy [destroyers]. Assuming that the enemy had escaped northward, both [the *Asashio* and the *Ōshio*] turned right and headed northward. At 0042, the *Asashio* entered into the wake of the *Ōshio*, and they proceeded in column.



An Asashio-class Destroyer



The Dutch Cruiser HNLMS Java



The U.S. Destroyer USS John D. Ford



The Dutch Destroyer HNLMS Piet Hein [Actually: HNLMS Evertsen]

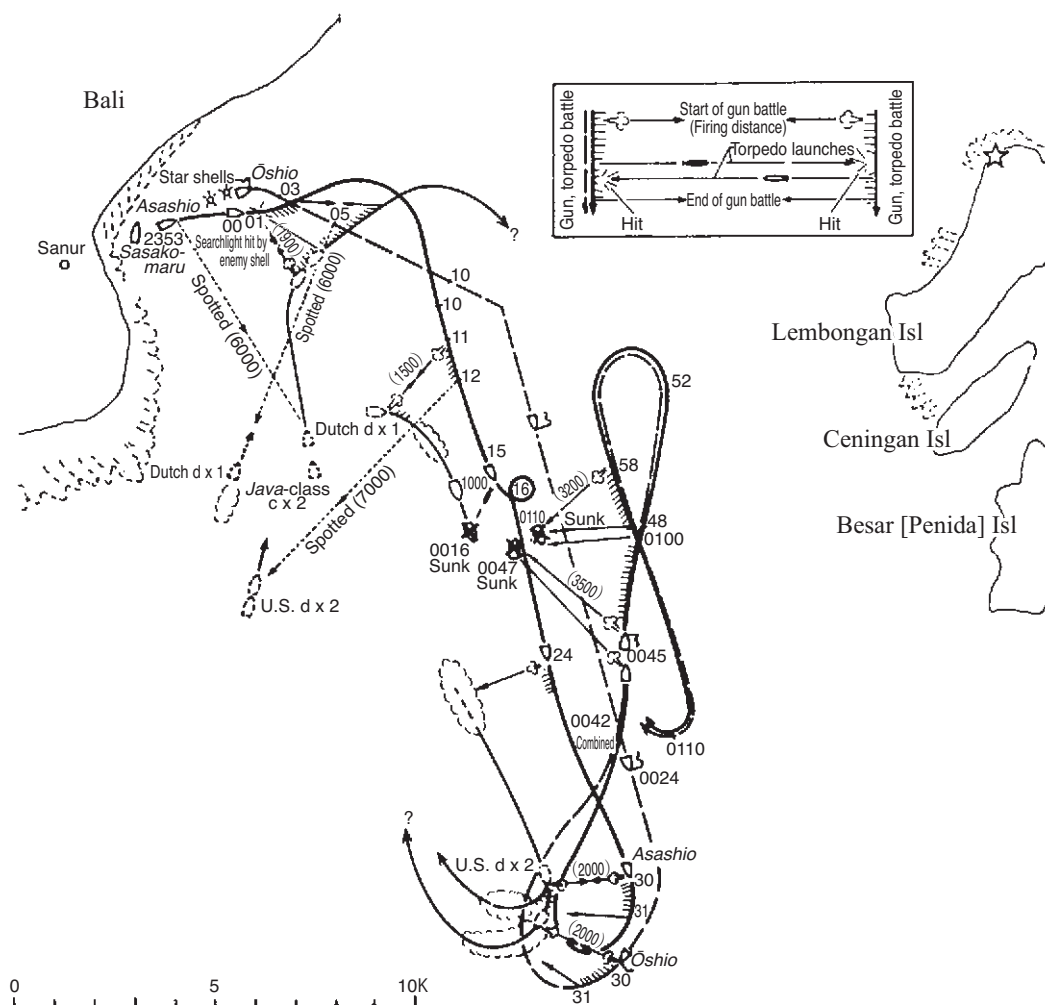


Illustration No. 32 — The First Phase of the Sea Engagement off Bali
(2353 on 19 February - 0110 on 20 February)

At 0045, three minutes after they had swung in line, they spotted two [enemy] destroyers sailing at a distance of 3,500 meters on their port bow on a parallel course, and immediately opened up a concentrated fire. At 0047, one of the destroyers caught fire and sank, and the other also caught fire. While keeping firing at the enemy destroyer in flames, both [the *Asashio* and the *Ōshio*] reversed course southward, and again around 0110 reversed course northward. Around 0110, the enemy vessel in flames disappeared, and they assumed that she had sunk. Both [the *Asashio* and the *Ōshio*] sailed northward, keeping a strict guard [against enemy vessels] on the surrounding waters. Around 0140, [both] returned to the waters off Sanur, and continued patrolling, doubling from east to west at the center of the Lombok Strait. The 8th Destroyer Division commander reported: "0140: Two *Java*-class enemy [cruisers] escaped northward through the Lombok Strait. Among the three remaining destroyers, two were sunk and one was seriously damaged. No damage to us."

The Support Unit's *Nagara* had left Makassar at 0800 on the 19th; after having joined up with the 21st Destroyer Division, which had left Balikpapan at 1000, she had reached in the evening a point eighty nautical miles north of the Lombok Strait, from where she was engaged in the support operation. On receiving the report of a sea engagement from the 1st Section of the 8th Destroyer Division, the unit sailed southward at full speed. En route, 1st Base Force Commander Rear Admiral Kubo ordered the 8th Destroyer Division commander to let his 2d Section join in as well. By that order, the *Sagami-maru* [was left] to sail north toward Makassar on her own, while the 2d Section of the 8th Destroyer Division reversed course at 0145 and headed toward the Lombok Strait.

The Second Phase of the Sea Engagement off Bali^(54, 58, 68)

(From 0310 till 0323) (*See Illustration No. 33*)

At 0310 on the 20th, the 1st Section of the 8th Destroyer Division [the *Asashio* and the *Ōshio*] again spotted two enemy cruisers and one destroyer sailing northward at high speed from the south. At 0315, they launched an attack with gunfire and torpedoes at a distance of 3,200 meters. At 0323, they detected the sound of an underwater explosion and judged that a torpedo had hit target, but they lost sight of the enemy in the silhouette of the mountains of Bali. The 8th Destroyer Division commander reported: "0315: We are in a fierce fight against two [enemy] *Java*-class cruisers off Sanur."

The Third Phase of the Sea Engagement off Bali^(54, 58, 68)

(From 0341 till 0346) (*See Illustration No. 33*)

The 1st Section of the 8th Destroyer Division [the *Asashio* and the *Ōshio*] sailed at high speed through the Badung Strait eastward in pursuit of the three enemy vessels that had escaped northward from the waters off Sanur, and reached the waters northwest off Lembongan Island at 0341 on the 20th, where they spotted a *Tromp*-class cruiser at a distance of 3,200 meters on their port bow sailing on a parallel course. The section immediately launched an attack with gunfire and torpedoes, while sailing on a parallel with the enemy on their port side. The enemy cruiser returned fire, and an artillery duel at a close distance of 3,000 meters continued for a few minutes. Although the result of the torpedo attacks could not be confirmed, many shells from both [the *Asashio* and the *Ōshio*] hit the enemy vessel. However, at 0346, one enemy shell hit the *Ōshio* at the powder handling room of Turret No. 2 (near the mizzenmast). Although it was assumed that enemy vessel was seriously damaged in this engagement, she continued sailing eastward and at 0350 disappeared into the gun smoke, while exchanging fire with the 2d Section of the 8th Destroyer Division, which had come sailing on the opposite course from the north.

The Fourth Phase of the Sea Engagement off Bali^(54, 58, 68)

(From 0347 till 0354) (*See Illustration No. 33*)

The 2d Section of the 8th Destroyer Division, which had been ordered to reverse course at 0145 on the 20th, had reached the east entrance of the Badung Strait around 0340. Spotting the flashlights of an artillery duel far ahead, the section had sailed westward to take part in the engagement. At 0345, apart from the gun flashes seen on port bow, they spotted two U.S. destroyers suddenly approaching out of the silhouette of Bali Island on starboard bow, sailing

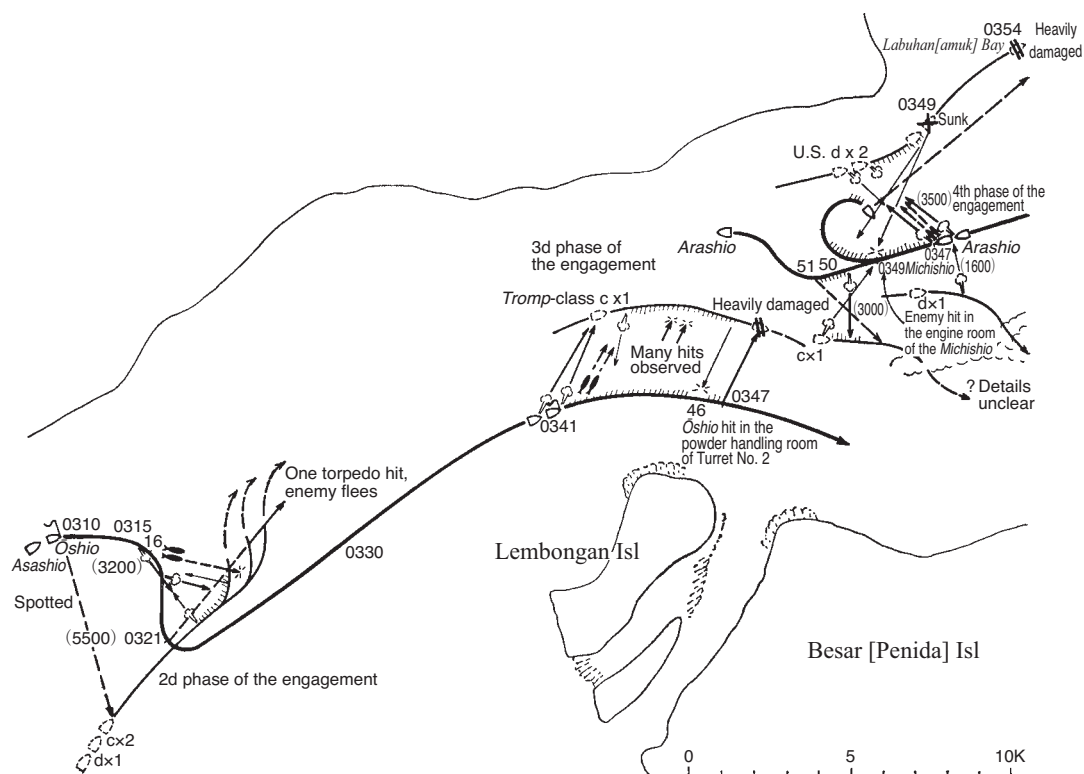


Illustration No. 33 — The Sea Engagement off Bali

The Second Phase (0310-0323, 20 February)

The Third Phase (0341-0346, 20 February)

The Fourth Phase (0347-0354, 20 February)

on an opposite course. At 0347, both sides simultaneously opened fire at each other at a distance of 3,500 meters. In two minutes from the start of the artillery duel, [the section] noticed that the first ship of the enemy had instantly sunk. However, almost at the same time, the *Michishio* was hit by enemy shell[s] at the engine room. With steam sharply blowing off, she became unable to sail but was still pouring fire on the remaining [enemy] vessel.

Just when both the destroyers [of the 2d Section] started exchanging fire with the [enemy] destroyers on starboard side, another [enemy] destroyer suddenly appeared at a close distance of 1,600 meters on portside sailing on an opposite course. Although the [Japanese] destroyers fired at her [too], she disappeared straight into the gun smoke. She was followed by one [enemy] cruiser, which sailed at a distance of 3,000 meters [also] on an opposite course. At 0500, the *Arashio* opened fire at her; though the engagement lasted only for a short period, the *Arashio* confirmed hits before the enemy vessel disappeared straight into the gun smoke. It was believed that the remaining [enemy] destroyer sailing on the starboard side on opposite course had been seriously damaged too in this engagement. However, as previously told, the *Michishio* was crippled due to a hit in her engine room; this and other direct hits caused sixty-four casualties including the chief engineer. Fortunately, there was no flooding, and

while drifting the crew worked hard to make emergency repairs. The ammunition consumed by each destroyer in these four phases was as follows:

The <i>Ōshio</i>	12.7-cm gun	217 shells	about 36 salvos
The <i>Asashio</i>	12.7-cm gun	310 shells	about 52 salvos
The <i>Michishio</i>	12.7-cm gun	62 shells	about 10 salvos
The <i>Arashio</i>	12.7-cm gun	73 shells	about 12 salvos

After the engagement, the 8th Destroyer Division picked up one Dutch officer, and nine non-commissioned officers and men drifting on the waters off Sanur. From interrogations it was learned that the enemy strength in the first phase of the engagement had consisted of two Dutch cruisers, two U.S. destroyers, and one Dutch destroyer.

Incidentally, the Support Unit of the Eastern Attack Unit was not able to support this engagement, because it had advanced to the Timor Sea in order to attack an enemy cruiser that had been spotted [on the waters] west of Port Darwin on the 19th.⁽⁷⁸⁾

The Withdrawal of the 1st [Phase Operation] Raiding Unit^(54, 68)

The *Nagara* and the 21st Destroyer Division, who had hurried to the Lombok Strait from the waters east of the Kangean Islands, finally reached the site around 0600, but they were too late for the battle against the enemy fleet. First Base Force Commander Rear Admiral Kubo had the *Nagara* and the *Hatsushimo* guard the north entrance of the Lombok Strait, while having the rest of the 8th Destroyer Division as well as the 21st Destroyer Division rescue the *Michishio*.

From 1000, the *Arashio* started towing the *Michishio*, and started withdrawing at an actual speed of 8 knots. However, right after the start of the towing, some enemy heavy bombers came for a raid and the towing cable was cut due to the evasive actions. The *Michishio* was flooded because of near hits. The *Ōshio* was also flooded and became unable to sail at a speed of more than 10 knots. First Base Force commander Rear Admiral Kubo ordered the *Wakaba* to escort the *Ōshio* and had them sail ahead. The 8th Destroyer Division commander changed ships from the *Ōshio* to the *Asashio*. The unit was divided into the following three groups for withdrawal, and each sailed north in the following three groups.

- 1st Group: the *Asashio*, the *Arashio* towing the *Michishio*, the *Nenohi*
- 2d Group: the *Wakaba* and the *Ōshio*
- 3d Group: the *Nagara* and the *Hatsushimo*

The 1st Group again came under a bombing attack by seven [enemy] heavy bombers a little after 1300 and suffered bombings by a total of twenty-six enemy aircraft by that evening. But, fortunately, without sustaining [any more] damage, the group escaped out of the 200 nautical miles range from Surabaya by sunset. The other groups also sailed out of the 200 nautical miles range from Surabaya by sunset. After that, the 2d and the 3d Groups managed to enter the port of Makassar between 1530 and 1600 on the 21st, and the 1st Group also finally managed to return to Makassar at 0130 on the 22d. Both the *Sagami-maru* and the *Sasakomaru* also somehow returned to Makassar. On the afternoon of the 22d [21st, p. 373], Dutch East Indies Unit Commander Vice Admiral Takahashi incorporated the 8th Destroyer Division into the main unit and ordered the division to stay on standby in Makassar.

The Communiqué by IGHQ

After entering the port of Makassar, the 8th Destroyer Division commander reviewed the military gains of the sea engagement off Bali and reported the following conclusions:⁽⁵⁴⁾

Phase	Enemy Forces	Military Gains
1st phase (by the <i>Ōshio</i> and the <i>Asashio</i>)	2 <i>Java</i> -class cruisers	
	2 U.S. destroyers	Inflicted considerable damage, but details are unknown
	3 Dutch destroyers	Sank all
2d phase (by the <i>Ōshio</i> and the <i>Asashio</i>)	2 <i>Java</i> -class cruisers	One slightly damaged (by a torpedo hit)
	2 U.S. destroyers	(Maybe the same ones as in the 1st phase engagement?)
3d phase (by the <i>Ōshio</i> and the <i>Asashio</i>)	1 <i>Tromp</i> -class cruiser	Seriously damaged (One of the cruisers of the 2d phase engagement)
4th phase (by the <i>Michishio</i> and the <i>Arashio</i>)	2 U.S. destroyers	Sank one and seriously damaged another
	1 <i>De Ruyter</i> -class (?) cruiser	(Maybe the same one as in the 3d phase engagement?)
	1 Destroyer (class unclear)	

Based on this [report], the IGHQ [Navy Department] released the following communiqué:⁽¹⁰⁹⁾

IGHQ [Navy Department] Communiqué (3.15 p.m., 21 February)

While carrying out an Army-Navy joint operation in the Bali area, two destroyers of the ... Destroyer Division, part of a destroyer squadron of the Imperial Navy, encountered at 0000 on 20 February in the Lombok Strait east of Bali a combined enemy unit of U.S. and Dutch forces, consisting of two cruisers and three destroyers. On encountering the unit, the destroyers immediately went on the offensive. After opening fire at 0040, they sank within ten minutes two enemy destroyers and seriously damaged another. Further, they hotly pursued two enemy cruisers who tried to escape and again engaged with them at 0315. The other two destroyers of the same division, who had been engaged in a separate operation, hastened south to attack the enemy. However, after sustaining damage by our gunfire and torpedo attacks, the enemy beat a hasty retreat under the cloak of the night and fled from our sight. One of our destroyers sustained damage in the engagement, but it does not prevent her from fighting or sailing.

The main officers, who participated in this engagement, were the following:⁽⁹⁶⁾

8th Destroyer Division Commander: Capt. Abe Toshio (graduate of the 46th class of the Imperial Japanese Naval Academy)

Captain of the destroyer *Ōshio*: Cdr. Kikkawa Kiyoshi (graduate of the 50th class)

Captain of the destroyer *Asashio*: Cdr. Yoshii Gorō (ditto)

Captain of the destroyer *Michishio*: Cdr. Ogura Masami (graduate of the 51st class)

Captain of the destroyer *Arashio*: Cdr. Kuboki Hideo (ditto)

The Operations of the Air Unit

From 18 February onwards, the weather slightly improved and the air unit launched attacks on [enemy] naval vessels in the Surabaya area. The following air operations were carried out:^(71, 75)

18th [of February]

- Four Type-0 fighter planes of the 3d Air Group patrolled in the air over the convoy but spotted no enemy.
- Three Type-0 fighter planes of the group conducted a reconnaissance attack on the Bali airfield but spotted no enemy.
- One land-based reconnaissance plane of the Tainan Air Group conducted a search for the enemy but returned due to bad weather.
- One land-based reconnaissance plane of the group reconnoitered the Bali airfield, but spotted no enemy.
- Fifteen Type-0 fighter planes and one land-based reconnaissance plane of the group attacked Madiun and reported having shot down one [enemy] reconnaissance seaplane and destroyed two fighter planes on the ground.
- Nine Type-0 fighter planes and two land-based reconnaissance planes of the group advanced from Balikpapan to Makassar.
- Eight Type-0 fighter planes of the group attacked Surabaya, engaged with twenty P-40s, reported having shot down nine (of which three with unconfirmed results), all returned.
- One land-based attack plane of the Takao Air Group reconnoitered the weather conditions and [reported] no impediments to an attack. [Accordingly], twenty-two land-based attack planes of the group carried out an attack on the [enemy] naval vessels at Surabaya and reported having scored direct hits on two light cruisers, who caught fire, as well as on two destroyers and [also] near hits on a large merchantman. Nine aircraft were marked by bullets, three crashed themselves, four crew were killed and two injured on board.

19th

- A total of sixteen Type-0 fighter planes directly guarding the anchorage, spotted seven B-17s and three B-24s and attacked them but failed to shoot them down.
- One land-based reconnaissance plane and five Type-0 fighter planes searched for the enemy in Surabaya, Bali and the Madura Strait, and spotted eleven [enemy] merchantmen, one minesweeper and one B-17.
- Three land-based attack planes searched for the enemy in the Sunda and the Java Seas, spotted four B-17s, one twin-engine bomber, and one large flying boat. Two of them were attacked by [enemy] fighter planes.
- Although eighteen land-based attack planes and twenty-three Type-0 fighter planes were [scheduled to] conduct attacks on Surabaya, the land-based attack plane unit called off the attack due to bad weather; nine of them carried out bombings on the urban area of Bawean Island [instead]. The Type-0 fighter planes engaged with thirty P-40s in the air and reported having shot down seventeen (of which three with unconfirmed results). One of Japanese aircraft crashed itself.

20th

- Eighteen Type-0 fighter planes advanced to the Bali base, after patrolling in the air over the Bali anchorage. During the patrol, they had an [air] engagement with three [enemy] light bombers and two dozens or more fighter planes, and reported having shot down six. One of Type-0 fighter plane went missing after having gone to reconnoiter naval vessel[s], of which it was unclear whether they were friend or foe.

- Thirteen Type-0 fighter planes carried out an attack on Surabaya, but spotted no enemy.
- Nine of the Type-0 fighter planes that had advanced to the Bali base carried out an attack on Malang, and reported having set ablaze four B-17s and destroyed another B-17 and one twin-engine plane.
- Sixteen land-based attack planes carried out an attack on [an enemy] cruiser, but scored no direct hits.
- Thirteen land-based attack planes went to conduct attacks on enemy naval vessels in the Lombok Strait, but spotted no enemy. They carried out bombings on the urban area of Banyuwangi (on the eastern end of Java) [instead].

Reconnaissance seaplanes of the *Sanuki-maru* provided the convoy carrying the [Bali] invasion unit with patrols against enemy submarines when the unit left Makassar, but the details are unclear.

The Engagements of the Army Units

At 0100 on the 19th, the Kanemura Detachment landed on the coast of Sanur without meeting any enemy resistance at all. That night, with dark clouds hanging low and poor visibility, was convenient for a surprise attack. Having carried out a sudden attack on the barracks in Denpasar before dawn and seizing them, the detachment moved south and seized the airfield around 1130. After that, the detachment took charge of securing the route[s] to transport Navy air base matériel as well as guarding the airfield.⁽¹⁴⁰⁾

The Second [Phase]: The Bali Transport Operation

The unit for the second phase of the transport operation, i.e. the *Rakutō-maru*, the *Okitsu-maru* ([of] the Eleventh Air Fleet), the *Daitō-maru*, the *Toyosaka-maru*, the *Hino-maru* No. 3 ([of] the 5th Construction Squad) left Balikpapan at 1700 on the 20th under the escort of the 2d Sub-chaser Division, and reached Makassar at 1130 on the 22d.⁽⁵⁹⁾ On the 22d, Dutch East Indies Unit Commander Vice Admiral Takahashi, leading the main unit, advanced from Balikpapan to Staring Bay, where he issued the following orders.⁽⁵⁴⁾

1. It seems that there are five to seven enemy cruisers and about ten destroyers in Batavia, and one *De Ruyter*- and one *Java*-class [cruiser] and about five destroyers in Surabaya.
2. The Dutch East Indies Unit shall, with the support of the Air Unit ([of] the Southern Task Force) and the Malaya Unit, cover the Sixteenth Army's landings on Java, while catching and destroying enemy naval vessels.
3. Other than the following, all units shall operate in accordance with the outline stipulated in the Dutch East Indies Unit Order Classified No. 9.
 - (a) The *Nagara*, the 8th Destroyer Division (minus the *Ōshio* and the *Michishio*), the 21st Destroyer Division (minus the *Hatsuharu*) and the 2d Destroyer Division shall escort the *Rakutō-maru*, the *Okitsu-maru*, the *Daitō-maru*, the *Toyosaka-maru* and the *Hino-maru* No. 3 under the command of the 1st Base Force commander. They shall leave the roads off Makassar on the evening of 23 February, reach Bali before dawn on the 25th, and cover and guard the disembarkation of matériel, while catching and destroying enemy naval vessels fleeing through the waterways both east and west of Bali.
 - (b) - (d) (The operations of the 2d Escort Unit and others — Omitted by the author)
 - (e) The main unit (the *Ashigara*, the *Ikazuchi* and the *Akebono*) shall reach the waters north of Lombok on the night of the 24th. Thereafter, the unit shall take charge of covering and sup-

porting the units for Operation HA [against Bali], and also take on the task of supporting the whole operation while catching and destroying escaping enemy naval vessels by appropriately operating on the waters north of the Lombok Strait around 28 February.

Although the 8th Destroyer Division, [namely] the *Asashio* and the *Arashio* who had not sustained damage in the sea engagement off Bali, had been ordered to join the main unit, by this order they were supposed to take again part in the [Bali] operation. Anticipating counterattacks by enemy naval vessels, Base Unit Commander Rear Admiral Kubo decided to further add to the forces for the second [Bali] operation the *Tsukushi* and the 1st Subchaser Division, which were then at Makassar, as well as Submarine Chaser No. 21 of the 12th Subchaser Division, which had been newly formed and advanced to Staring Bay from mainland Japan.⁽⁶⁸⁾

On 23 February, Base Unit Commander Rear Admiral Kubo issued to the units that had assembled in Makassar for the second [Bali] operation the outline of the second operation, which was in summary as follows:⁽⁶⁸⁾

1. Disposition of forces

- (1) The main unit (directly led [by the commander]: The *Nagara*, the 8th Destroyer Division (minus the *Ōshio* and the *Michishio*)
- (2) The Echelon (led by the 21st Destroyer Division commander): The 21st Destroyer Division (minus the *Hatsuharu*), the 2d Subchaser Division and Submarine Chasers No. 1 and No. 21
- (3) The support unit: The *Tsukushi*

2. Main points of the operation

The units shall leave Makassar at 1800 on the 23d, pass the point of 6°21'S 118°25'E at 0400 on the 24th, the point of 7°40'S 116°9'E at 2030 [on that day], and reach the roads off Pantai Timur at 0900 on the 25th. After that, they shall at that place conduct the disembarkation and the guarding.

The following information on the enemy had by that time been found out from the statements of the prisoners etc.:⁽⁵⁴⁾

1. The enemy forces which had participated in the sea engagement off Bali
Commander: Rear Admiral Doorman of the Dutch Navy
HNLMS De Ruyter, *HNLMS Java* and another cruiser as well as five destroyers
2. The base to where the enemy navy escapes is Cilacap (*USS Houston* stayed there around 5 or 6 February).
3. It seems that ten U.S. cruisers and twenty U.S. destroyers sometimes come to give support, while they patrol the areas [surrounding] Australia as well as the Indian Ocean.
4. The Dutch [Navy] possesses twelve submarines, and if U.S. and British submarines are included, [the allies] have thirty to forty submarines.
5. Military supplies are delivered from the United States every day.
6. Others
 - (1) Seaplane bases: Surabaya and Cilacap
 - (2) Land bases: Surabaya, Batavia and many others
 - (3) Fuel bases: Semarang and Tebakubekun [?]*

* In Dutch sources Semarang is never mentioned as a fuel base. The main fuel depots for the fleet were at Surabaya, Batavia (Tanjung Priok), and Cilacap. Also a few strategically placed oil tankers were used as auxiliary depots. Before the engagement at the Gaspar Strait on 15 February, the Allied Striking Force had partly refueled at Telukbetung, south Sumatra. Maybe *Tebakubekun* should be read *Telukbetung*.

Based on air reconnaissance information gathered until 22 February, it was judged that one A-class cruiser, one *De Ruyter*-class and one *Java*-class cruiser as well as five destroyers were at anchor in the Surabaya area.⁽¹⁰⁸⁾ In the meantime on the 22d, for the first time eleven land-based attack planes advanced to Bali, which increased the [total] strength on Bali to thirty-two fighter planes, four land-based reconnaissance planes and eleven land-based attack planes. However, the enemy had day after day persistently come to attack [the Bali airfield] although in small numbers.⁽⁷¹⁾

At 1800 on 23 February, the Second [Bali] Transport Operation Unit left Makassar. Although an enemy aircraft came probing around 1000 on the 24th, it did not lead to enemy attacks. When the unit approached the 230 nautical miles range from Surabaya at 1700 that day, a report came from [an] aircraft: “[Spotted] one enemy cruiser and three destroyers at sixty nautical miles north of Surabaya.” Base Unit Commander Rear Admiral Kubo assumed that the enemy was likely to be escaping in the direction of Bali or coming to shell the airfield on Bali. Therefore, he advanced to the waters between the Kangean Islands and Bali, leading the *Nagara*, and the 21st and the 8th Destroyer Divisions to search for the enemy, but did not spot them.⁽⁶⁸⁾

At 0800 on the 25th, the transport unit entered the anchorage and by the end of February completed the disembarkation. Although there were a few air raids by enemy aircraft during that period, no damage was sustained. Also, a few enemy naval vessels appeared but they all fled without engaging. The Bali operation of the 1st Base Force was wrapped up as of 5 March.⁽⁶⁸⁾ In the meantime, the landings in eastern and western Java had been successfully carried out on 1 March, and during that time the aircraft units, which had advanced to the Denpasar [airfield], carried out a very effective air campaign.⁽⁷¹⁾

A Review of the Sea Engagement off Bali (See Illustrations Nos. 34, 35, and 36.)

Concerning the circumstances of the engagements in this sea battle, there are on the Japanese side no records of the 8th Destroyer Division extant. The only available data consist of a fragmentary record of telegrams in the action report of the 2d Destroyer Squadron, some brief accounts in the operation reviews, and the rough artillery records in the lessons of war compiled by the Yokosuka Gunnery School. As for records on the allied side, since there are almost no data available from the Dutch side, we have to chiefly rely on Morison’s *The Rising Sun in the Pacific*. However, we cannot have complete faith in his account. I will try to examine all these data together, although it may be difficult to expect a definite [reconstruction]*.

The First Phase

The opponent in the first phase of the engagement consisted of five ships: the Dutch cruisers *HNLMS De Ruyter* and *HNLMS Java*, the Dutch destroyer *HNLMS Piet Hein* and the U.S. Destroyers *USS [John D.] Ford* and *USS Pope*.

The five ships sailed with *HNLMS De Ruyter* in the lead, followed by *HNLMS Java*, while *USS [John D.] Ford* and *USS Pope* followed in their wake at a distance of 10,000 meters. The latter two lagged behind because they had lost the wake of *HNLMS Piet Hein* for a while due to a course change before rushing into the attack. When rushing into the attack, *HNLMS De*

* After the Japanese publication of the present volume, a Dutch analysis of this battle appeared in Ph. M. Bosscher, *De Koninklijke Marine in de Tweede Wereldoorlog [The Royal Netherlands Navy in the Second World War]*, 1986, Vol. 2, pp. 263-270. With one exception, we have not incorporated his findings in the following description.

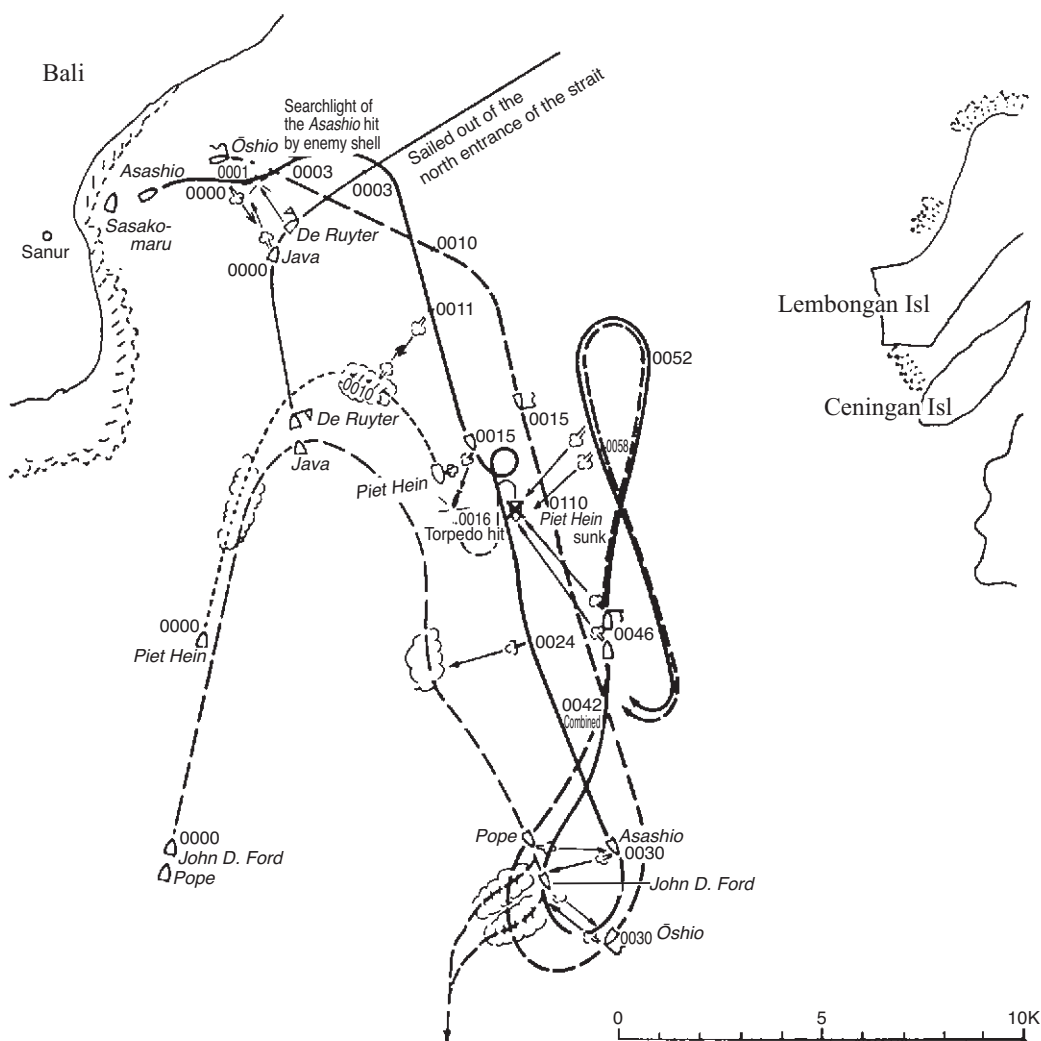


Illustration No. 34 — The Relative Positions of Both Forces during the First Phase of the Sea Engagement off Bali

Ruyter had been prepared for an artillery duel with the enemy on starboard. The “two *Java*-class enemy cruisers” that the *Asashio* had spotted at 2353 were correctly *HNLMS De Ruyter* and *HNLMS Java*. Because the Japanese force had the mountains [on Bali] at the back, the allied force spotted them too late. Consequently, both sailed past each other in an instant with no time to spare for a [true] artillery duel. The [allied] cruisers disappeared to the north, without [turning back to] repeat the attack.*

The enemy vessel that the *Ōshio* had spotted at an end of a smoke screen to the south at 0005 right after the artillery duel was *HNLMS Piet Hein*. For unknown purposes, *HNLMS Piet Hein* had laid a smoke screen at the sight of the artillery duel ahead of her.** *HNLMS*

* The *Asashio* and the *Java* did exchange fire.

** According to Bosscher p. 266, by some unknown cause *Piet Hein*'s smoke generator had been activated, thereby betraying her position to the Japanese.

Piet Hein and the *Asashio* rapidly closed the distance. Checked by the *Asashio*, *HNLMS Piet Hein* turned right, and both came to sail on parallel courses. From 0010 onwards, *HNLMS Piet Hein* came under fierce fire from the *Asashio*, which was followed by a direct hit of a torpedo at 0016. The damage was huge and her speed rapidly decreased. At that time the *Asashio* assumed that she had sunk her, but in reality [*HNLMS Piet Hein*] was moving about on the waters nearby at low speed.

The two U.S. destroyers, who had followed in the wake of *HNLMS Piet Hein*, sailed into the smoke screen the latter had laid and turned right to avoid it, where they came to sail on a parallel course on the starboard side [of the *Piet Hein*] (i.e. her unengaged side). The two vessels that the *Asashio* spotted at 0012 were these U.S. destroyers. Both destroyers were about to join the engagement, but seeing the damage sustained by *HNLMS Piet Hein*, they took evasive actions for some time, but ended up sailing southward on a parallel course with the *Asashio*. However, when they came under concentrated fire from a Japanese force that had been increased with the *Ōshio*, they hurriedly laid a smoke screen and fled southward. Then, while sailing northward after reversing course, the *Ōshio* and the *Asashio* newly spotted two destroyers (actually one) on their port side bows at 0045; [in fact] it was *HNLMS Piet Hein* that the *Asashio* believed she had sunk. Although *HNLMS Piet Hein* was set ablaze by the gunfire from the *Ōshio* and the *Asashio* directed at her for the second time around, she [in fact] did not sink yet. Still more, what the *Ōshio* and the *Asashio* fired at from 0058 onwards after [again] reversing course was still *HNLMS Piet Hein*. It seems that she [finally] sunk around 0110. The Japanese ships assumed that they had sunk or heavily damaged another vessel, but they must have wrongly taken the burning heavy oil spilt over the waters for another vessel. In the final analysis, the conclusion that in the first phase of the battle they had sunk two [enemy] destroyers and inflicted serious damage to a third appears to have been a mistake for having sunk *HNLMS Piet Hein* [only].*

The Second, Third and Fourth Phases

The allied naval vessels that appeared in the second phase and after were the Dutch cruiser *HNLMS Tromp*, the U.S. destroyers *USS Stewart*, *USS Parrott*, *USS [John D.] Edwards* and *USS Pillsbury*. They sailed in a column with the U.S. destroyers at the head, while *HNLMS Tromp* followed at a distance of 8,000 meters. While sailing north at a speed of 25 knots, the U.S. destroyers haphazardly fired torpedoes toward the Sanur anchorage around 0306, which naturally hit nothing. During the torpedo launch action, the *USS Pillsbury* lost the wake of the vessels in front of her, separated from the column and headed north of Lembongan Island on her own. At 0310, the *Ōshio* and the *Asashio* spotted the enemy, but they mistook the three U.S. destroyers for two cruisers and one destroyer.

The *Ōshio* and the *Asashio* opened up with gunfire and torpedo attacks against the superior enemy. After the opening of the battle, the column of the U.S. destroyers got into disarray due to the smoke of the gunfire and also because *USS Stewart* had been hit in the steering-engine room. [Consequently,] the third ship, *USS [John D.] Edwards*, became the lead, whom the first ship, *USS Stewart*, followed, while the second ship, *USS Parrott*, became unable to control its movements due to trouble with her rudder; she left the line and sailed northward on the waters north of both ships.

* Morison and other allied sources interpret the gunfire heard after *USS Ford* and *Pope* had managed to get away as if the *Asashio* and *Oshio* had inadvertently fired at each other.

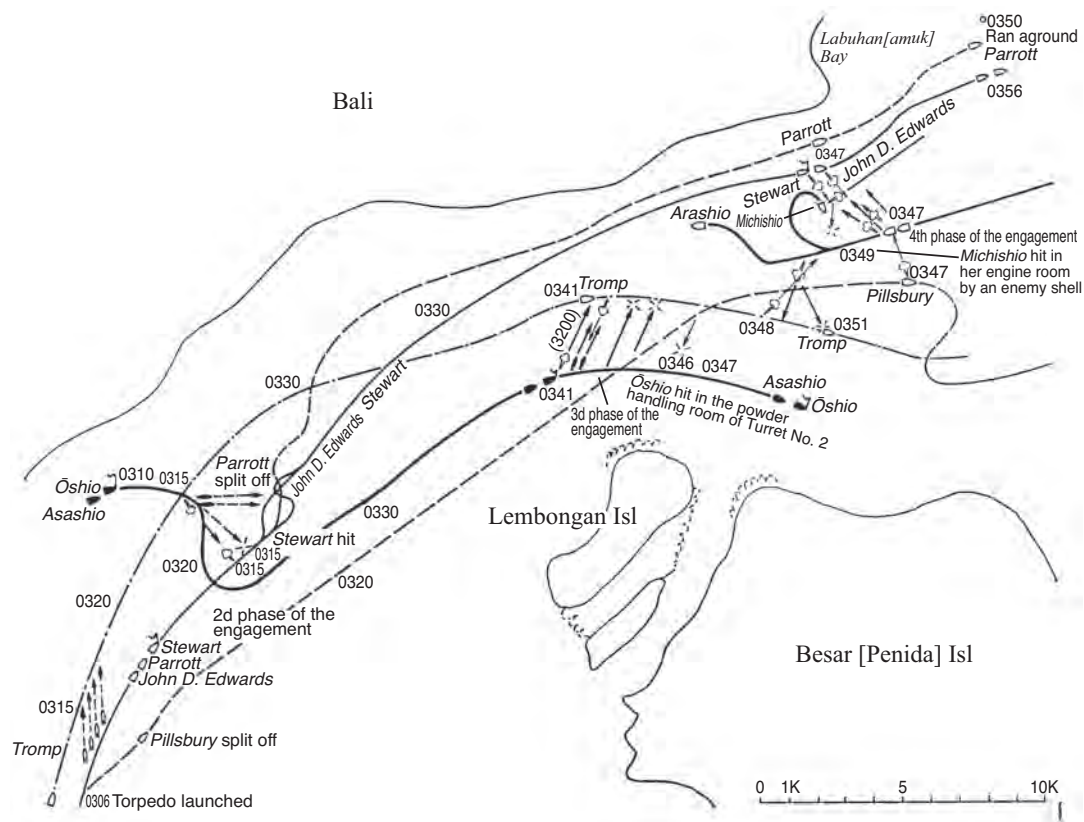


Illustration No. 35 — The Relative Positions of Both Forces from the Second to the Fourth Phase of the Sea Engagement off Bali

When the *Ōshio* and the *Asashio* changed course and started sailing eastward in pursuit of the U.S. destroyers, *HNLMS Tromp*, who had lagged behind, sailed past the Sanur anchorage. [Hidden] in the silhouette of the island, she was not seen by the 8th Destroyer Division, but she could not catch sight of the Japanese forces either because the latter had entered in the blind zone on her starboard quarter. The *Ōshio* and the *Asashio* [first] spotted *HNLMS Tromp* [on the waters] northwest of Lembongan, fired at her from her starboard quarter at 0341, and scored a number of direct hits. Although unable to operate her fire control and searchlight, *HNLMS Tromp* also scored a direct hit on the *Ōshio*. While firing at [the Japanese on] starboard, *HNLMS Tromp* also came under attack on her port side, which disabled the port searchlight as well. The ship that was firing at her from the other side was the *Arashio*, who had come sailing in on an opposite course.

The 2d Section of the 8th Destroyer Division [i.e. the *Arashio* and the *Michishio*] had rushed right in between the enemy, who was sailing eastward divided into a northern and southern group. USS *Parrott*, USS [John D.] *Edwards*, and USS *Stewart*, were sailing on their northern side while on their southern side were *HNLMS Tromp* and USS *Pillsbury*, who was sailing ahead [of *HNLMS Tromp*]. At 0347 the 2d Section opened up with gunfire and torpedo attacks on USS [John D.] *Edwards* and USS *Stewart* while sailing on an opposite course and assumed that they had sunk the first ship in the 7th salvo. However, simultaneously the *Michishio* re-

ceived a direct hit in her engine room and became unable to sail. The *Michishio* continued firing at the U.S. destroyers while turning her bow to the right and believed that she had inflicted serious damage to the second ship. After the *Michishio* had sustained damage, the *Arashio* who followed in her wake spotted an enemy cruiser sailing on an opposite course on her port side and fired a few salvos at the latter, but she disappeared on her port side quarter. It was these [salvos] that had destroyed the port searchlight of *HNLMS Tromp*. Witnessing the artillery duel between the *Arashio* and the *Michishio* and the [allied] units to the north of them, *USS Pilsbury* spotted the Japanese destroyers [as well], but after only firing a couple of salvos she evacuated [from the scene of action]. *USS Parrott*, who had separated from the column [due to] steering trouble and sailed to the north of *USS Stewart* since then, sailed east past the waters where the gun battle was going on, without exchanging fire with the Japanese force at all. Although she ran aground off Cape Labuan, she got free on her own and escaped to the north entrance of the Lombok Strait.

The actual forces in the engagement and the damage they sustained were as follows:

Japanese Navy	Allied [Naval] Forces
The <i>Ōshio</i> (destroyer): minor damage; one hit in a powder handling room The <i>Asashio</i> (destroyer) The <i>Michishio</i> (destroyer): serious damage; hit by several shells and crippled The <i>Arashio</i> (destroyer)	<i>HNLMS De Ruyter</i> (cruiser), <i>HNLMS Java</i> (cruiser) <i>HNLMS Tromp</i> (cruiser): some damage; hit at places by 10 shells <i>HNLMS Piet Hein</i> (destroyer): sunk <i>USS [John D.] Ford</i> (destroyer), <i>USS Pope</i> (destroyer) <i>USS Stewart</i> (destroyer): minor damage; one direct hit at the steering equipment <i>USS Parrott</i> (destroyer), <i>USS [John D.] Edwards</i> (destroyer), <i>USS Pilsbury</i> (destroyer)

That is to say, the allied forces had sent out three cruisers and seven destroyers and sustained the loss of having one destroyer sunk, one cruiser half damaged, and one destroyer slightly damaged, while the Japanese only suffered a loss of having one destroyer seriously damaged and another slightly damaged out of four destroyers (two at the initial phase of engagement).

The circumstances of the allied forces were as follows: It was on 17 February that the information came in that Japanese invasion units against Bali were about to leave Makassar. ABDA Naval Forces Commander Vice Admiral Helfrich of the Dutch Navy (who had replaced Admiral Hart of the U.S. Navy on 11 February) issued an order to the Doorman unit to immediately attack the enemy. At that time, the allied striking force under the command of [Rear Admiral] Doorman had just retreated from the attack by Japanese air units in the Gaspar Strait and dispersed to various [naval ports]. Judging that it would be too late to make a sortie after having assembled his [full] strength, Rear Admiral Doorman issued the following outline of attack:

1. Time and point of attack
The night of 19-20 February at the Badung Strait
2. The main points of attack
 - (1) The first attack unit (consisting of two cruisers and four destroyers currently stationed in Cilacap) shall rush in at 0030 (Japan time) on the 20th.

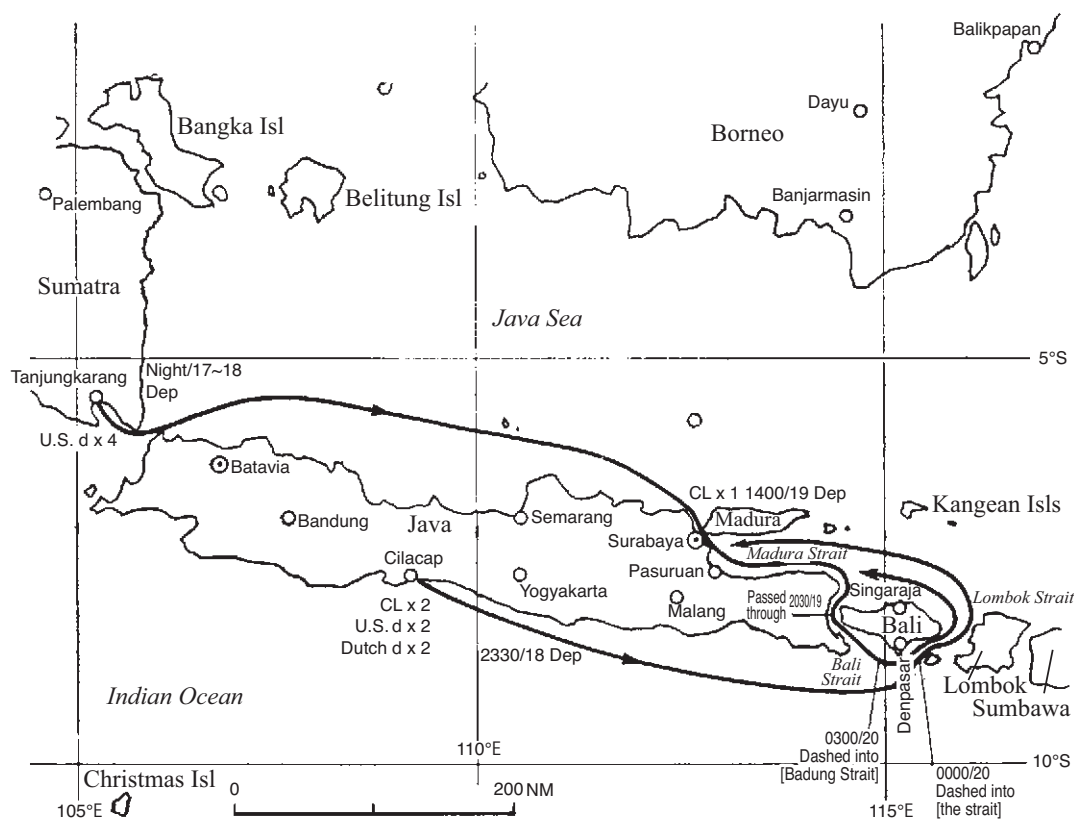


Illustration No. 36 — Outline of the Operations of the Allied Attack Units (17-20 February, 1942)

- (2) The second attack unit (consisting of one cruiser currently stationed in Surabaya and four destroyers currently in the Sunda Strait) shall assemble at Surabaya and rush in three hours after the charge of the first attack unit.
- (3) The 3d attack unit (consisting of seven torpedo boats currently stationed at the Bali Strait base) shall rush in one hour after the charge of the 2d attack unit.)

On the basis of such a plan, the operation was carried out. However, the third attack unit did not even spot the Japanese destroyers and in spite of committing an overwhelmingly superior unit, the allied naval force lost a favorable opportunity to destroy the transport convoy escorted by only two Japanese destroyers (later increased to four) due to the operating units' dubious implementation of the operation.

13. The Surprise Attack Operation Against Port Darwin

(See Illustration No. 37)

The Plan of Operations for a Surprise Attack on Port Darwin

We have already described the circumstances that led to the commitment of the Carrier Task Force to the Southern Operation [pp. 211-212]. At that time, at 0000 on 31 January, R. Adm. Ugaki Matome, the chief of staff of the Combined Fleet, sent the following telegram to Vice Admiral Kondō, the commander of the Southern Task Force, outlining the intentions behind the employment of the Carrier Task Force.⁽¹⁴¹⁾

1. With the fall of Singapore and the progress in the operations against Java and Celebes, the enemy will look for paths of retreat from Java and Sumatra to Australia and the Indian Ocean. It is very likely that we will see the British Indian Ocean Fleet and U.S. and Australian surface forces come out to rescue and cover [the retreating forces]. By catching and destroying such forces as well as destroying the fleeing transport convoys and, depending on the circumstances, destroying the enemy forces in the Java area from the rear, the final operation of the southern operation will be wrapped up and won in one stroke. For executing such an operation, the forces [mentioned in] Second Fleet Classified Telegram No. 781 are considered insufficient, and thus the Carrier Task Force and one element of the Sixth Fleet have been added as reinforcements.
2. During the period of employment of the Carrier Task Force, we want you to make absolutely sure that the force shall be perfectly guarded against enemy submarines, so that it can be deployed in attacking the bases of the enemy fleet and its air power as effectively and appropriately as possible and in the shortest period of time. Also, we want you to pay due regard to clearly defining the operations of friendly submarines so they will not be confused with enemy submarines.

In response, Southern Task Force Commander Vice Admiral Kondō drew up around 5 February an internal draft plan of operations outlining a surprise attack on Port Darwin in the rear of Kupang on 17 February, prior to the operation to seize Kupang (whose capture had been postponed till 20 February at the Manila Conference), by a force consisting of the 2d Carrier Division as the main body under the command of Eleventh Air Fleet Commander in Chief Vice Admiral Tsukahara.

Note: The suggestion of 2d Carrier Division Commander Rear Admiral Yamaguchi [p. 212] was accepted that, in view of the enemy surface unit's night attack off Balikpapan, the primary bases of the enemy should be attacked [first], because the conventional method of attacking and neutralizing the enemy within 600 nautical miles [from a friendly base] and pushing forward air bases by just 300 nautical miles carried the risk of being attacked by enemy surface vessels at the time of invasion.⁽¹⁰¹⁾

The second part [of Vice Admiral Kondō's plan of operations] outlined the incorporation of the 2d Carrier Division into the First Air Fleet for the second carrier operation (the carrier operation in the Indian Ocean).⁽¹⁴¹⁾

Then on 8 February, the main force of the Carrier Task Force (minus the 5th Carrier Division (minus the *Oboro*), and minus the *Arare* and the *Kagerō*) and the 2d Submarine Squadron were formally incorporated into the Southern Task Force, as previously told. With that and

with the postponement of the Java operation, [the Southern Task Force] became less pressed for time. Accordingly, at 1500 on 9 February, Southern Task Force Commander Vice Admiral Kondō divulged his immediate plan for the southern operation as a whole, as well as his plans for the first carrier operation (to destroy enemy forces that might come in the way of the capture of strategic places such as Timor) and for the second carrier operation (to completely destroy the enemy by cutting off his paths of retreat at the time of Java operation). These plans were as follows:⁽⁵³⁾

Southern Task Force Telegraphic Order No. 92 [at] 1500 on the 9th

1. Because of our air attacks in early February, the enemy who has made Java his stronghold has lost the best part of his naval and air power. Since it is highly likely that the remnants will attempt to evacuate to Australia, India and South Africa as our invasion operations progress, it is also quite likely that, in order to rescue [the evacuees], British, U.S., Dutch and Australian surface forces will appear in the eastern part of the Indian Ocean. Further, it seems that one element of the enemy forces has already evacuated to Port Darwin and its vicinity. According to intelligence, one element of the U.S. air reinforcements, acting in concert with the British and Australian forces, is using the place as its base.
2. The Malaya Unit is currently carrying out an attack on the port of Singapore, and intends to capture Bangka and Palembang in mid-February. Following the capture of Makassar, the Dutch East Indies Unit and the air unit are going to capture Bali and Timor around 20 February, and launch [the operation to] capture Java from around 25 February onwards.
3. The Southern Task Force shall timely let the Carrier Task Force carry out carrier operations, first in the Arafura Sea and then in the eastern part of the Indian Ocean. In these operations, it shall try to completely destroy the enemy air power in the Port Darwin area as well as catch and destroy enemy fleets and transport convoys, while attacking the enemy forces in the Java area from their rear. While continuing their present tasks, the remaining units shall act in concert with the above carrier operations and try to further expand the military gains, so that the clearing [of the enemy] in the entire Dutch East Indies area will be accelerated.
4. The Carrier Task Force shall conduct the carrier operations in the following way:
 - (1) First carrier operation (surprise attack on Port Darwin and vicinity)
[The units] shall timely depart from Palau, advance to the Arafura Sea, and carry out a surprise attack on Port Darwin and vicinity (around 19 February) on the day before the launch of the capture [operation] of Timor, after which they shall put in at Staring Bay for replenishment (in case the 3d Battleship Division is not going to participate in the operation, the 2d Section of the 4th Destroyer Division shall also remain in Palau as its guard unit).
 - (2) Second carrier operation (carrier [operations] in the eastern part of the Indian Ocean)
[The units] shall timely leave Staring Bay and advance to the Indian Ocean; they shall conduct carrier operations on the ocean for about five days, and if there is no change in the enemy movements, they shall operate with the aim of reaching the waters south of the Sunda Strait on 1 March. After that, they shall return to Staring Bay.
5. In the first carrier operation, the Air Unit shall with one element carry out joint air strikes on Port Darwin and vicinity. For the second carrier operation, they shall take on search and attack missions over the waters where the Carrier Task Force operates, particularly the wide areas ahead of the sailing route of the latter, using the bases on the southern coast of the Dutch East Indies. At the same time, they shall conduct reconnaissance attacks on the Christmas and Cocos Islands as soon as possible.
6. The Dutch East Indies Unit shall let a force [consisting of] the 5th Cruiser Division as the core operate in the Banda Sea during the first carrier operation and in the area southwest of Timor

during the second carrier operation. The force shall be assigned to cover and accomodate the Carrier Task Force while guarding its rear during the operation.

7. Submarine Unit A (the 4th and the 6th Submarine Squadrons) shall operate as scheduled; it shall be assigned to watch and patrol the southern coast of the Dutch East Indies east of (and including) Java as well as the Torres Strait and the Port Darwin area.
8. Submarine Unit B (the 5th Submarine Squadron) shall be assigned to watch and patrol the coastal areas of Ceylon and India as well as the north entrance of the Malacca Strait and the southern coast of Sumatra.
9. Submarine Unit C (the 2d Submarine Squadron) shall leave Staring Bay around 23 February and advance into the Indian Ocean. The bulk of the unit shall advance while searching for the enemy more or less 400 nautical miles southeast of Java, and swiftly reach the area south of the Cocos Islands. After that and until about 1 March, it shall conduct patrols from a position on the waters between about 97°E and 100°E beyond the 600 nautical miles range from Palembang. One element shall be assigned to covertly patrol the regular sailing routes on the western coast of Australia off Freemantle, after which it shall return to Staring Bay around 6 March.

Also, one designated submarine shall promptly be assigned to reconnoiter and watch the Cocos Islands.

10. The main body of the Southern Task Force shall leave Palau on 18 February and advance to Staring Bay, from where it shall advance into the Indian Ocean in tandem with the Carrier Task Force and appropriately operate to support all operations.
11. In this operation, the forces operating in the Indian Ocean may be unified to carry out [particular] missions. The outlines of these missions shall be issued in separate orders.

On 10 February, Southern Task Force Commander Vice Admiral Kondō ordered the 2d Carrier Division (minus the 23d Destroyer Division) and the 7th Destroyer Division to return to the Carrier Task Force.^{*(54)} (In response, Eastern Attack Unit Commander Rear Admiral Takagi, who experienced a shortage of destroyers, strongly requested that the 7th Destroyer Division should remain, which was finally approved on the 12th. The details will be described later.) Then, at 0700 on 12 February, Southern Task Force Commander Vice Admiral Kondō announced that during the carrier operations of the Southern Task Force, the units operating in the Indian Ocean would operate under his unified command. Again on the 15th, he issued the following order concerning the operations of the Carrier Task Force (Telegraphic Order No. 53).⁽¹⁴¹⁾

1. In accordance with Southern Task Force Telegraphic Order No. 92, the Carrier Task Force shall carry out carrier operations in the Port Darwin area as well as in the eastern part of the Indian Ocean, according to the following schedule:
 - (a) The first [carrier operation]

[The force] shall leave Palau on 15 February, sail by way of the Molucca Strait ([at] 1800 on the 17th), the Manipa Strait ([at] 1200 on the 18th), west of Babar Island ([at] 0300 on the 19th) to a point about 80 nautical miles south of Babar Island around 0600 on the 19th, from where it shall launch the surprise air strike operation against Port Darwin. After that, it shall put in at Staring Bay.
 - (b) The second [carrier operation]

[The force] shall leave Staring Bay around 25 February and sail by way of the Ombai Strait and along the western side of the Savu Islands so as to reach the eastern part of the Indian Ocean. After operating there, it shall return to Staring Bay.

* See p. 345. Actually, this order was issued by the Commander in Chief of the Combined Fleet.

2. The air unit of the Southern Task Force shall, in concert with the above carrier operations, be assigned to catch and destroy enemy forces as well as to search for and attack the enemy on the waters where the Carrier Task Force operates, particularly the wide areas ahead of the sailing route of the latter.
3. Apart from the following operations, the air unit of the Southern Task Force shall operate according to its assigned dispositions.
 - (a) The 1st Air Raid Unit
 - (1) From the departure of the Carrier Task Force from Palau till the completion of the operations of the force, the unit shall search for the enemy on the sailing route ahead of the force in the area of the Molucca Strait and to the south, while clearing and neutralizing [the enemy] in the northwestern part of New Guinea, Halmahera, and the Savu Islands.
 - (2) On 19 February, in concert with the surprise attack of the Carrier Task Force, it shall carry out an air strike on Port Darwin with its land-based attack plane units at 1130 with the facilities of the east airfield as their target.
 - (3) On the 19th, it shall search for the enemy in the Arafura and the Timor Seas with one element of large flying boats, ready against fleeing enemy vessels.
 - (4) After that, [the unit] shall search for and attack [the enemy] in the Arafura and the Timor Seas as designated by the commander, while accelerating the advance to the Kupang base. [The unit shall also] continue reconnaissance attacks on key places in northwestern Australia.
 - (5) During the second operation of the Carrier Task Force, [the unit] shall search for the enemy in as wide an area as possible on the sailing route ahead of the force in order to catch and destroy enemy surface forces.
 - (6) If the [capacity of the Kupang] base permits, the bulk of the large flying boat units shall be advanced to Kupang during the carrier operations.
 - (b) The 2d Air Raid Unit
 - (1) The unit shall accelerate the advance of the land-based attack plane units to the Jimbaran [airfield] (note by the author: Bali). Upon its advance, the unit shall search for and attack enemy naval vessels in the coastal areas of Java as well as in the Christmas Island area.
 - (2) During the second operation of the Carrier Task Force, the unit shall search for and attack the enemy on the sea in as wide an area as possible west of a line 160° [SSE] from the Jimbaran base (west of a 120° [ESE] line until the land-based attack plane units of the 1st Air Raid Unit will have advanced to Kupang).
4. The 3d Air Raid Unit shall be incorporated into the Air Unit of the Southern Task Force and conduct the following search and attack [missions].
 - (1) After the advance of the land-based attack plane units to Palembang, [the unit] shall search for and attack enemy naval vessels in the Cocos Island, Java and Sumatra areas.
 - (2) During the second operation of the Carrier Task Force, [the unit shall search for and attack the enemy in the area] west of the Palembang line.

At 2030 on the 16th, 5th Cruiser Division Commander Rear Admiral Takagi sent the units concerned the outline of operations regarding the cover for the units of the first carrier operation by the following telegram: "The Eastern Support Unit (the *Nachi*, the *Haguro*, and the *Akebono*) shall leave Staring Bay at 1500 on the 17th and, after having been joined by the *Ikazuchi* en route, take charge of covering the units of the first carrier operation, while [also] supporting the 2d Escort Unit. The operation schedule is as follows (the rest is omitted by the author; it will be described later on in [the section on] the Timor Invasion Operation.)"⁽⁵³⁾

The status of the Carrier Task Force when it left Palau for the first carrier operation was as follows:⁽¹⁴¹⁾ (as of 15 February [1942])

1. The disposition of forces (as shown in the following table)

Unit	Commander	Forces	Main Tasks
Air Raid Unit	Cdr in Chief, 1st Air Fleet	First Air Fleet (minus 4th and 5th Carrier Divs and destroyer div[s])	To attack enemy air power and naval vessels
Support Unit		8th Cruiser Div Cdr	To cover the main unit and attack enemy naval vessels
Guard Unit		1st Destroyer Sqdn Cdr	To provide guard [for friendly forces], attack enemy naval vessels and transport ships, provide guard along the sailing route, provide guard on the flying routes

Note: The 1st Carrier Division (the *Akagi* and the *Kaga*), the 2d Carrier Division (the *Sōryū* and the *Hiryū*), the 8th Cruiser Division (the *Toné* and the *Chikuma*) and the 1st Destroyer Squadron (the *Abukuma* and seven destroyers)

2. The state of aircraft replacements

The 1st and the 2d Carrier Divisions have been provided at Truk with ten carrier-based fighter planes, eighteen carrier-based bombers and fourteen carrier-based attack planes from the 5th Carrier Division, which was going to return to mainland Japan.⁽¹⁰⁰⁾

The Launch of the Operation

Reconnaissance and Sailing

At 1020 on 10 February, one land-based reconnaissance plane of the 3d Air Group took off from Ambon, carried out a covert photoreconnaissance over Port Darwin and returned at 1720.

The results of the visual reconnaissance were as follows:⁽⁸¹⁾

1. There are two airfields [with a runway] of 1,500 meters to 2,000 meters long in the northern suburbs of the city of Port Darwin. Five large planes and about twenty small planes were spotted on the eastern airfield. Three [enemy] fighter planes were patrolling in the air at an altitude of about 2,000 meters.
2. There is [a] seaplane base at the southeastern end of the city of Port Darwin. Three flying boats were spotted in the neighborhood.
3. One vessel, which looked like a carrier-plane tender, about ten large merchantmen, eleven small merchantmen and about five vessels, which looked like destroyers, were spotted in the bay.
4. No air bases were spotted on the Melville and Bathurst Islands.
5. Although adequate reconnaissance may not have been performed due to clouds, the objective was by and large attained.
6. No damage was sustained.

In connection with the Carrier Task Force's attack on Port Darwin, the commander of the land based air units, Vice Admiral Tsukahara, refrained from attacking Port Darwin until the very day of the air strike.

At 1400 on 15 February, the Carrier Task Force left Palau for the first carrier operation (the surprise attack on Port Darwin).⁽¹⁴¹⁾ On that day, the Kanoya Air Group Detachment planned to conduct a reconnaissance attack over the Lesser Sunda Islands with eighteen land-based attack planes, but due to bad weather, attacked only Flores and the Alor islands.⁽⁸¹⁾ [Meanwhile,] three large flying boats of the Tōkō Air Group searched for the enemy in the Banda and the Timor Seas; at 1100, one of them spotted one [enemy] cruiser, three destroyers and four transport ships sailing westward in the Timor Sea and went on probing, but did not return. Two land-based attack planes of the 1st Air Group took off to probe the above convoy and spotted it at 1755, but it was too late to carry out an attack on that day. On that day, nine land-based attack planes of the 1st Air Group carried out an attack on Dobo ([on] the Aru Islands), while another nine on Fak Fak ([on] New Guinea).⁽⁸¹⁾

On the 16th, the Carrier Task Force sailed south, while having carrier-based attack planes guard its sailing route ahead, carrier-based bombers patrol against enemy submarines, and [some] carrier-based fighter planes provide escort [against enemy aircraft] in the air and also [others] on standby on the carriers.⁽⁷¹⁾ Although two Type-0 fighter planes of the 3d Air Group Detachment carried out a search and attack mission on the enemy air power on Halmahera and the surrounding waters, they did not spot the enemy. [Meanwhile,] land-based attack planes of the 1st Air Group and large flying boats of the Tōkō Air Group carried out an attack on the [enemy] convoy they had spotted on the day before in the Timor sea, but could not attain large military gains.⁽⁸¹⁾ Also, twenty-seven aircraft of the Kanoya Air Group Detachment took off for the attack on this convoy, but they could not spot the enemy [convoy] due to bad weather (to be described later.)

On the 17th, the Carrier Task Force [continued] sailing south on strict alert. Since no water depths were provided on the nautical charts of the area, the Carrier Task Force sailed ahead, greatly worried about the sailing route.⁽¹⁴²⁾ On that day, the Takao Signal Unit commander reported that communication intelligence had shown that twenty-three U.S. naval vessels, thirteen British naval vessels and two vessels of the Dutch East Indies had appeared in the direction of Darwin and Batavia. [A] carrier-based attack plane of the *Kaga*, which was guarding the sailing route ahead of the force, spotted one submerged enemy submarine at thirty-four nautical miles 220° [SW] of the main unit, and neutralized her. At 2150, the Carrier Task Force crossed the equator.⁽¹⁴¹⁾ In the meantime, as for the land-based air unit, two large flying boats of the Tōkō Air Group searched for the enemy in the Molucca and the Ceram Seas, but spotted no enemy. Also, in order to attack the convoy spotted on the days before, four large flying boats of the Tōkō Air Group and four land-based attack planes of the Kanoya Air Group took off for the search while twenty-six land-based attack planes of the 1st Air Group and nineteen land-based attack planes of the Kanoya Air Group took off for the attack, but without spotting the enemy convoy, attacked their second target, [a] battery at Kupang.⁽⁸¹⁾

On the 18th, like the day before, the Carrier Task Force went on sailing further south on strict alert.⁽⁵³⁾ The land-based air unit had six large flying boats of the Tōkō Air Group search for the enemy [within a range of] 550 nautical miles between 120° [ESE] and 200° [SSW] from Ambon, while having three land-based attack planes of the Kanoya Air Group search for the enemy [within a range of] 650 nautical miles between 165° [SSE] and 200° [SSW] from

Kendari. However, they spotted nothing more than one armed transport ship (sailing on a 100° [E] course at a speed of 16 knots) at 320 nautical miles 50° [NE] from Port Darwin and two transport ships and a destroyer (on a northeastern course at a speed of 12 knots, directly escorted by aircraft) at 90 nautical miles 268° [W] [from Port Darwin].⁽⁸¹⁾

On the 18th, the land-based air unit commander, Vice Admiral Tsukahara, reported on the enemy movements: According to air reconnaissance of northwestern Australia, there are one small aircraft carrier, a few destroyers and a few submarines. On 15 February, one class-A cruiser, three destroyers and four transport ships were sailing westward in the Timor Sea, but due to serious damage inflicted on three of the transport ships on 16 [February] by our air attack, [the enemy] seems to have escaped to the south, abandoning plans to bring reinforcements to Java or Kupang. There are no other powerful units in western Australia, and it is highly likely that the Australian main fleet and the U.S. Fleet reinforcements are stationed on the east coast. The British Indian Ocean Fleet seems to be operating from its base on Ceylon with one element in the Cocos Islands and/or the Rangoon area. Its strength is estimated to consist of two battleships, two aircraft carriers, two to three class-A cruisers, three to four class-B cruisers and ten to twelve destroyers.⁽⁸¹⁾

Carrier Task Force Commander V. Adm. Nagumo Chūichi's plans till that day [the 18th] for the air strike on Port Darwin can by and large be pieced together as follows:^(17, 141)

1. The enemy movements in the area of Port Darwin

(1) Since aircraft radio communications are sparse, the [enemy] movements are not very active.

The number of enemy aircraft on site can by and large be estimated at around 30 aircraft.

(2) The enemy vessels on site are one aircraft carrier-like vessel, one or two cruisers, some destroyers and other [types of] ships, and about ten transport ships.

2. The formation of the attack units

(1) Commander: Cdr. Fuchida Mitsuo

(2) Formation of the aircraft units

Carrier	Type-0 fighter planes	Type-97 carrier-based attack planes	Type-99 carrier-based bombers	Total	Grand total
<i>Akagi</i>	9	18	18	45	188
<i>Kaga</i>	9	27	18	54	
<i>Sōryū</i>	9	18	18	45	
<i>Hiryū</i>	9	18	17	44	

3. Weather reconnaissance and armament

(1) The scheduled time for the weather reconnaissance plane of the 8th Cruiser Division to reach the foremost [reconnaissance] point shall be set at 0600.

(2) The carrier-based attack planes shall carry 800-kg bombs.

4. The status of the friendly forces (scheduled for the 19th)

(1) Land-based attack plane units shall carry out air strikes on the Port Darwin airfield at 1130.

(2) Large flying boats shall search for the enemy in the Arafura and the Timor Seas.

5. The scheduled movements of the carrier group (after the takeoff of the aircraft)
 - (1) In case of northwesterly winds: set course to 90° [E] and change course to 300° [NW] after two hours.
 - (2) In case of northeasterly winds: set course to 270° [W] and change course to 60° [ENE] after two hours.
 - (3) In case of southwesterly winds: set course to 60° [ENE] and change course to 240° [ESE] after three hours.
 - (4) In case of southeasterly winds: set course to 330° [NNW] and change course to 130° [SE] after two hours.
 - (5) In whichever case, [the carriers] shall sail at a speed of 20 knots. However, for take off and landing of aircraft, their course may be shifted slightly upwind.
[An antiaircraft] guard in the air over the carriers shall be instituted prior to the take off of the attack units and continued by and large until sunset.

The Destruction of Port Darwin

On the early morning of the 19th, the scout seaplane of the *Toné* took off and reached the foremost [reconnaissance] point at 0600 for a weather reconnaissance, but could not make radio contact due to trouble with its radio set. At 0825 after its return, it reported that the weather was suitable.⁽¹⁴³⁾ However, before that, Carrier Task Force Commander Vice Admiral Nagumo had already judged the weather to be suitable and issued the order to strike Port Darwin. First of all at 0615, three Type-0 fighter planes of the *Akagi* to provide an [antiaircraft] guard in the air took off and took up positions. (Although the guard was provided by a total of fifteen aircraft in five shifts until 1735, no enemy was spotted.)⁽⁷¹⁾ At 0622, the Type-97 carrier-based attack plane of the *Akagi* carrying Commander Fuchida, commander of the attack plane unit, took off. The aircraft units of all carriers took off one after another and formed formations above the Carrier Task Force. At 0700, the aircraft with the commander on board flew over the flagship and headed to attack Port Darwin.⁽⁷¹⁾ At 0745, the aircraft units deployed for the attack over Melville Island and in full force went on to the attack at 0810; they completed the strike a little after 0900, returned and were recovered by the mother ships by 1212. The military gains and losses reported were as follows:⁽⁷¹⁾

1. The carrier-based attack plane units of the *Akagi* ([led by] Cdr. Fuchida Mitsuo)

First Sqdn (nine carrier-based attack planes): Bombed and seriously damaged the railway pier and two merchantmen on both sides of it; no damage was sustained.

Second Sqdn (nine carrier-based attack planes): Bombed a large merchantman and scored a near hit at the bow; no damage was sustained [by the Japanese side].
2. The carrier-based bomber units of the *Akagi* ([led by] Lt. Chihaya Takehiko)

First Sqdn (nine carrier-based bombers): Inflicted some damage to a destroyer and minor damage to a merchantman; no damage was sustained.

Second Sqdn (nine carrier-based bombers): Inflicted serious damage to two merchantmen, which were set ablaze, and some damage to another; one aircraft was marked by bullets.
3. The carrier-based fighter plane unit of the *Akagi* (nine carrier-based fighter planes [led by] Lt. Cdr. Itaya Shigeru)

Shot down four enemy fighter planes in an air engagement and set four [enemy] bombers [on the ground] ablaze and destroyed another four [on the ground] by strafing; three aircraft were marked by bullets.
4. The carrier-based attack plane units of the *Kaga* ([led by] Lt. Cdr. Hashiguchi Takashi)

First Sqdn (nine carrier-based attack planes): Scored all direct hits on virtually the whole administrative district; seven aircraft were marked by bullets.

Second Sqdn (nine carrier-based attack planes): Scored all direct hits on the [enemy] Navy headquarters and the southeastern side of the administrative district; no damage was sustained.

Third Sqdn (nine carrier-based attack planes): Scored one hit at the stern of a merchantman and another hit at the railway pier. The direct hits caused serious damage; the squadron [also] sank two small merchantmen by near hits; no damage was sustained.

5. The carrier-based bomber units of the *Kaga* ([led by] Lt. Ogawa Shōichi)

First Sqdn (nine carrier-based bombers): Bombed the east airfield, blew up two hangars and set them ablaze; bombed the west airfield, blew up the hangar[s] and barrack[s] and set them ablaze; strafed a barrack and [a] radio direction locator station; one aircraft crashed itself and another was marked by bullets.

Second Sqdn (nine carrier-based bombers): Bombed one 5,000t-class merchantman and set her ablaze, sank another, and strafed one armored car and set it ablaze; five aircraft were marked by bullets.

6. The carrier-based fighter plane unit of the *Kaga* (nine carrier-based fighter planes [led by] Lt. Nikaidō Yasushi)

Shot down four [enemy] fighter planes and one flying boat in an air engagement, strafed one [enemy] flying boat and set it ablaze; four aircraft were marked by bullets.

7. The carrier-based attack plane units of the *Sōryū* ([led by] Lt. Abe Heijirō)

First Sqdn (six carrier-based attack planes): Bombed a large merchantman, with little result; three aircraft were marked by bullets.

Second Sqdn (six carrier-based attack planes): Bombed two large merchantmen, with little result; one aircraft was marked by bullets.

Third Sqdn (six carrier-based attack planes): Bombed barrack[s], with enormous result; no damage was sustained.

8. The carrier-based bomber units of the *Sōryū* ([led by] Lt. Cdr. Egusa Takashige)

First Sqdn (nine carrier-based bombers): Instantly sank one destroyer, set ablaze another and one mid-sized merchantman as well as heavy oil tank[s]; six aircraft were marked by bullets.

Second Sqdn (nine carrier-based bombers): Set one oiler and one flying boat ablaze; strafed a gunboat, barrack[s] and others; one [Japanese] aircraft sank during an emergency landing on the water (the crew were rescued) and four aircraft were marked by bullets.

9. The carrier-based fighter plane unit of the *Sōryū* (nine carrier-based fighter planes [led by] Sub-lieutenant Fujita Iyozō)

Directly covered the attack units, strafed one auxiliary cruiser and reduced her speed.

10. The carrier-based attack plane units of the *Hiryū* ([led by] Lt. Cdr. Kusumi Masashi)

First Sqdn (nine carrier-based attack planes): Bombed one 10,000t-class cargo ship, set her ablaze; positive to have sunk her.

Second Sqdn (nine carrier-based attack planes): Bombed one 10,000t-class oiler, set her ablaze; positive to have sunk her.

A total of four aircraft of the 1st and the 2d Squadrons were marked by bullets.

11. The carrier-based bomber units of the *Hiryū* (eighteen carrier-based bombers [led by] Lt. Kobayashi Michio)

Sank one 10,000t-class and one 7,000t-class merchantman, seriously damaged one class-B cruiser and inflicted considerable damage to one 7,000t-class and one mid-sized merchantman; two aircraft were marked by bullets.

12. The carrier-based fighter plane unit of the *Hiryū* ([led by] Lt. Nōno Sumio)

Shot down one [enemy] fighter plane in an air engagement, seriously damaged two large and two small aircraft [on the ground] by strafing, set ablaze three large and three small planes and two flying boats; one aircraft crashed itself and seven were marked by bullets.



The Bombing of Port Darwin

As for the land-based air units, one land-based reconnaissance plane reconnoitered Port Darwin at 1010, which was followed by twenty-seven land-based attack planes of the Kanoya Air Group and twenty-seven land-based attack planes of the 1st Air Group, which raided Port Darwin and bombed the east airfield at 1037 and 1040. The unit reported as military gains that all bombs had hit the airfield facilities as well as the runways, engulfing one large hangar on the south side, two small hangars and neighboring facilities in a huge fire (the large hangar on the north side was already on fire), while setting two large planes ablaze, and seriously damaging one mid-sized and four small planes. One aircraft was marked by bullets.⁽⁸¹⁾

At 1005, aircraft of the *Akagi* returning from Port Darwin spotted one 6,000t-class auxiliary cruiser about 100 nautical miles north of Port Darwin. Carrier Task Force Commander Vice Admiral Nagumo immediately ordered the 8th Cruiser Division to probe the enemy, while ordering the 2d Carrier Division to attack her. On receiving the [returning] units of the first attack, 2d Carrier Division Commander Rear Admiral Yamaguchi promptly prepared for a second attack, and the second attack units (consisting of nine carrier-based bombers each of the *Sōryū* and the *Hiryū*) took off at 1306. At 1406, [a] scout seaplane of the *Toné* reported that the location of the [enemy] auxiliary cruiser was 30 nautical miles 10° [N] of Cape Fourcroy [and that she was sailing] on a 200° [SSW] course at a speed of 18 knots. From 1456 to 1512, the carrier-based bomber unit of the *Sōryū* strafed and bombed the enemy about 10 nautical miles 0° [N] of [Cape] Fourcroy, scored three direct hits with 250 kg bombs and rendered her unable to sail, while the carrier-based bomber unit of the *Hiryū* spotted one 1,000t-class merchantman at 32 nautical miles 350° [NNW] of Cape Fourcroy at 1456, attacked and reported

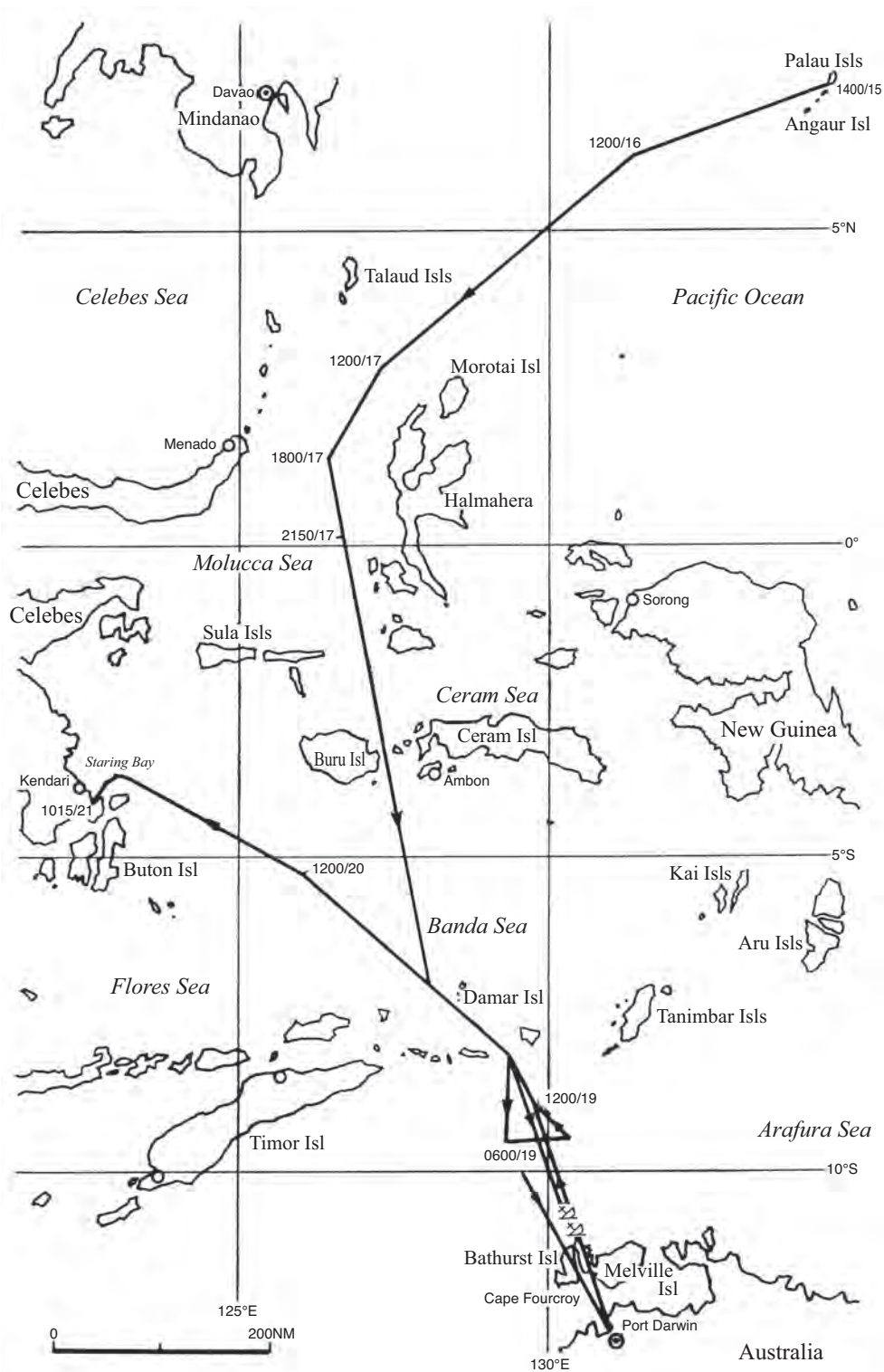


Illustration No. 37 — The Operations of the Carrier Task Force in the Air Strike on Port Darwin (15-21 February, 1942)

to have sunk her. The loss sustained by Japanese forces was one aircraft that was marked by bullets; all aircraft returned at 1700.^(71, 141)

At 2430 on the 19th, the Carrier Task Force commander reported the military gains in his Summary Report of the Actions No. 5 as follows.⁽¹⁴¹⁾

1. After having reconnoitered the weather with a scout seaplane of the 8th Cruiser Division, we carried out [the operation] to attack Darwin at 0830 on the 19th as scheduled.
At 0825, we were spotted by an enemy twin-engine flying boat; we pursued it but let it slip away to the south.
2. The military gains
 - (a) One large and ten small [enemy] aircraft were shot down, four large and three small planes and three flying boats were strafed and set ablaze, and two large and three small planes were strafed and destroyed, amounting to twenty-six aircraft (all on site)
 - (b) Eight transport ships, two destroyers, and one submarine chaser were sunk. One destroyer was seriously damaged. Other than the above, one hospital ship and some small boats were spotted but they were not attacked. No aircraft carriers or submarines were spotted inside the bay.
 - (c) As for ground facilities, all (three) hangars on both the east and west airfields and one barrack were set ablaze. The buildings in the neighborhood of the administrative district and the Navy headquarters as well as the mooring pier were bombed and destroyed. [Also,] barrack[s] at the northeastern end of the urban area were bombed and set ablaze.
 - (d) The carrier-based bombers of the 2d Carrier Division (eighteen bombers) and a scout seaplane of the 8th Cruiser Division carried out the second attack on one 6,000t-class auxiliary cruiser and one 1,000t-class transport ship, which were fleeing on the waters north of Cape Fourcroy at 1500; they sank the transport ship and crippled the auxiliary cruiser. (Since three No. 25 normal bombs directly hit the latter and caused a fire, it was assumed that she must have sunk later.)
3. Losses
One carrier-based bomber of the *Kaga* and one carrier-based fighter plane of the *Hiryū* crashed themselves and met a heroic end.
4. Remarks
 - (a) The enemy hardly has a will to fight.
 - (b) Except for the fire directed at the previously mentioned aircraft that crashed themselves, [the level] of the [enemy] antiaircraft fire cannot be considered particularly superior, [considering that only] a few aircraft were marked by bullets while conducting horizontal bombing runs at an altitude of 3,000 meters.
5. During this operation, at 0930 on the 17th, one submerged [enemy] submarine was spotted at 2°30'N 127°26'E and neutralized.
Note by the author: [S.W.] Roskill states in *The War at Sea* that "great damage was done to the port and to the shipping in it."

In the meantime on that day [the 19th], large flying boat[s] of the Tōkō Air Group, which were searching for the enemy in the western part of the Arafura Sea and the eastern part of the Timor Sea, spotted one (*Canberra*-class) cruiser at a point sixty-three nautical miles 247° [WSW] of Port Darwin. However, this naval vessel was lucky to avoid an attack, because she was a little out of the maximum attack range of the carrier-based planes and because she was spotted after the land-based attack planes' attack on Port Darwin.⁽¹⁴¹⁾

The Carrier Task Force completed the operation and headed for Staring Bay as scheduled, and at 1015 on 21 February, it safely put in at the bay.⁽¹⁴¹⁾

14. The Capture of Timor (*See Illustrations No. 38 and No. 39*)

The State of Affairs up to the Capture [Operation]

The Invasion Schedule and the Units Involved

In the Tokyo Agreement concluded on 10 November 1941, it was stipulated that the [operation to] capture Kupang should be executed by around Day X + 60 (6 February) following the [operation to] capture Ambon. Then, in the conference at Cam Ranh Bay on 29 December [1941], it was decided that the Ambon and Kupang operations should be carried out in parallel with the Makassar Strait and the east of Celebes lines of operation, constituting three lines of operation. Accordingly, the capture [operation] was fixed on Day X + 65 (11 February). However (as described previously [p. 99]), partly due to the Navy's wish to capture Kupang before Makassar, in the plan of operations of the Dutch East Indies Unit announced on 29 December ([and] revised by about 5 or 6 January), it was decided that the capture [of Kupang] should be carried out on Day X + 59 (5 February).

As for the units to be employed in the capture, it was decided that the Army should divert the Itō Detachment ([consisting of] three battalions of the 38th Division as the core) from Hong Kong, while the Navy was supposed to add minesweepers and submarine chaser[s] of the 1st Base Force to the main force of the 2d Destroyer Squadron as the escort force. Also, the Eleventh Air Fleet planned to advance to this area the necessary strength of land-based attack planes and fighter planes. Further, it was decided that the 9th Construction Squad, which was to be newly organized on 15 January, should be employed.

After that, in connection with the delay in the Menado and the Kendari operations, the [operation to] capture Ambon was postponed (for six days) to 31 January, and along with that the [operation to] capture Kupang was postponed to Day X + 74 (20 February) at the Manila Conference of 22 January.⁽⁵³⁾ Meanwhile, earlier on 16 January, the 3d Yokosuka Special Landing Force (a paratrooper unit) had advanced to Tarakan to be dropped on Balikpapan, but the operation was hindered by the delay in the preparation of the airfield, leaving them on standby in Tarakan. On 27 January, as a result of a discussion between the air unit of the Southern Task Force and the Dutch East Indies Unit, it was decided that the force should be employed for the Kupang operation.⁽⁶⁷⁾ Because of this [change], the employment of one element of the 1st Kure Special Landing Force, scheduled to be dispatched from Ambon to capture Kupang, was called off; instead, it was decided that one element of the Sasebo Combined Special Landing Force (two platoons) and another small element of the 3d Yokosuka Special Landing Force (which does not conduct paratroop operations) should participate in the [Kupang] operation from Makassar.⁽⁵³⁾

The Issue of Invading Portuguese Timor

In relation to the Kupang operation, the decision of how to deal with Portuguese Timor, a third country, was one of the issues in conducting the war. In the beginning of January 1942, intelligence was received that an element of Dutch East Indian and Australian troops had invaded the Dili area of Portuguese Timor,⁽³⁴⁾ and this became a serious problem for Tokyo as the Kupang operation was drawing near. It was on 20 January that the issue was taken up at the Liaison Conference between IGHQ and the Government for the first time,⁽⁴¹⁾ and at the next conference on the 28th, Prime Minister Tōjō and Chief of Navy General Staff Nagano

sharply differed in opinion on the issue and could not reach agreement.* Prime Minister Tōjō maintained that as long as the enemy troops are deployed in Dili, it is only natural to mop them up, but that Japanese troops should be promptly withdrawn from the [Portuguese] territory, once they had mopped up the enemy in the city, whereas Chief of Navy General Staff Nagano maintained that the withdrawal of our troops from Portuguese Timor should depend on the attitude of the Portuguese as well as the circumstances at the time.^(1, 41, 144) Taking into account that in a prolonged war in the future, Dili would be an important operational base for neutralizing Australia, the chief of Navy General Staff could not easily approve a withdrawal [of Japanese forces]. In the end, at the liaison conference on 2 February, a compromise plan was agreed on: “After mopping up the British, Dutch and Australian forces on Portuguese territory, the Imperial [Japanese] forces shall withdraw from the area concerned, as long as Portugal ensures the neutrality [of the territory]. However, if it is unavoidable in terms of the attitude of the Portuguese and the other circumstances of the entire operation, the [Japanese forces] can continue to use [the place] as a base for operations.”⁽¹⁴⁴⁾

Earlier on 5 January, at the same time as issuing an order to the Sixteenth Army to capture Ambon and Kupang, the Southern Army headquarters had sent a telegram to [the Army Department of] IGHQ that they would like to receive as soon as possible actual proof that the enemy forces were using Portuguese Timor,⁽³⁴⁾ but they had been left without a reply. However, all of a sudden on 4 February, the Southern Army headquarters received an advisory telegram from the Navy, which read: “In view of the present situation where both Australian and Dutch East Indies forces have occupied Portuguese Timor, we would like, at the time of [the operation to] capture Timor, to have an element of the Itō Detachment go ashore in Dili (under the escort of the Navy) almost simultaneously with the landing in Kupang and seize the vicinity.” The Southern Army promptly wired central [command] requesting directives.⁽³⁴⁾

On 7 February, both the Navy and the Army Departments of IGHQ issued orders concerning the capture of Kupang and Dili.^(42, 43, 145, 146) This order stated that unless Portugal took hostile action, [both forces] were supposed to respect the sovereignty [of Portuguese Timor] as much as possible. On 7 February, having received the Imperial Order concerning the capture of Kupang and Dili, the Southern Army for the first time confirmed the policy of central [command] and, on the same day, wired a reply to the Southern Task Force approving the advisory telegram of 4 February.⁽³⁴⁾ Accordingly, on 9 February, Southern Task Force Commander Vice Admiral Kondō issued an order to seize Dili. Earlier, from around 5 February, Dutch East Indies Unit Commander Vice Admiral Takahashi had started preliminary negotiations with Sixteenth Army Commander Lieutenant General Imamura. On 7 February, he sent an official advisory telegram and by the [Sixteenth Army’s] telegram of approval of 11 February, the arrangement between them was officially concluded. The arrangement read in outline as follows:⁽²⁴⁾

1. Almost simultaneously with [the operation to] seize Kupang, one element of the Itō Detachment (for which adequate escort shall be provided) shall be put ashore in Dili and vicinity in Portuguese territory in order to seize the city (with seizing the airfield as the main purpose).
2. Depending on the situation after seizing Kupang, the Itō Detachment shall seize the Kolbano airfield overland and make it ready for use.

Details shall be decided after consultation between Detachment Commander Itō and the 2d Destroyer Squadron commander.

* See also Vol. 3, p. 381.

Since the particulars concerning the seizure of Dili as well as the official text of the arrangements with Sixteenth Army Commander Lieutenant General Imamura had been decided, Dutch East Indies Unit Commander Vice Admiral Takahashi sent on the same day, the 11th, the following communication to Rear Admiral Takagi, commander of the Eastern Attack Unit, who was supposed to implement the operation:⁽⁵⁴⁾

Third Fleet Classified Telegram No. 271 [at] 1500 on the 11th

Concerning the landing and occupation of Dili, it is requested that arrangements in line with the following main points be made with [Army] Detachment Commander Itō and the 21st Air Flotilla before they are carried out:

1. Summary of the Policy of the Government in [Navy Ministry] Secretariat Classified Telegram No. 146 (brought and explained by Staff Officer Koseki)
 - (a) In order to secure air base[s] and prospective base[s] of operations, [the invasion] shall be conducted for the purpose of clearing the British, Australian and Dutch forces [from the territory] and shall be carried out, while trying not to make an enemy of the Portuguese forces. Therefore, before entering [Portuguese territory], various parts of the territory shall be reconnoitered, and the use of airfield[s] and the requisitioning of buildings shall take the form of obtaining approval of the Portuguese [authorities] beforehand, unless the Portuguese units become hostile toward us.
 - (b) At or after 0800 on the 20th, the Government will give the necessary notifications to the Portuguese.
2. The main points of the arrangements
 - (a) [The invasion unit] shall advance to Dili and vicinity before dawn on the 20th and disembark. The landing points shall be selected in such a way that visual identification of friend or foe from the air will be easy. It will be better to avoid the front of Dili as much as possible and appropriately land at a more distant place.
Metinaro, ten nautical miles west* of Dili or Aipelo to the west of Dili seem to be suitable [landing points].
 - (b) [The invasion unit] shall advance on Dili by and large after dawn while friendly aircraft keep watch in the air. Simultaneously, handbills (to the effect that the purpose of our forces is to clear the British, Australian and Dutch forces [from the territory], and that the Portuguese forces should avoid hostilities [against us]) shall be dropped from the air.
 - (c) After that, depending on the enemy movements, reinforcements shall be brought in and the ground units shall be covered and supported from the sea.
 - (d) Concerning the preliminary air reconnaissance over the landing points, arrangements with the air unit must be made as soon as possible.
 - (e) The construction squad to be employed for the Dili operation shall be designated later.

At the same time, Dutch East Indies Commander Vice Admiral Takahashi issued the order to seize Kupang and Dili to 2d Escort Unit Commander Rear Admiral Tanaka, which was in outline as follows:⁽⁵⁴⁾

1. The schedule of the operation to capture the Dutch East Indies shall be changed as follows:
 - (1) Batavia and Surabaya: 26 February
 - (2) Kupang and Dili: 20 February

* Actually *east* of Dili

- (3) Bali: 18 February (as scheduled)
2. The 2d Escort Unit shall escort one element of the Itō Detachment to Dili by 20 February with one element. It shall also make arrangements with Detachment Commander Itō concerning [the operation to] seize the Kolbano airfield.

At the same time, Dutch East Indies Unit Commander Vice Admiral Takahashi informed Tokyo that no naval special landing forces would be employed in the invasion operation against Dili and that it would be alright if the Government's notification would be given to the Portuguese side at or after 0800 on the 20th.⁽⁵⁴⁾ Also, it was decided that one element of the 1st Construction Squad ([currently in] Kendari) would be employed for Dili.⁽⁷⁸⁾

The Issue of Which Forces to Assign to the Invasion of Timor

1. The Participation of the 1st Patrol Boat Division

In view of the Ambon operation, the necessity of being able to conduct small-scale minesweeping operations with shallow-draft large-sized motorized [landing] craft was keenly felt, which led to the decision that the small-scale minesweeping unit ([consisting of] four large-sized motorized [landing] craft loaded [on the vessels of] the 1st Patrol Boat Division and specially-assigned minesweeping personnel) that had been organized in the Makassar operation should be brought in. [Accordingly,] it was decided to incorporate the 1st Patrol Boat Division into the 2d Escort Unit and put the specially assigned personnel (who belonged to the 1st Base Force) onto the patrol boats. Second Destroyer Squadron Commander Tanaka had also requested an increase in the number of minesweepers, but this was not realized due to a lack of available forces.⁽⁵⁴⁾

2. The Assignment of the 7th Destroyer Division (three destroyers)

As of 30 January, the 7th Destroyer Division, which had been assigned to the carrier air unit and advanced to Palau, was transferred to the Eastern Attack Unit, where the 1st Section was incorporated into the 2d Escort Unit to engage in the Ambon operation, while the 2d Section accompanied the 5th Cruiser Division and became [part of] the Support Unit. However, along with the decision to commit the Carrier Task Force to the southern theater, the Combined Fleet [also] issued an order to the 2d Carrier Division and the 7th Destroyer Division to return to the Carrier Task Force as of 10 February. Regarding this [order], Eastern Attack Unit Commander Rear Admiral Takagi and 2d Destroyer Squadron Commander Rear Admiral Tanaka strongly requested that the 7th Destroyer Division should stay, which was finally confirmed on the 12th.⁽⁵⁴⁾

3. The Issue of the Participation of the Seaplane Tenders

As of 9 February, the deployment of the seaplane tender force of the Dutch East Indies Unit was envisioned in the following way:⁽⁵⁴⁾

The *Chitose*: Shall directly cover the eastern Java invasion unit from Jolo.

The *Mizuho*: Shall engage in the service of aircraft at Staring bay; therefore it is all right if she cannot be employed for the invasion operation against eastern Java.

The *Sanuki-maru*: Crippled and remains at Balikpapan; her aircraft units shall advance to Makassar and support the Bali invasion operation as well as the eastern Java invasion units.

The *Kamikawa-maru* and the *San'yō-maru*: Shall directly cover the western Java invasion units from Cam Ranh Bay.

Therefore, no seaplane tenders were available for the Timor operation. Concerned about this, 21st Air Flotilla Commander Rear Admiral Tada requested the air unit commander that since it would be difficult to securely provide the invasion units with patrols against enemy aircraft or submarines, or with support for the land combats from the Kendari base, which was 385 nautical miles away, the 11th Seaplane Tender Division should cooperate in the operation. The 2d Destroyer Squadron commander also strongly requested it of the Dutch East Indies Unit. On 11 February, Dutch East Indies Commander Vice Admiral Takahashi sent a telegram to the 11th Seaplane Tender Division to the effect that there was a possibility that the *Mizuho* might be made to support the Timor operation for a while prior to the Surabaya operation.⁽⁷⁸⁾ After that, on the 16th, it was decided that the *Mizuho* and Patrol Boat No. 39 should be incorporated into the 2d Escort Unit, while the aircraft unit of the *Sanuki-maru*, Patrol Boat No. 36 and two fishing boats should be incorporated into the 2d Air Unit.⁽⁵⁴⁾

The Plan of Operations

Plan of Operations of the Eastern Attack Unit

Eastern Attack Unit Commander Rear Admiral Takagi successively issued his orders concerning the operation to capture Timor, which were, as of 16 February (and launched as of the 17th), in summary as follows:⁽⁷⁸⁾

1. Forces to be employed and their distribution

Unit		Commander		Forces
Eastern Attack Unit	Support Unit	5th Cruiser Div Cdr	2d Destroyer Sqdn Cdr	5th Cruiser Div (minus the <i>Myōkō</i>), the <i>Akebono</i> and the <i>Ikazuchi</i>
	2d Escort Unit			The <i>Jintsū</i> , the 16th Destroyer Div, the 15th Destroyer Div (minus the <i>Natsushio</i>), the 7th Destroyer Div 1st Section, the 21st Minesweeper Div ([only] Minesweepers Nos. 7 and 8), Patrol Boats Nos. 1 and 2, two plts of the Sasebo Combined SLF, the <i>Mizuho</i> , Patrol Boat No. 39, 4 naval transport ships ([with] the 1st Construction Squad and one element of 3d Yokosuka SLF [on board])

2. Supporting friendly forces

- (1) The 1001 Unit ([i.e.] the 3d Yokosuka Special Landing Force) of the Eleventh Air Fleet, fighter plane units and land-based attack plane units
- (2) The Army Itō Detachment ([consisting of] three infantry battalions as the core) in five transport ships

3. Tasks

- (1) In cooperation with the Army Itō Detachment and the 1001 Unit of the Eleventh Air fleet, the unit shall seize Kupang and the vicinity and secure the Kupang airfield.
 - (2) In cooperation with the Army Itō Detachment, the unit shall carry out a sudden attack to seize Dili ([in] Portuguese Timor) as well as occupy and secure the airfield there.
 - (3) On top of the support for the above operations, the support unit shall also provide cover in the first carrier operation to be conducted by the carrier operation unit.
4. Outline of the operation
- (1) The Support Unit
 - {1} The 5th Cruiser Division (minus the *Myōkō*) and the *Akebono* shall leave Staring Bay at 1500 on 17 February. After approaching the 1st Echelon of the 2d Escort Unit on the morning of the 18th, [the unit] shall change course eastward. At night on the 18th, about 30 nautical miles north of Romang Island, it shall turn northward, and about 110 nautical miles north of the island again change course westward. After approaching the 2d Echelon on the morning of the 19th, [the unit] shall [further] sail westward and, at night on the 19th, it shall operate around the area to the north of the Alor Strait. Thereafter, it shall appropriately operate, depending on the enemy movements.
 - {2} The *Ikazuchi* shall replenish in Staring Bay on the 18th and join [the unit] at 38 nautical miles 145° [SE] of Maromaho at 1100 on the 19th.
 - (2) The 2d Escort Unit

On top of [sailing along] the invasion route designated in Third Fleet Classified Telegram No. 199 (note: the route between Kambing and the Alor Islands), [the unit shall operate] as designated by the commander.
5. The operations of the Carrier Task Force and the air unit
- On the morning of 19 February, a day prior to the invasion of Timor, our Carrier Task Force shall conduct a surprise attack on enemy air power and naval vessels in Port Darwin as well as on facilities situated there. Also, the air unit shall, in concert with this operation, attack Port Darwin from the Ambon and Kendari bases.

The Arrangements Between the 2d Escort Unit and the [Army] Itō Detachment

In accordance with the Dutch East Indies Unit Order of 11 February and the instructions from the Third Fleet chief of staff, 2d Escort Unit Commander Rear Admiral Tanaka made arrangements with Detachment Commander Itō on 14 February at Ambon, which were in summary as follows:⁽⁵⁴⁾

1. The distribution of the transport convoy
 - (1) The 1st Echelon: the units [to seize] the Kupang area
 - (2) The 2d Echelon: the units [to seize] the Dili area
2. The invasion forces
 - (1) Army
 - {1} The Kupang Area: the Itō Detachment (commander: Major General Itō): the 38th Infantry Group headquarters, two infantry battalions and one mountain artillery battalion as the core
 - {2} The Dili Area: One element of the Itō Detachment, [that is] one infantry battalion as the core
 - (2) Navy
 - {1} The Kupang Area: One battalion of the 3d Yokosuka Special Landing Force (the main force shall parachute down, while the other element shall make a seaborne landing) and two platoons of the Sasebo Combined Special Landing Force
3. The assembly points, times and dates of departure, landing points, times to start landing, etc.

Landing areas	Time to leave the assembly points	Time to enter the anchorages	Time to launch the landings (time to leave the [mother] ships)	Landing points	Remarks
Kupang area (1st Echelon)	0500 on 17 February	0100 on 20 February	0300 on 20 February	Army forces: coast east and west of Cape Mali Navy SLFs: coast east of Cape Mali	After disembarking combat units, [the transport ships] shall change anchorage to the area off Oilalus or to the Semau Strait to disembark the remaining units.
Dili area (2d Echelon)	0230 on 18 February			Coast west of Dili	

Each echelon shall change anchorage to the anchorage outside the Ambon port by 1700 on the day before the date of departure in the above.

4. The main points of the escort (omitted)
5. The entry into the anchorage and the cover of the landing [operation] etc. (omitted)
6. The movements of the transport ships after the landing (omitted)

The Plan of Operations of the Other Units

On 14 February at Ambon, 2d Escort Unit Commander Rear Admiral Tanaka disclosed the outline of the operation to seize Timor by means of 2d Escort Unit Order No. 5.⁽⁵⁴⁾ This order stated that the southern coast, which was considered to be weakly defended, was chosen as the landing point for Kupang, and that in tandem with the operation of the 1001 Unit, which would conduct a paradrop operation on an area near the northern coast, [the invasion unit] should capture Puton [Penfui] airfield as well as Kupang while cutting off the only road leading to the east.

Also, it stated that the units to capture Dili should first of all occupy an area along the coast west of Dili and try as best as they could not to provoke the [authorities of] Portuguese Timor, while appropriately operating in accordance with the course of the diplomatic negotiations. In the meantime, since the *Mizuho* and Patrol Boat No 39 had been incorporated in the 2d Escort Unit as previously told, the commander formed the 2d Escort Unit air unit and assigned the unit to guard the sailing route as well as the anchorage of the 1st Echelon against enemy aircraft and submarines, while providing support for the ground combat of the landing units. The captain of the *Mizuho* reported that his operation plan was to leave Kendari at 1400 on the 17th, [operate] on the waters near Binongko the whole day on the 18th, near the Alor Strait the whole day on the 19th, and near Maikuru [? Nai Kliu? Naibonat?] on the north-west coast of Timor around 0000 on the 20th, and after that operate depending on the weather conditions and the enemy movements.⁽⁵⁴⁾

As for the land-based air unit, twenty-two large flying boats of the Tōkō Air Group had been advanced from Kema to Ambon from the 1st through the 10th of February, while nine-

teen Type-0 fighter planes and two land-based reconnaissance planes of the 3d Air Group had been advanced from Kendari to Ambon from the 4th through the 9th of February.^(71, 81) Also, thirty-eight Type-96 land-based attack planes of the 1st Air Group had been advanced from the 7th through the 11th from Menado and Kendari to Ambon, which was followed by 1st Air Raid Unit Commander Rear Admiral Tada, who advanced to Ambon from Kendari on 12 February to direct the Timor operation.⁽⁷⁵⁾

The plan was that the land-based air unit should carry out attacks on enemy air power and military facilities in the area, as well as search for and attack enemy naval vessels in the Arafura and the Timor Seas, while [also] providing support to the Carrier Task Force during the first carrier operation and providing direct escort in the air against enemy aircraft for the [Timor] convoy. The plan also included dropping the paratrooper unit at a point twelve kilometers northeast of the Kupang airfield and, in conjunction with the Army Itō Detachment, having the unit capture Kupang and vicinity and secure the airfield.

The Launch of the Operation

Prior Neutralization of the [Enemy] Air Power^(71, 81)

The air unit, which on 25 January had advanced to Kendari (seized on the 24th), launched a strike on Kupang with fighter planes as early as on the 26th and gradually intensified the air strikes, virtually neutralizing the Kupang airfield by the end of January. Thereafter, following the advance of airplane units to Ambon, the search and attack missions in the [Kupang] area were further intensified, but the enemy was barely seen; even in reconnaissance attacks in western New Guinea on 9 February, no enemy aircraft were spotted. In the meantime (as previously told), a large number of [enemy] naval vessels and aircraft were spotted in a reconnaissance over Port Darwin by a land-based reconnaissance plane of the 3d Air Group on the 10th. No enemy aircraft was spotted in a reconnaissance over the Dili area on the 11th ([conducted by] one land-based attack plane of the Kanoya Air Group).

Since then, reconnaissance attacks had been carried out day in and day out in the Kupang and Dili areas. However, only several merchantmen but no enemy aircraft were spotted. During this period, as mentioned previously, an enemy convoy ([consisting of] one heavy cruiser, three destroyers, three large and one mid-sized transport ships) was spotted to the west of Port Darwin on the 15th and the 16th, and attacks were carried out with ten large flying boats as well as thirty-five land-based attack planes of the 1st Air Group. However, they reported of having only seriously damaged three large transport ships (one of which had confirmedly sunk). The accurate shooting of the enemy heavy cruiser on the contrary had inflicted damage on twelve aircraft, which were marked by bullets, and seriously injured two men and one slightly.

According to the Dai-ichi Kūshū Butai Sentō Gaihō (Summary Action Report of the 1st Air Raid Unit), the circumstances of this attack were as follows, with special attention paid to the skillful evasive actions and the accurate anti-aircraft fire of the enemy:⁽⁸¹⁾

1. At 0400 [on the 16th], four large flying boats of the Tōkō Air Group took off to search for enemy transport convoys and, at 0830, one of them spotted a convoy [consisting of] one U.S. large (*Chester*-class) cruiser, one large destroyer, two destroyers, three 8,000 ton or larger transport ships and one 6,000t-class transport ship, a total of eight vessels, at 570 nautical miles 193° [S]

of Lu (note by the author: Ambon). [The flying boat] appropriately and effectively kept on probing and guided the attack unit.

2. From 0630 onwards, thirty-five middle-sized land-based attack planes of the 1st Air Group and ten large flying boats of the Tōkō Air Group took off one after another and carried out a bombing attack on the enemy vessels from 1045 until about 1150 at an altitude of 3,500 to 4,500 [meters]. Although all four squadrons of the 1st Air Group bombed the enemy large cruiser in their first attack, no effective hit was scored due to her large high-speed (thirty knots) evasive actions. In the second attack, all squadrons carried out attacks on the transport ships; one squadron scored two direct hits with No. 6* regular bombs and four effective near hits, which caused one ship to stop and list. (It is certain that she will sink.) Each of the other two squadrons scored two effective near hits with No. 6 bombs (four in total) at the large transport ships.

The Tōkō Air Group completed its bombing by 1150. When it was leaving the battle site after having scored several effective near hits, it spotted nearby one [enemy] large cruiser, which was evacuating at a speed of 30 knots on a 200° [SSW] course, and two destroyers, which stayed with the transport ships. It also spotted that out of the three transport ships that had stopped, two were in flames and another was seriously damaged. Based on the above, it is certain that at least three transport ships had been seriously damaged. Detailed reports of the military gains will follow after examining the results from the detailed reports and the photos [to be] provided by the Tōkō Air Group.

3. The Kanoya Air Group Detachment had planned to search for the enemy with three aircraft and attack them with twenty-four aircraft, by having them take off after 0500. However, due to the bad weather at the base and its vicinity, the takeoff [was delayed till] 1100 before the twenty-seven aircraft [finally] took off to attack the enemy. Because of the frequent rain showers in the area where the enemy was expected to be at that time, they were in the end unable to spot the enemy.
4. Two Type-0 Fighter Planes of the 3d Air Group Detachment carried out a search and attack [mission] on the enemy air power on Halmahera and the surrounding areas, but did not spot the enemy.
5. Losses: Twelve mid-sized land-based attack planes of the 1st Air Group were marked by bullets, two men were seriously injured and one man slightly injured.

In the attacks today, while taking very skillful evasive actions, the enemy large cruiser delivered a very fierce, accurate and continual anti-aircraft barrage as a *Houston*-class [cruiser] had done the other day.

Tomorrow, we shall further search for and attack this enemy.

Contrary to the accurate anti-aircraft fire of the enemy, the bombing accuracy of the Japanese forces was rather poor. This was supposedly caused by a lack of adequate frontline bombing practice and also because of problems with the Japanese bombsights.

Note: Earlier, on 14 February, (a part of?) a Norden bombsight had been seized from a PBY flying boat at the Ambon Seaplane Base. This bombsight used a small gyrocompass to ensure that the bombsight would stay vertical, which enabled such an accurate bombing that effective [results] could be expected even in single aircraft bombings. On the other hand, we Japanese used [level] bubble bombsights that were poor in accuracy, for which we compensated to some extent by training and with formation bombings. Although we had seized the bombsight, we lacked, among others, the production technology for small gyrocompasses and until the end of the war were never able to copy this bombsight.⁽¹²⁴⁾

* The text has No. 25, which is apparently a misprint because the Action Report also has No. 6.

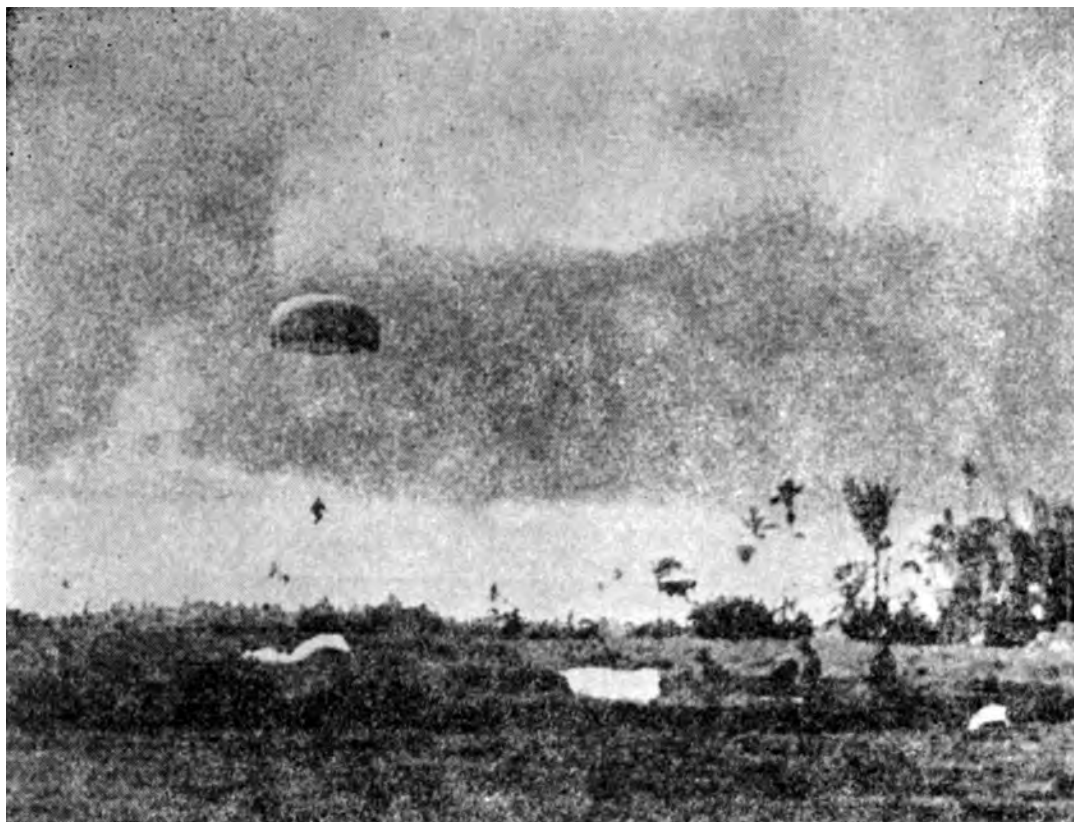
The Sailing of the Invasion Units

On the morning of the 17th, the 2d Escort Unit and the 1st Echelon (the Kupang invasion unit) left Ambon, while on the next day, the 18th, the 2d Echelon (the Dili invasion unit) left Ambon.⁽⁵⁴⁾ Also, the *Mizuho* and Patrol Boat No. 39 left Staring Bay on the 17th.⁽⁶⁸⁾ On the morning of the 18th, the *Mizuho* unit reached Binongko Island, where they set up a seaplane base to provide the 1st Echelon with a guard against enemy aircraft and submarines; the unit dismantled the base by the evening and [again] sailed south. At 0420 on the 19th, when the 1st Echelon was sailing southwestward fifty nautical miles off Timor in parallel to the coast, it came under an attack by a torpedo, but it sustained no damage nor had it any clue [from where the torpedo had come].

At 2330 on the 19th, the 2d Echelon began the operation to enter into the anchorage, while the minesweeping unit of the 1st Echelon, which had sailed ahead, entered into the 1st anchorage east of Cape Mali around 2000 to start sweeping for mines; it completed the sweeping by 2400 and reported no tethered mines. At 0600, the *Mizuho* reached off Cape Lewolein on the northern coast of Lomblen Island, set up a seaplane base in the bay and guarded the 1st Echelon against enemy aircraft and submarines. On that day, as previously told, the Carrier Task Force and the air unit attacked Port Darwin in large numbers and inflicted devastating damage on the naval vessels on site as well as the port facilities and the airfield. Meanwhile, the Support Unit was sailing southward and advanced into the Timor Sea on the 20th, to be ready against the [enemy] heavy cruiser, which the aircraft of the Eleventh Air Fleet had attacked on the 16th (the enemy was not spotted in the end). During this period, the air unit carried out reconnaissance attacks on Kupang and the vicinity (its battery in particular) as well as the waters surrounding that area, and also reconnoitered the Port Darwin area. It barely spotted enemy vessels or aircraft other than some merchantmen, except for those in the Port Darwin area. On the 18th, a thorough reconnaissance of the dropping point at Kupang was carried out.⁽⁷¹⁾

The Landing in Kupang and the Uphill Battle of the Airborne Unit

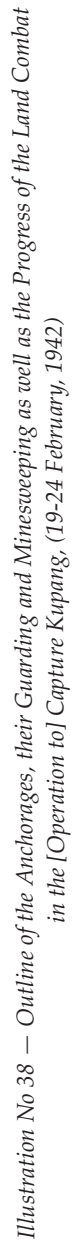
At 0050 on 20 February, the 1st Echelon entered the 1st Anchorage east of Cape Mali and the unit to land on the coast east of Cape Mali made a successful landing at 0240. At 0410, the second landing unit also came ashore.⁽⁵⁴⁾ In the meantime, about 450 men of the unit of the first drop of the 3d Yokosuka Special Landing Force were dropped on a pasture to the north of Babau at 1045, without meeting with any enemy resistance. The Army unit seized Highland 385, halfway between the landing point and Kupang by the end of the day, while the 3d Yokosuka Special Landing Force advanced to the east of Babau around 1200, fought a fierce battle against a large enemy unit equipped with tanks and armored cars, and completely seized Babau at 1755. Also after that, the 3d Yokosuka Special Landing Force continued to battle with powerful enemy units, but after having driven off the enemy in front westward at 1926 and getting native people to show them a shortcut to the airfield, the force headed for the airfield. The 3d Yokosuka Special Landing Force had gotten in fierce engagements with the enemy because by advancing along the main road from Kupang to Dili, they [unintentionally] came to cut off the escape route of the enemy. The losses sustained by the force amounted to two platoon commanders and three dozen non-commissioned officers and men killed, and one platoon commander and forty to fifty non-commissioned officers



The Navy Paratrooper Unit About to Land

and men injured.⁽¹⁴⁷⁾ In the meantime at sea, the main unit sailed to the north of Kupang, while the Support Unit took up a position to the south of Kupang to support the operation. Also, the *Mizuho* left Lomblen Island in early morning and provided guard for the anchorages and support for the land combat, while appropriately operating on the waters south of Alor Island.

At 0900 on 21 February, the center attack unit of the Itō Detachment charged into the city of Kupang. At 1024 and in the same way as the day before, about 250 men of the unit of the second drop of the 3d Yokosuka Special Landing Force were dropped on the [above-mentioned] pasture and headed for Babau; from around noon, the unit conducted a fierce two-hours battle near Babau against a large enemy unit, equipped with tanks and armored cars, after which the unit drove off the enemy. Then, contact with the first drop unit was established, and [the unit] advanced along the bypath in the mountain forest toward the airfield. At 1200, the Itō Detachment completed clearing [the enemy] from the city of Kupang and also seized the landing point for the 4th anchorage at Tenau to the north [of the other three anchorages]. At 1400, one element of the center attack unit of the Itō Detachment seized the Kupang airfield. After having handed over the guard [of the airfield] to the 1st Sasebo Special Landing Force detached force, which had advanced with them, they joined the main force. In the meantime, the right attack unit of the Itō Detachment had at 1730 advanced to Oesau, a key point on the enemy escape route toward the east.⁽⁵⁴⁾ At night, the 1st Sasebo Special



Landing Force detached force commander sent the following report on the condition of the airfield: "2250: The area of the airfield is about 600,000 square meters and there are 220 or more holes blasted in the center. Fighter planes can use [the airfield] from the 23d onwards and there will be no hindrances to its use ([by] mid-sized land-based attack planes from the 25th [onwards])."⁽⁵⁴⁾

The minesweeper units dealt with the minesweeping at each anchorage and in the waterways, but found no tethered mines. The Support Unit, which had operated on the waters west of Roti Island during the daytime, judged that the objectives of the operation had been more or less attained and started withdrawing toward Staring Bay in order to prepare for the Java operation.⁽⁵⁴⁾ On that day, as the Java operation was approaching, Dutch East Indies Unit Commander Vice Admiral Takahashi let the *Mizuho* unit return to her original unit. After retrieving her aircraft in the afternoon, the *Mizuho* sailed in the evening northward through the Alor Strait toward the Makassar Strait.⁽⁵⁴⁾

At 0600 on the 22d, the vanguard of the paratrooper unit finally reached the airfield. Meanwhile from the early morning onwards, the Itō Detachment fought a fierce engagement in the Oesau area, the escape route of the enemy, and drove off the enemy (during this engagement, the detachment requested the Navy to bomb the enemy, in which the land-based attack planes cooperated). From around 2210, the detachment turned to the pursuit of the escaping enemy, caught them and made them surrender to the east of Naibonak at 1000 on the 23d. The enemy consisted of about 1,000 men equipped with about 100 armored cars and other vehicles.⁽¹⁰⁴⁾

At 1600 on the 22d, the Support Unit put in at Staring Bay, where the unit joined the main unit of the Dutch East Indies Unit; the *Ikazuchi* and the *Akebono*, which had been in the Support Unit, were incorporated into the main unit, while the *Kawakaze* and the *Yamakaze*, which had been in the main unit, were put into the Support Unit instead. At 0000 on the 23d, as previously told, the Dutch East Indies Unit commander issued the outline of the Java Invasion operation, which was [in summary] as follows:⁽⁵⁴⁾

1. (The enemy movements in the Batavia and Surabaya areas — Omitted by the author)*
2. (The plan of the Dutch East Indies Unit — Omitted by the author)
3. (a) (Concerning the second [phase] of transport operation in Bali — Omitted by the author)
- (b) The 2d Escort Unit shall be disbanded at 1800 on 24 February. The vessels of each unit shall operate according to the following outline.
 - (1) The 2d Destroyer Squadron (minus the 8th, the 15th, and the 18th Destroyer Divisions) shall sail to Makassar and replenish [there], after which it shall get to the waters south of Cape Selatan around 1600 on the 26th. After that, it shall operate on the waters north-west of the 1st Escort Unit to take charge of supporting the latter as well as catching and destroying enemy naval vessels.
 - (2) The 15th Destroyer Division shall be assigned to guard the Kupang area, after which it shall operate in accordance with Southern Task Force Telegraphic Order No. 106 (i.e. joining the main unit of the Southern Task Force; it shall take charge of towing and replenishing).
 - (3) The 21st Minesweeper Division (minus Minesweepers Nos. 11 and 12) and Patrol Boats Nos. 1 and 2 shall escort the transport ships ([of] both the Navy and the Army) that are currently in the Timor area to Kendari, as soon as they are empty after disembarkation; after that they shall in consultation with the 21st Air Flotilla commander escort the 21st

* See pp. 322-323 for the items omitted here.

Air Flotilla transport ships to Kupang.

- (4) The 2d Section of the 7th Destroyer Division shall replenish at Makassar, after which it shall operate as designated by the 5th Cruiser Division commander.
- (c) The *Tomozuru* shall escort the *Sasako-maru* from Makassar to [the waters] off Takisung (eighteen nautical miles north of Cape Selatan) and embark one element of the Army Sakaguchi Detachment [on the latter], after which they shall join the 1st Escort Unit [on the waters] south of Cape Selatan around 1200 on the 26th.
- (d) The 5th Cruiser Division (minus the *Myōkō*), the 1st Section of the 7th Destroyer Division, the *Yamakaze* and the *Kawakaze* shall appropriately operate in the rear area of the 1st Escort Unit, taking charge of its support as well as catching and destroying enemy naval vessels.
The 5th Cruiser Division commander may at his discretion arrange the tasks of the 4th and the 2d Destroyer Squadron commanders.
- (e) The operations of the main unit (as previously told)

By this order, the 2d Escort Unit came to be disbanded on the evening of the 24th and all vessels from destroyers and above were to pull out of Kupang immediately to participate without a moment of respite in the eastern Java invasion operation; the 15th Destroyer Division, [however,] was to join the Southern Task Force to participate in the carrier operation to the south of Java, while the 21st Minesweeper Division (Minesweepers Nos. 7 and 8) and the 1st Patrol Boat Division (Patrol Boats Nos. 1 and 2) were to be kept on site to guard and escort the transport ships. However, the advance of the Support Unit to the southwest of Timor to support the carrier operation to the south of Java and to guard its rear at the time of Java invasion operation was to be called off, and its tasks were to be changed to the support and cover of the eastern Java invasion unit after advancing to the north of Surabaya.

Since the minesweeping in front of the city of Kupang was completed on the 22d, the transport ships shifted their anchor from the 4th Anchorage in the Semaui Strait to the waters in front of Kupang on the 23d to start disembarkation. The minesweeping unit had completed the minesweeping in Kupang Bay by 1600, and because the 1st Minesweeping Division* was ordered to take charge of guarding Dili, it left Kupang for Dili at 1600 on the 23d. On that day, nine fighter planes and two land-based reconnaissance planes of the 3d Air Group of the 1st Air Raid Unit advanced to the Penfui airfield, while the seven flying boats of the Tōkō Air Group advanced to the Tenau seaplane base.⁽⁸¹⁾

At 1200 on the 24th, 2d Escort Unit Commander Rear Admiral Tanaka left Kupang for Makassar, leading the *Jintsū* and the 16th Destroyer Division.⁽⁵⁴⁾ Only the 21st Minesweeper Division and the 15th Destroyer Division, the latter being on standby to join the Southern Task Force, were left in Kupang. While sailing to Makassar, the 2d Escort Unit Commander transmitted an order to his subordinate units that the 2d Escort Unit would be disbanded at 1800. In this operation, with no enemy air or submarine attacks, and moreover no mines, which had been anticipated and for which a cautious stage-by-stage minesweeping operation had been conducted, the surface unit had in the end sustained no losses at all.⁽⁵⁴⁾

The Landing at Dili

At 0130 on 20 February, when the 2d Echelon started preparing for the landing operation after having entered the 1st Anchorage under the escort of the 7th Destroyer Division, it suddenly came under fire from land. The escorting destroyers immediately returned fire, which

* Actually the 1st Patrol Boat Division. See pp. 298, 345.

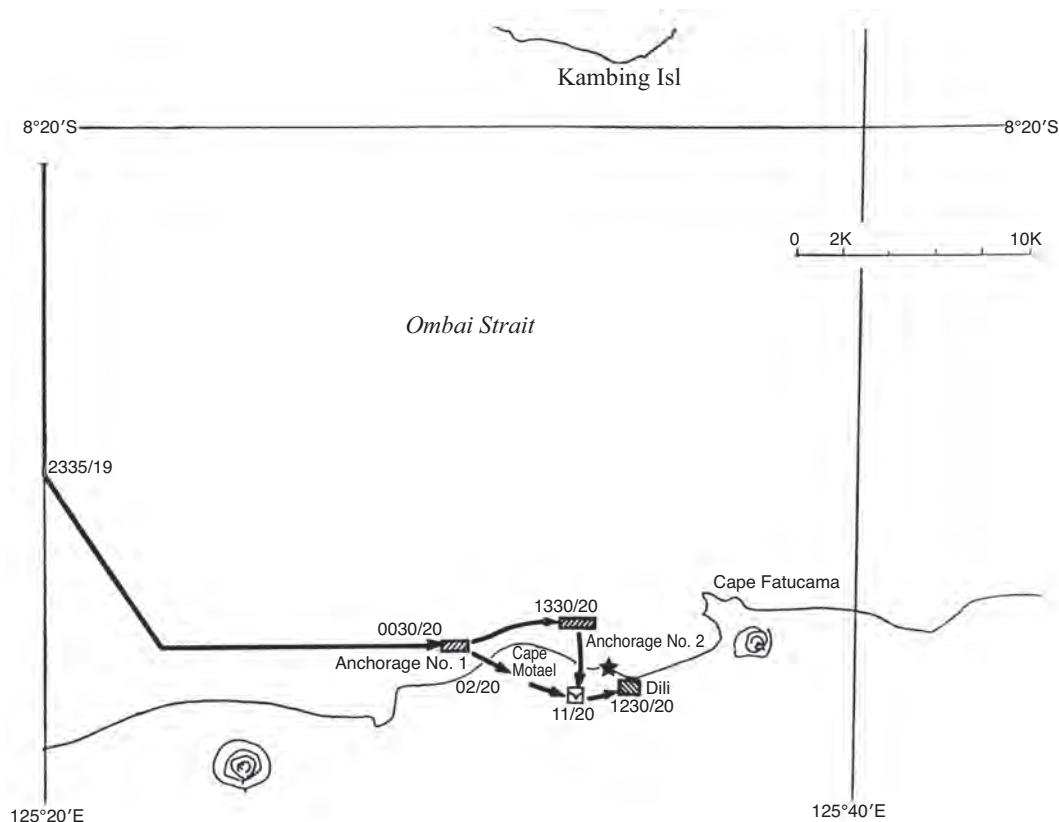


Illustration No. 39 — The Outline of the Invasion of Dili (20 February, 1942)

silenced the enemy fire. At 0220, the first landing unit successfully landed, and the second landing was also carried out successfully around 0530, both with no losses on the Japanese side.⁽⁵⁴⁾ At 1100, the army landing unit seized the Dili airfield, eliminating powerful enemy resistance. The airfield had no signs of recent use; since it had no runways and land mines were laid at places, it was judged that it would take seven days before fighter planes could use the airfield. At 1230, the army unit rushed into the urban area of Dili and rescued thirty Japanese who had been put in detention.⁽⁵⁴⁾

On the 21st, the 3d Air Group Detachment commander examined the condition of the airfield and wired that with the construction matériel brought to the site or requisitioned on site, it was expected to take ten days before it could accommodate about twenty fighter planes.⁽⁴⁵⁾ Worried about this, the 7th Destroyer Division commander dispatched the captain of the destroyer *Ushio* to the shore to hold talks with the 3d Air Group Detachment commander, the 1st Construction Squad, the Army units, etc. As a result, they [now] forecasted that it would be available for fighter planes in four days, and he reported this to the departments and sections concerned.⁽⁵⁴⁾

The disembarkation was continued on the 22d and the 23d; on the 24th, the 1st Section of the 7th Destroyer Division handed over the tasks to guard Dili to the 1st Patrol Boat Division and left Dili for Makassar at 0830.⁽¹¹⁰⁾ At 1500 on that day, the transport ships of the 2d Echelon left Dili for Kupang under the escort of the 1st Patrol Boat Division, which completed the

withdrawal of the surface unit at Dili, and only the ground units remained. At 0700 on the 25th, the 2d Echelon arrived at Kupang. Concerning the attitude of the Portuguese in the Dili operation, the 2d Escort Unit commander sent the following report at 0000 on the 25th:⁽⁵³⁾

According to the report of the 7th Destroyer Division commander, at the time of landing on Dili, only the Australian troops had fought back. The Portuguese forces did not put up resistance and the government officials did not evacuate to the suburbs, either. After having occupied Dili, the army has wholly respected the sovereignty [of the Portuguese] by using the barracks of Australian forces, etc. However, the Portuguese seem to feel offended; in every negotiation with the Japanese, they quibbled that they were not able to provide answers without instructions from the home government, as if they had no intention to cooperate with us.

Because the Allies had no powerful forces stationed in the Timor area and the flames were licking around their feet in the Java and Port Darwin areas, they could not send reinforcements. The Australian ground troops in Timor consisted of about 2,000 men.⁽⁹⁵⁾

In this way, Timor, located halfway between Australia and Java and forming a strategic point for supply of forces and materials, was seized, and the eastern Java part of the [Japanese] envelopment of Java was completed. Still more, by the end of January, Rabaul on New Britain, a strategic point of communications between the United States and Australia, had already fallen in the hands of the Japanese forces as well.