

Chapter VII The Capture of Java's Dehors

1. [Commander Imamura's] Orders to the 38th Division

The Sixteenth Army's Arrangements with the [Navy] Malaya Unit

On 9 January, a meeting was held at the command post of the Sixteenth Army in Saigon with the staff officers Oyadomari Chōsei of the 38th Division and Akatsuka Kazuo of the 48th Division, who [both] had flown in on the day before.⁽³²⁾ On the afternoon of the next day, the 10th, Army Commander [Imamura], Chief of Staff Okazaki, and Staff Officer Oda left for Cam Ranh Bay, where they had a meeting with the [Navy] Malaya Unit (the First Southern Expeditionary Fleet) on the flagship, the *Chōkai*, on both the 11th and the 12th, and also with the commander and staff officer(s) of the 5th Destroyer Squadron, after which they returned to Saigon on the night of the 12th.^(32, 120)

The general situation at that time was as follows:

1. Anticipating the seizure of Kuala Lumpur (seized on the 11th), the Twenty-fifth Army had given the following order in Ipoh on 10 January:⁽⁵³⁾ “(1) The enemy in central Malaya is [for the most part] destroyed near Slim, [after] being severely attacked and closely pursued by the 5th Division, and part of the remnants are retreating southward. [Meanwhile,] the 18th Division will land in Mersing shortly. (2) The army shall closely pursue the enemy toward Singapore.” The main force of the 18th Division had left Humen in southern China on the 7th and had arrived in Cam Ranh Bay on the 10th.⁽⁵³⁾ The Southern Army had held talks with the [Navy] Malaya Unit at Cam Ranh Bay on the 11th with the 18th Division also participating, where they agreed on [the plan] that the main force of the 18th Division ([consisting of] four battalions as its core) would land in Mersing on 17 January, and they signed [the arrangement] on the 12th.⁽²³⁾ In Kuantan, the airfield had been made ready for use on the 10th.⁽⁵³⁾ [Previously] on 6 January, the Southern Army had ordered the Kawaguchi Detachment to seize the airfields in Ledo.⁽²³⁾ [Editor's note: Called Singkawang II and Singkawang III in Dutch sources. The latter was just an emergency landing strip.] The Southern Army had completed the previously mentioned “Supplement to the Southern Army's Air Operation Plan” on 10 January.⁽²⁾ The main force of the 33d Division had arrived in Bangkok from eastern China [also] on 10 January.^(23, 120) The Sakaguchi Detachment had landed in Tarakan on 11 January,⁽¹¹⁹⁾ and the Eastern Detachment had left Hong Kong in southern China on 12 January to head first for Davao.⁽¹¹⁸⁾
2. The information on the allied forces, obtained by 8 January, was in outline as follows:⁽²³⁾
 - (1) In Burma, the enemy was making every effort to build up its preparations against our offensive: It seemed that two divisions extracted from the northwest of India had arrived in Rangoon around 23 December, and the Chinese Army was also continuing its advance into Burma.

- (2) In Malaya, the British Indian Army was planning to hold out by having the units, which were previously deployed in several lines along the west coast, and the front line division of the Indian Army fight as a rearguard. Some 1,000 British Indian troops had been stationed in groups over the whole area of Kuantan on the east coast, but their main force had retreated westward on the 5th due to the attacks by our army. There was information that an element of Australian troops had arrived in or near Singapore, but it seems that large corps had yet to arrive for support. In Singapore, some 70 allied aircraft were found on 3 January, which was [increased to] 114 aircraft on 7 January. It is certain that [the air force] had been reinforced [with aircraft] from the Dutch East Indies and Australia.
- (3) In Sumatra, sixteen aircraft were found in Palembang, seven in Pekanbaru, and two in Medan on 3 January.
- (4) Some 800 British Indian troops, who had been stationed in or near Kuching in British Borneo, had retreated in the direction of Siluas (note: southwest of Kuching) in Dutch [Borneo] at the end of December.

As previously described, the Southern Army had planned "landings in Bangka and Palembang around day x + 60 (6 February)" with the aim of (1) seizing the oil resources in Palembang and its environs, the area with the richest oil field of the Dutch East Indies, (2) cutting off reinforcements for the allied forces in Singapore as well as blocking the retreat of the forces from the area, and (3) obtaining an air base for [the operation to] capture Java. It [also] intended to use the 1st [Paratroop] Raiding Group for seizing the oil resources in Palembang. However, the 1st [Paratroop] Raiding Regiment, which had been shipwrecked on 3 January, had reached Bangkok on the 11th with almost nothing more than the clothes on its back, and the 2d [Paratroop] Raiding Regiment had not yet left the mainland. (It departed from Moji on the 15th.^(23, 93)) The Southern Army had come to think that it was impossible to use the [paratroop] raiding group for Palembang, because of the material and moral shock which the 1st [Paratroop] Raiding Regiment had sustained and the actual condition of the 2d [Paratroop] Raiding Regiment with its insufficient level of training.⁽²⁸⁾

Due to the fact that the [paratroop] raiding group was in the above-described condition, and the fact that the immediate concern of the [Navy] Malaya Unit was focused on the Mersing landing operation, which was expected to involve great risks, and the fact that the 38th Division would advance its assembly point to Cam Ranh and from then on work on preparing for the southern Sumatra operation, etc., the arrangements between the Sixteenth Army and the [Navy] Malaya Unit were somewhat less specific. In outline they can be imagined as having been as follows:

1. The Sixteenth Army shall have the main force of the 38th Division (with four battalions as its core) leave Hong Kong around 20 January, advance to Cam Ranh Bay around 24 January, and prepare for Operation L (i.e. the Bangka and Palembang landing operations).
2. The [Navy] Malaya Unit shall prepare for Operation L, while carrying out the Mersing landing operation ([of] the main force of the 18th Division, scheduled to land on 17 January), the seizure of the base on the Anambas [islands] (on the sea east of Singapore), and the operations against the coast west of Ledo.
3. The Sixteenth Army shall have the Operation L unit leave Cam Ranh around 31 January and have its advance party land in Bangka and Palembang on day L (6 February).
4. The Malaya Unit shall support these operations with the main force of its air and naval capacity.

5. The droppings of the 1st [Paratroop] Raiding Group in Palembang shall be tentatively scheduled for the day before day L. The Southern Army shall be pressed for the execution [of the operation].
6. At a later date, the [Navy] Malaya Unit shall make further arrangements with the 38th Division about its escort and with the Third Air Force about its air cooperation.

At that time, the 3d Destroyer Squadron was the only destroyer squadron in the Malaya Unit and it had been decided that its commander, R. Adm. Hashimoto Shintarō, leading the light cruiser *Sendai*, and the 11th and the 20th Destroyer Divisions, would provide the direct escort of the Mersing landing unit, while the 12th and the 19th Destroyer Divisions, each respectively incorporated in the main unit of the Malaya Unit and the main escort unit ([consisting of] the 7th Cruiser Division as its core), would provide the indirect escort of the Mersing landing unit.⁽¹¹⁸⁾ The 5th Destroyer Squadron under the command of R. Adm. Hara Kenzaburō ([consisting of] the *Natori* and the 5th and the 22d Destroyer Division, i.e. one light cruiser and eight destroyers), which had [temporarily] been transferred from the Philippines (Dutch East Indies) Unit to the Malaya Unit to escort the main force of the 33d Division, one regiment of the 5th Division, and others from Magong to Singora and Bangkok, was returned from the Malaya Unit to the Dutch East Indies Unit after finishing escorting the transport convoy on 9 January, and it was in the middle of changing course in order to escort the main force of the Sixteenth Army from Gaoxiong to Java. On its way, it made a call at Cam Ranh Bay for about five hours on the 12th, and had talks with the Sixteenth Army as well as with the Malaya Unit as previously told.⁽¹²⁰⁾ Due to the Southern Army's acceleration of the Java operation, it had been decided that the 5th Destroyer Squadron would escort the main force of the Sixteenth Army straight to Java from Gaoxiong (without calling at Cam Ranh). At that time, the 5th Destroyer Squadron had received the following telegram from the [Navy] Dutch East Indies Unit:⁽¹²⁰⁾

Dated 6 January at 2030, from Chief of Staff, Third Fleet

The following matters have been decided in the arrangement between the Sixteenth Army and the Third Fleet:

1. The escort of Detachment B has been changed and assigned to the 8th Destroyer Division.
2. The main force of the Sixteenth Army shall assemble in Gaoxiong from 29 January to 5 February and directly go [to the waters] close to Batavia without calling at Cam Ranh Bay. The details shall be specified in the arrangement between the 5th Destroyer Squadron commander and the [Sixteenth] Army commander.

Dated 6 January at 2100, from Chief of Staff, Third Fleet

The Third Fleet and the Sixteenth Army made a preliminary arrangement in Gaoxiong on 29 December and then concluded the formal arrangement by telegram. Therefore, no further face-to-face meetings will be held. A summary of the arrangement is as follows:

1. Army Detachment B (or the Itō Detachment, in four transport ships) shall leave Hong Kong on 12 January and arrive in Davao on 18 January under the escort of the 8th Destroyer Division. After that, it shall capture Ambon on 25 January and Kupang on 5 February under the escort of a force consisting of the 2d Destroyer Squadron as its core.
2. The Sakaguchi Detachment shall be escorted by a force consisting of the 4th Destroyer Squadron as its core, and is scheduled to capture Tarakan on 11 January, Balikpapan on 21 January, and Banjarmasin on 31 January. (Accordingly, part of the operation to capture Menado is also set on 11 January.)

3. The main force of the Sixteenth Army shall be escorted by a force which consists of the 5th Destroyer Squadron as its core. It shall depart from Gaoxiong during the period from 29 January to 5 February and land in or near Batavia around 16 February. The details shall be specified between the commanders of the 5th Destroyer Squadron and the Sixteenth Army in Gaoxiong on 26 January.
4. The 48th Division shall leave Manila on 7 February [under the escort of] a force consisting of the 4th Destroyer Squadron as its core and land in or near Surabaya around 16 February. The details shall be specified between the commanders of the 4th Destroyer Squadron and the 48th Division in Manila on 4 February.

The 8th Destroyer Division, which would escort the Itō Detachment, belonged to the 2d Destroyer Squadron. As previously explained, because the operation schedule was quite tight and the forces employed for escorting were extremely limited, the [Navy] Southern Task Force (including the Dutch East Indies Unit, the Malaya Unit, and others) had no extra strength to spare for the rear. On 14 January, the Navy Department of the IGHQ [even] passed down an order that “the second transport convoy of the unit under the direct control of the Twenty-fifth Army (in twenty-four transport ships) from Magong to Singora shall be provided by the Second China Expeditionary Fleet.”⁽¹⁾ It was during these meetings [in Cam Ranh] on the 11th and 12th that, before directly reporting his concerns to [Southern Army] Commander in Chief Terauchi, [Sixteenth] Army Commander Imamura had sought the opinion of [First Southern Expeditionary Fleet] Commander in Chief Ozawa, who had given him a reassuring response. (See the previous description [p.164].)

Army Commander [Imamura] Heads for Gaoxiong After Giving Orders to the 38th Division

On 14 January, the 48th Division ([in] the Philippines) was added to the order of battle of the Sixteenth Army by order of [the Army Department of] IGHQ.⁽¹⁾

On the next day, the 15th, the previously mentioned preliminary arrangement made between the Sixteenth Army and the [Navy] Malaya Unit in Cam Ranh on the 12th was [officially] signed.⁽¹²⁰⁾

The 2d Division was supposed to start leaving Moji from that day (the 15th) and come to Gaoxiong first.⁽⁵³⁾

Army Commander Imamura left Saigon at 0900 on the next day, the 16th, along with Chief of Staff Okazaki, leaving [Chief of] Operations Staff Oda and others in Saigon. He arrived in Guangdong at 1700 via Sanya on Hainan Island, made a courtesy call on the Twenty-third Army commander, and left Guangdong at 1300 on the next day, the 17th, for Hong Kong, where, after the commander and cadre of the 38th Division had presented themselves before him, he gave instructions and took command of the division.⁽³²⁾ Division Commander Sano Tadayoshi reported that (1) the damage that the division had sustained through the capture of Hong Kong was not so serious, and that the valuable experiences gained through fighting against a European army was rather a big advantage for them; that (2) the Itō Detachment (or the Eastern Detachment), which had embarked with the help of Staff Officers Saiki Ikuzō and Nishiura Setsuzō dispatched from Saigon and Taiwan respectively, had been sent off by Senior Staff Officers Takashima Tatsuhiko and Kitamura Yoshifuto, who had come from

Saigon representing the army commander, and that it had left Hong Kong on the 12th, under the escort of the 8th Destroyer Division, and was heading first for Davao.^(35, 36)

At 0900 on the next day, the 18th,⁽³²⁾ Army Commander [Imamura] gave the 38th Division commander in outline the following order:⁽⁶⁶⁾

1. The main force of the 38th Division (minus the Eastern Detachment and the Shōji Detachment) shall advance first to Cam Ranh Bay by late January and leave the bay around 31 January under a naval escort, pass through [the waters] off the coast of Singapore, and put ashore an element on Bangka Island around 6 February to seize Mentok airfield. On the same day, the main force shall go upstream on the Musi River, rush to Palembang, secure the place, relieve the paratroopers, and at the same time have a powerful unit advance as swiftly as possible to Telukbetung, which faces the Sunda Strait, and seize the airfield there.
2. The Shōji Detachment ([consisting of] the main force of the 230th Infantry Regiment as its core) shall be put under the direct command of the [Sixteenth] Army and shall advance to Gaoxiong first.

Incidentally, Chief of Staff Okazaki considered that motorization [of the army] was absolutely essential in order to accomplish a blitzkrieg-like operation against the Dutch East Indies where the roads were considerably developed, and he had sent in advance a telegram to the 38th Division to instruct them to equip [its units] with motor vehicles seized in the war.⁽³⁶⁾ However, according to the report from the division, the Twenty-third Army had not allowed it. Understanding the Twenty-third Army's position, Chief of Staff Okazaki then borrowed eighty motor vehicles [from the Twenty-third Army] by handing in exchange a bond of borrowing to its chief of staff, Major General Kuribayashi, and equipped [the division] with them.⁽³⁶⁾ Later, the Shōji Detachment achieved great results in seizing at a stroke the Kalijati airfield on the day of its landing by using these motor vehicles, and thereby enabling the advance of the 3d Air Division under the command of Major General Endō as early as the next day.

After issuing the above orders to the 38th Division on the 18th, Army Commander Imamura left Hong Kong for Gaoxiong at 1000 on the same day, where, after a long absence, he took command of the headquarters of the army.⁽³²⁾ Vice Chief of Staff Harada and Staff Officers Takahashi, Nishiura, Yamashita and others had left Tokyo on 2 January, arrived in Taipei on the 5th, then [first] stationed [the army headquarters] at [the facility of] the Taiwan Army headquarters in Taipei. After welcoming Staff Officers Takashima and Kitamura from Saigon on the 8th, they had moved from Taipei and set up the army headquarters in Gaoxiong on the 12th.^(45, 33, 34)

After mostly finishing what he had to do in Gaoxiong, the army commander was considering departing for the Philippines to take command of the 48th Division there, when the [Navy] Dutch East Indies Unit (the Third Fleet), which had [once] stated in its order that "it would hold no further face-to-face meetings with the Sixteenth Army, and that, from now on the commanders of the 4th and the 5th Destroyer Squadrons should arrange matters respectively with the commanders of the 48th Division and the Sixteenth Army," notified its "wish to make operational arrangements with the Sixteenth Army in Manila from the 21st onward." So the army commander flew from Gaoxiong to Manila on the 21st, ahead of schedule.⁽³²⁾ On the previous day (the 20th), the Southern Army had given the Sixteenth Army the previously mentioned order to carry out the operation to capture Java.^(23, 24)

2. The Manila Conference and the Arrangements Between the Sixteenth Army and the [Navy] Dutch East Indies Unit

An Unexpected Request from the [Navy] Southern Task Force

On 19 January, the Southern Army received a telegram from the [Navy] Southern Task Force (i.e. the Second Fleet), which explained the totally unexpected situation in the eastern part of the Dutch East Indies, and requested postponement of the landings on Java due to this [situation].^(23, 24) At that time, the 38th Division had finished its embarkation and was to leave Hong Kong and head southward on the next day, the 20th. Furthermore, the 2d Division was due to arrive in Gaoxiong from the day after next, the 21st, and the 48th Division had been preparing for the Java operation since the 8th, while the Twenty-fifth Army had given an order on the 10th to pursue the enemy toward Singapore and, though behind schedule, was going to carry out a landing in Mersing on the 26th.⁽⁵³⁾ [Actually,] it was the postponement from 17 to 26 January of the date of landing in Mersing (though it was decided that only the unloading of plane fuel and ammunition would do and that the landing of the main force of the 18th Division was no longer necessary), and the delay in capturing the Ledo airfield by the Kawaguchi Detachment that the Southern Army really worried about. It had never dreamed of a delay in the operations on the east coast of Borneo [and further east]. Three days before (on the 16th), it had [even] recorded in its journal: "Directives for Operation H (note by the author: the Java operation): Although the principle is to carry out simultaneous landings in eastern and western Java, the landing in eastern Java may have to be carried out on its own [first], should by any chance Operation L (note by the author: the Bangka and Palembang operations) be delayed."⁽²⁴⁾ And so it stuck to its conviction that it should land on Java on day $x + 70$ (16 February) in any case.^(23, 24)

Dated 19 January at 0000 from Chief of Staff, Second Fleet

To Chief of Staff, Southern Army

Regarding the schedule for capturing the Dutch East Indies, the bases seized in the eastern part of the Dutch East Indies are in an unexpectedly bad condition, and even though we are trying by every possible means to expand them and make them ready for use, the fact remains that the advance and deployment of [our] air force is gradually getting delayed, whereas the enemy has been launching counterattacks from the many bases [still under its control]. In addition, if we consider the situation at Tarakan, where [submarine] mines were laid over extensive areas, it becomes inevitable to postpone the scheduled dates of landing in Banjarmasin, Makassar, Timor and Java by about ten days in order to proceed with the coming capture operations without serious problems. Therefore, in order to arrange the details, we will send the senior staff officer of our fleet to the meeting to be held in Manila from 21 to 23 January between the Sixteenth Army, the Third Fleet, and the Eleventh Air Fleet. We would like you to especially see to it that also from your headquarters a staff officer will be dispatched.

The Southern Army took the situation seriously and decided to dispatch Col. Ishii Masayoshi, senior staff officer of Section 1, Col. Tanikawa Kazuo, senior staff officer of Section 4, and [Navy] Capt. Ishihara Itsu, staff officer of the Second Fleet seconded to the Southern Army, to Manila. At the same time, it sent the [Navy] Southern Task Force and the Army Department of IGHQ the following telegrams:⁽²³⁾

To Chief of Staff, Second Fleet (dated 19 January at 1730)

We have taken note of the Second Fleet Telegram Classified No. 702 regarding the schedule for the capture of H. The [Southern] Army considers that it is essential that the schedule should not be postponed even if it entails some risks, as it is highly likely that allowing the enemy time to increase its preparations step by step would rather make the capture operations more difficult. Therefore, it has asked the corps under its command for full support not only for the air units of the Army but also for those of the Navy in respect to seizing airfields and making them ready for use, and replenishing fuel and ammunition [for their aircraft]. We would like to ask your understanding of the above in advance. We shall send Staff Officers Ishihara, Ishii, and Tanikawa to Manila.

Dated 19 January from Chief of Staff [Southern Army]**To Vice Chief of Army General Staff**

Southern Army Staff Section 1 Telegram No. 557

1. We have received a telegram from the Second Fleet, which is summarized as follows: (The following part omitted by the author.)
2. In response, we wired back, stressing that the [Southern] Army wants to keep the invasion schedule specified in General Agreement No. 4 as standard at all costs, as it is apparent that postponement of the date of capture would rather result in the enemy's reinforcement of its defense (naval and air [defense] in particular) and cause further delay in our advance, and we informed [the fleet] that we would provide full support for the Navy air units as well by seizing airfields and making them ready for use, and replenishing fuel and ammunition [for their aircraft], in order to increase the fleet's confidence.
3. However, regarding Operation H (note by the author: the Java operation), our operational policy was originally based on the assumption that we would resolutely carry out the policy by applying overwhelming results against the enemy air power, as the air power of both the enemy and us is evenly matched. Now that the enemy's air power in H has been slightly increased, and, moreover, a reinforcement of enemy naval vessels seems to be arriving soon, it is perfectly clear that a postponement of several days will rather cause a delay of more than a dozen days. Therefore, we judge that it is too late to hesitate in carrying out the plan of operations.
4. We [provided] the above [information] just in case a proposal [would be made to you] by the Navy General Staff.

The General Situation Until Then**I. Information on allied forces****Southern Army Special Report No. 5 (from 9 to 20 January)⁽²³⁾****1. General situation**

- (1) The allied forces of the enemy in the Southwest Pacific seem to be preparing for a protracted [war] by making every effort to strengthen the line between Burma and Australia via the Dutch East Indies (Sumatra and Java), while continuing resistance in Malaya and the Philippines. Although it is not yet known for certain how much Britain and the United States have reinforced their military strength since around the time of the opening of hostilities, it is roughly estimated as follows:

{1} Burma

One Indian Army division and about fifty aircraft.

{2} Malaya

About one Indian Army brigade and about one Australian Army brigade.

Some U.S. and Dutch aircraft.

It seems that Britain is dispatching more warships from the Indian Ocean to reconstruct its Eastern Fleet, but the details are unknown.

{3} The Dutch East Indies

Whereas the details of ground troops and aircraft are unknown, the main force of the U.S. Asiatic Fleet seems to have fled to this area. Regarding their route of transport, it is almost certain that Britain for sure but also the United States is using the Indian Ocean route. (The rest omitted by the author.)

II. Operation S (the Endau and Mersing landing operation) has up to now progressed as follows:

As previously mentioned, the Southern Army drew up plans for Operation Q (the Kuantan landing operation) and Operation S on 13 December, concluded General Agreement No. 3 at Cam Ranh on 23 December, and on the same day ordered by means of Southern Army Operation Order A, No. 20 that Operation Q [would be carried out by a force of] two battalions of the 18th Division as its core, which would land in Kuantan around 31 December, and that Operation S [would be carried out by] the main force of the 18th Division ([consisting of] four battalions as its core), which would land in Mersing around 7 January. However, it cancelled Operation Q on 27 December and had the unit supposed to conduct the operation (i.e. the Koba Detachment) land in Singora [instead] and go southward along the east coast. [Meanwhile] the Takumi Detachment, which had gone ahead southward along the east coast, occupied Kuantan on 31 December, and the airfield there was made ready for use on 10 January.⁽²³⁾ As previously told, the Southern Army unwillingly called off Operation Q for four reasons: the opinions offered by the Twenty-fifth Army and the Third Air Force, the opinion of the Navy, and the swift advance of the Takumi Detachment. Instead, it poured great enthusiasm in conducting Operation S and insisted on its definite implementation.⁽²³⁾ As for the Twenty-fifth Army, it had great expectations for the Mersing landing operation because the progress of its operations since its advance to the banks of the Perak River had not been very good. The main force of the 18th Division charged with the Mersing operation was [also] extremely enthusiastic, partly because the units formed out of this division and commanded by Detachment Commanders Takumi, Koba and Kawaguchi had been achieving brilliant military gains on the east coast of Malaya and the west coast of Borneo.⁽²³⁾ The air [support] arrangements for Operation S were made on 3 January (the day when [Sixteenth] Army Commander Imamura moved to Saigon).⁽²³⁾ Anticipating that a landing close to Singapore would trigger fierce counterattacks by the allied air and naval forces, it was decided that the air operation should be absolutely perfect. This resulted in a plan for an unusually massive air operation since the opening of hostilities, in which a total of more than 300 aircraft, consisting of about 110 fighter planes, about 80 heavy bombers of the Third Air Force of the Army and about 20 fighter planes and about 100 land-based attack planes of the 1st Air Unit (the 22d Air Flotilla) of the Navy would be employed. Also, it was decided that almost all airfields in Malaya would be used, among which those in Kota Bharu and Sungai Petani would be shared by the Army and the Navy, and that the Army would advance about 60 Type-97 fighter planes to the Kuantan airfield to provide perfect cover for the convoy.⁽²³⁾ Furthermore, it was decided that the air operation should

be launched as soon as possible from 10 January onwards to destroy the allied air power in and around Singapore.⁽²³⁾ Subsequently, on 11 January, the Southern Army conferred about the operational arrangements for Operation S in Cam Ranh and concluded them on the next day, the 12th.⁽²³⁾ (On that day, the Sixteenth Army had a preliminary meeting with the [Navy] Malaya Unit in Cam Ranh on the operations against Bangka and Palembang.⁽³²⁾) The top echelon of the 18th Division (who arrived at Cam Ranh Bay on 10 January) also participated in the arrangement.⁽²³⁾ In this arrangement, it was decided to roughly set the landing date as 17 January, and if a change [in the date] were necessary, both parties should discuss and determine [a new date] by noon three days prior [to the landing date]. The point of landing should be the coast of Endau, and the landings should take place for two days in eleven fast ships, which would leave Cam Ranh Bay on 14 January under the direct escort of the Navy 3d Destroyer Squadron (of about six destroyers) with the *Sendai* as flagship as its core, and under the indirect escort of almost the whole force of the Malaya Unit.⁽²³⁾ In concluding this arrangement, heated arguments were exchanged over the schedule between the Southern Army and the Navy; the former insisted on carrying out the operations against Bangka, Palembang and Java as scheduled in General Agreement No. 4 (the agreement concluded on 1 January), while the latter would like to carry out secure surface escort operations after [first] gaining command of the air.⁽²³⁾ Although the operation to destroy the enemy air power based on the above-mentioned arrangement of 3 January was started on 12 January, the start on the Navy side [was delayed to] the following day, the 13th, due to bad weather on the east coast of Malaya.⁽²³⁾ What was more, it did not produce the expected results: repeated attacks by our forces ended in vain as the allied air forces escaped from Singapore. Instead, the allied air forces came to attack the anchorage in Singora on the 12th and the 13th and in Sungai Petani on the 15th, and it seemed from observation that they were also being reinforced.⁽²³⁾ Around this time, the Twenty-fifth Army's offensive was regaining its momentum; on 11 January it stormed into Kuala Lumpur, a place of strategic importance, and its leading group closed in on Gemas on the 14th. It was now expected that [the Twenty-fifth Army] would be able to advance to the Straits of Johor around 25 January.⁽²³⁾ On 14 January (two days before the [Sixteenth] Army Commander Imamura left Saigon for Hong Kong and Gaoxiong), the chief of staff of the Twenty-fifth Army [Lt. Gen. Suzuki Sōsaku] sent the following telegram to the chief of General Staff of the Southern Army:⁽²³⁾

TOMI [Twenty-fifth Army] Staff Section 1 Telegram No. 723 (dated 14 January)

The operations of the [Twenty-fifth] Army are making more progress than expected. In view of the current situation, where most of the immediate enemy has been destroyed and so has its morale, we have come to the conclusion that Operation S does not need to be carried out in order to [facilitate] the capture of Singapore. Instead, the army would like to promptly launch the Sumatra operation following the capture of Singapore. Therefore, although we appreciate the special consideration of [the Army Department of] IGHQ and the Navy [for Operation S], we would like to propose that Operation S be cancelled for the above reason, and that the main force of the 18th Division will be put ashore in Singora and assemble on the coast opposite of Penang.

The Southern Army received the above telegram on the same day (the 14th). It was [also] the day when the 18th Division was supposed to leave Cam Ranh Bay for Operation S.⁽²³⁾ The above telegram of the Twenty-fifth Army had been sent to [the Army Department of] IGHQ as well, and also to the Navy by its liaison officer.⁽²³⁾ [Meanwhile] the [Navy] Malaya Unit had wired the Southern Army on the same day (the 14th) that "it would postpone the landing date of Operation S (by two days [in total]) to the 19th in view of the insufficient results of the air operations to destroy the enemy in the Malaya theater."⁽²³⁾ The 18th Division, however, which wanted to be engaged in the operations of the war as soon as possible, wired the chief of staff [of the Southern Army] under the name of Division Commander Lt. Gen. Mutaguchi Ren'ya, on the same day (the 14th) the following telegram:⁽²³⁾

KIKU [18th Division] Staff Telegram No. 25 (dated 14 January)

Even though the division hoped and tried every way to persuade [the Navy] to depart as soon as possible [for Operation S], the Navy did not agree to our departure because of the less-than-expected results of the air operation to destroy the enemy air power, and it even further postponed [the departure] by one day, which eventually forced us to [just] watch the situation. Although it has made efforts to improve its air operation by changing the methods, the timing and other [factors], the Navy seems to think that [even] departure under a blackout will probably be difficult depending on the results [of the air operation] from tomorrow onwards. We really would like to have the [Southern] Army's help as well, so that this operation [of ours] will be swiftly accomplished.

At that time, the results of the massive air operations launched from 12 January onwards to destroy the enemy air power were not as anticipated: the allied air forces had fled to Sumatra, and [their] aircraft still kept on making occasional guerrilla-like attacks.⁽²³⁾ [However,] the Southern Army headquarters had no accurate knowledge of the insufficient results of these air operations.⁽²³⁾ Furthermore, there was also the precedent of Operation Q, when the Southern Army, though deploring the Navy's proposal to postpone the operation, had reluctantly accepted it, because it had been formally consulted.⁽²³⁾ However, it did not approve the Twenty-fifth Army's proposal to cancel Operation S and turned it down.⁽²³⁾ While the Southern Army found the [Navy] Malaya Unit's proposal cowardly, it felt obliged to agree to the proposal as it had been formally consulted, and it sent on the same day the following telegram to the chief and vice chief of staff of the Malaya Unit under the name of the chief of staff [of the Southern Army]:⁽²³⁾

Southern Army Staff Section 1 Telegram No. 504 (dated 14 January)

Although the results [of the damage] caused to the enemy warships in the air operation against Singapore are not clear, we completely overwhelmed the enemy air forces and not more than about fifty [enemy] aircraft are left. As the enemy aircraft are only vainly trying to escape to preserve themselves, the [Southern] Army judges that the cover of the convoys under sail and at the anchorages may be expected to be perfect. In view of the progress of the operations along the west coast of Malaya, we are very much afraid that further delay in implementing Operation S at this moment in order to await [further] results in the air operations will mean that we will not only lose a battle opportunity but also delay the launch

of Operation H. We would appreciate your understanding that when the [Southern] Army concluded the agreement on the air operations we counted on carrying out the operations under such results as attained up to today. And we would like you to understand that also concerning the implementation of Operation L our view remains the same as the above.

Note: Operation H means the Java [operation], and L means the Bangka and Palembang operations.

Thus, on 16 January, the day of the operation convoy's departure after the two-day delay came at last, but the Southern Army received another telegram from the Malaya Unit.⁽²³⁾

On the 14th, an Army reconnaissance plane scouting [the enemy around] Singapore spotted one aircraft carrier and seven warships in its naval port, and six or seven ships which seemed to be battleships or cruisers on the sea south of [Kampung Sungai] Buntu. On the 15th, we identified on reconnaissance photos by a Navy reconnaissance plane, one battleship (apparently Renown-class) and five destroyers anchored in the naval port. Others are unidentified due to clouds. Our unit plans to destroy these enemy [ships] first. We would like to request a postponement of Operation S for the time being.

The same day (the 16th), the Southern Army received yet another telegram from the Malaya Unit to the effect that the latter wanted to postpone Operation S until the 21st, to which the army reluctantly sent a reply of approval. Then again on the same day (the 16th) the army received the following consultative telegram, this time from the Southern Task Force (the Second Fleet).⁽²³⁾

In view of the enemy's movements in the Singapore area and the present progress of the Army operations in the E area, we [propose to] cancel Operation S. The Navy's cooperation in the sea transport and debarkation of matériel for the Army air bases to the Endau and Mersing areas shall be arranged between the commander in chief of the Southern Army and the commander of the Malaya Unit.

Note: E indicates Malaya.

On this day (the 16th), the judgement of Section 1 of the Southern Army Staff was [still] as stated in the previously mentioned "Directives for Operation H" that "although the principle is to carry out simultaneous landings in eastern and western Java, the landing in eastern Java may have to be carried out on its own [first], should by any chance Operation L be delayed."⁽²⁴⁾ On the previous day (the 15th), after receiving the information about the allied fleet in the Singapore area, the commander of the Malaya Unit (and commander in chief of the First Southern Expeditionary Fleet), Vice Admiral Ozawa, had left Cam Ranh Bay with his main unit and was sailing southward,⁽¹⁰³⁾ while the commander of the Southern Task Force (and commander in chief of the Second Fleet), Vice Admiral Kondō, who had left Magong on the 14th and was on his way [with his fleet] to Palau,⁽¹⁰³⁾ had sent the Southern Army the above-mentioned proposal to discuss cancelling the operation. It was [also] the day when [Sixteenth] Army Commander Imamura left Saigon for Hong Kong and Gaoxiong.⁽³²⁾

The Southern Army headquarters finally recognized the fact that the results [of the air operation] to destroy the enemy air power were insufficient.⁽²³⁾ At that time, the

front line of the Twenty-fifth Army was closing in on Gemas, but the actions of the allied air forces were still brisk.⁽²³⁾ The next day, the 17th, in reply to telegram No. 153 sent by the Southern Army on the 16th (the telegram concerning the postponement [of operation S] until the 21st), the Malaya Unit (in the middle of its mission) expressed its views as follows:⁽²³⁾

To Chief of Staff, Southern Army

From Chief of Staff, First Southern Expeditionary Fleet

Concerning Southern Army Staff Section 1 Telegram No. 153, we have the following views: The Southern Expeditionary Fleet considers the main objective of Operation S to be the acceleration of the operations of the Twenty-fifth Army. By maintaining close contact and working together with the army we are familiar with the progress of its operations in detail. At the same time, in the light of the circumstances surrounding the cancellation of Operation Q, we are very concerned about the delay of day S, and through the departments concerned both in the Army and the Navy, we have often signaled to the [Southern] Army as well our intention regarding stepping-up the air operation. Whereas the operations of the Twenty-fifth Army are developing more rapidly than expected, the progress of the air operations, which had been delayed and were finally launched on the 12th, has failed to live up to our expectations, partly due to bad weather. As of the 14th, it seems that we have been able to practically overwhelm the enemy fighter planes, but most of the enemy torpedo bombers are yet to be destroyed. We judged that it was highly possible that in carrying out Operation S as scheduled under such circumstances [our] transport fleet would sustain serious damage, and thus we postponed [the operation]. You may understand from the above that we consider the enemy attack planes as the main object of our air operation. We would like you to understand that our view is significantly different from yours. Because it would be unpleasant to carry out under these circumstances in cooperation [with you] Operation L hereafter, we would like to have a full discussion on another occasion.

Unlike the Twenty-fifth Army, the Southern Army not only focused on the operations in Malaya, but also in particular on the implementation of the Bangka, Palembang and Java operations, and thus [the Southern Army considered] it urgently necessary to promptly make airfields ready for use. [In other words,] even if it were [no longer] necessary to put ashore forces for the capture of Singapore, it was still necessary to disembark the forces and the matériel for making the airfields near Kluang and Kahang ready for use. [Consequently,] instead of giving full approval to the cancellation of Operation S, the [Southern] Army sent on the same day (the 17th) the following reply for a conditional cancellation [of Operation S]:⁽²³⁾

To Chiefs of Staff, Second Fleet and First Southern Expeditionary Fleet

From Chief of Staff [Southern Army]

We have no objection to your proposal concerning Operation S on the following conditions: The sea transport to Endau or Mersing shall be conducted in two ships by 26 January at the latest. The Navy shall take charge of the mine sweeping of and near the landing points and the cover of the ships under sail and at the anchorages; whereas the Army shall take charge of the air defense. The time required for disembarkation will be a whole day and a night. Further, the units on stand-by in Cam Ranh Bay shall be put ashore in Singora and Bangkok.

After receiving replies from the Southern Task Force and the Malaya Unit that [both] had no objections to the above telegram, the Southern Army ordered the cancellation of Operation S on 19 January, and at the same time gave an order to the Third Air Force to “transport and land [the ground units of] the air units (including the matériel), presently on stand-by in Cam Ranh Bay, near Endau or Mersing by 26 January at the latest in cooperation with the [Navy] Malaya Unit.”⁽²³⁾ On the previous day (the 18th), the main unit of the Southern Task Force ([under the command of] Vice Admiral Kondō) had arrived in Palau to support the Dutch East Indies operation.⁽¹⁰³⁾ Also on this day (the 19th), the main unit of the Malaya Unit returned to Cam Ranh Bay,⁽¹⁰³⁾ because there were not as many enemy warships in Singapore as reported, and the allied fleet had not appeared either.⁽¹¹⁸⁾ Meanwhile, Sixteenth Army Commander Ima-mura, who had ordered the main force of the 38th Division to first advance to Cam Ran Bay, had arrived in Gaoxiong on the previous day (the 18th).⁽³²⁾

It was on this [very] day (the 19th) and under the above-mentioned circumstances that the Southern Army received the telegram mentioned in the beginning [of this section] from the Southern Task Force, that is, the telegram to the effect that the forward push of the bases in the eastern part of the Dutch East Indies could not be carried out as scheduled, and that it would like to request that the landings on Java scheduled for 16 February be postponed by about ten days. For the Southern Army the two messages [the delay in the forward push and the postponement of the Java landings] contained in the telegram came totally unexpected.

III. The Ledo airfields issue (*See Illustration No. 19*)

At that time, one of the concerns of the Southern Army was [the progress of the operation to] seize the airfields in Ledo and make them ready for use. The issue was in outline as follows:

As previously described, [in preparation] for conducting the southern Sumatra and Java operations, the plan was that the Army air units would go southward along the Malay Peninsula, while the main force of the land-based aircraft of the [Navy] Malaya Unit would advance into western Borneo (i.e. Kuching) to carry out further operations [from there].

The Kawaguchi Detachment had seized the airfield in Kuching on 25 December.⁽²³⁾ However, the Kuching airfield was against expectations in such a bad condition that it was judged too difficult to be fixed for use.⁽²³⁾ On learning that the airfield in Ledo found on 20 December was quite vast, the Southern Army sent a telegram to Detachment Commander Kawaguchi on 26 December that for the sake of the [Navy] Malaya Unit it “wanted him to investigate and report immediately on [the possibility] of seizing the airfields near Bara or Ledo by either land or sea as quickly as possible in further cooperation with the Navy.” It was followed by another telegram on 28 December, saying: “The road between Kuching and Singkawang seems [good enough] to be used by motor vehicles. We would like the Kawaguchi Detachment to be ready to seize, without missing an opportunity, the airfields near Bengkayang or, depending on the situation, a port (Singkawang or Pontianak), which



Commander of the 35th
Infantry Brigade
Maj. Gen. Kawaguchi
Kiyotake

leads to these [airfields].”⁽²³⁾ On concluding General Agreement No. 4 ([about] bringing forward the Java operations) on 1 January, the Southern Army directed the [coming] operations with great enthusiasm, and as previously mentioned, on 6 January, ordered the Kawaguchi Detachment to capture Ledo. However, Detachment Commander Kawaguchi was away from Kuching, having gone to the north from 27 December to 12 January, doing things like having an audience with the Sultan of Brunei. [His absence] worried and irritated the Southern Army, and [so did the fact that] preparations for seizing Ledo had not much progressed.^(23, 92)

Detachment Commander Kawaguchi was away from Kuching for the following reasons. The mission assigned to the detachment on 20 November ([by] Southern Army order) was that “the [commander of the] Kawaguchi Detachment shall depart from the assembly point after the opening of hostilities, attack Miri and Seria first, secure vital resource areas as well as air bases and, immediately after that, occupy the air base near Kuching as quickly as possible. In the occupied territories, he shall [also] assume the task of establishing a military administration.”⁽²³⁾ Furthermore, the Southern Army order he received on 6 January was a simple one, which read, “Detachment Commander Kawaguchi shall promptly seize, mainly by land, airfields near Bengkayang, and ports in Dutch Borneo which lead to these [airfields].”⁽²³⁾ No change in the basic mission of establishing a military administration, which had been stated in the Southern Army order of 20 November, was mentioned, nor was the intention of the Southern Army conveyed adequately. Furthermore, the detachment commander had enough confidence in his regimental commander to let [the latter] duly make preparations for [the seizure of] Ledo. He also felt that it was not totally impossible to expand and make the Kuching airfield ready for use.^(23, 92)

After the operations to seize Miri, the Kawaguchi Detachment ([consisting of] the 35th Infantry Brigade headquarters and the 124th Infantry Regiment of the 18th Division as its core) left [an element of] its forces consisting of one infantry battalion and one company as the core in Miri and Seria, and seized Kuching with the rest. After the seizure of Kuching, Detachment Commander (Brigade Commander) Maj. Gen. Kawaguchi Kiyotake left Kuching with one infantry battalion (minus two companies) and others on 27 December, and returned to Miri, leaving in Kuching a unit consisting of five infantry companies as its core under the command of the commander of the 124th Infantry Regiment, Col. Oka Akinosuke. [Commander Kawaguchi] stationed himself in Brunei and Labuan on 31 December and 1 January, and in Jesselton from 8 to 11 January.^(23, 92) On 28 December, Detachment Commander Kawaguchi received a telegram from the Southern Army with an order to prepare for seizing Ledo, as to which, on the 29th, he wired back to the Southern Army from Miri, that (1) in view of the activities of enemy aircraft and submarines, he considered it appropriate to advance by land, and that (2) because he thought it necessary to reinforce the troops [in Kuching] from Miri, he would like to request ships to be sent. [This] was followed by another telegram on the next day, the 30th, from Miri to the effect that “[the commander] would dispatch Maj. Shiraishi Michinori, the 18th Division staff officer attached to the detachment, for discussing future operations.”⁽²³⁾ At that time, the rainfall in Kuching was getting heavier and heavier. The impatient Southern Army read this telegram from Miri and as a last resort wired back that “As [our] Staff Officer Satō is

at your location, we request you to postpone the dispatch of [your] Staff Officer Shiraishi until after the seizure of Ledo.”⁽²³⁾ On the next day, the 31st, Detachment Commander Kawaguchi sent the Southern Army a telegram that “the road leading to Ledo is in an extremely bad condition: no bridges [were found] across the rivers, and there is no prospect of obtaining provisions and fodder on the way there. Besides, the airfields in Ledo, Bengkayang, Pontianak and others have already been destroyed by the attacks of [our] naval aircraft. On the other hand, Kuching airfield has good soil, and we expect that part of the airfield will be ready in a few days, and it will be available from around 1 January. I recommend you to consider giving up the Ledo operation and using the Kuching airfield [instead].” However, the Southern Army paid no attention to it because it was wired from Miri.⁽²³⁾ On 2 January, the Kawaguchi Detachment reported on the situation in Kuching. The main point was that at the Kuching airfield extension work was in progress, aiming at making [a field of] 300 meters wide and 800 meters long, and that an extension of its length to 1,000 meters was expected to require about ten days, and to 1,200 meters another fifty days, and to 1,500 meters another sixty days.⁽²³⁾ It was absolutely out of the question because [a runway of] 1,200 meters long was required for the Navy land-based attack planes.⁽²³⁾ On the next day, 3 January (the day [Sixteenth] Army Commander Imamura advanced to Saigon), the Southern Army sent a telegram under the name of Senior Staff Officer of Section 1 Col. Ishii Masayoshi to Staff Officer Shiraishi [attached to the Kawaguchi Detachment], which read “Report the progress of the preparations for the operation by return telegram” and implicitly pressed him for action.⁽²³⁾ On this day (the 3d), the Southern Army held talks about the already-mentioned air [support] arrangement for Operation S and others with the [Navy] Malaya Unit, where they deliberated [the issue] and decided that “Ledo shall be captured by land. Seizure by sea shall be conducted when possible without strain.”⁽²³⁾ At that time, the Southern Army felt that Regimental Commander Oka Akinosuke and Detachment Commander Kawaguchi Kiyotake were hesitating to prepare for the Ledo operation.⁽²³⁾ On the next day, the 4th, the Southern Army inquired of the Navy about its eagerness to use the Ledo airfield,⁽²³⁾ and learned that the Malaya Unit had the intention to advance almost all of its air units to Ledo.⁽²³⁾ Just then (on the 5th), the Kawaguchi Detachment (whose commander was still in Miri at that time), sent in the following report on the state of preparation for the Ledo operation:⁽²³⁾

Telegram sent on 5 January

1. Regarding the new operations, the detachment has been taking action as shown in the separately sent telegram No. 255.
2. The progress of preparation and the situation known as of yesterday, the 4th
 - (1) The enemy troops who retreated from the neighborhood of Kuching consist of some 800 men and seem to be demoralized.
 - (2) The stretch of eighty kilometers of road between Bau and Siluas in Dutch [Borneo] is a narrow defile. There are many streams with suspension bridges and log bridges. A construction unit has been sent in advance to repair them.
 - (3) The progress of establishing an overland line of communication is as shown in the separately sent telegram No. 256. An infantry company is scheduled to be sent to Siluas in advance.
3. The units diverted from Miri are assembling in Kuching in about four seized small cargo ships, of which the first ship will be arriving on the 6th.

4. It is expected that the unit in Kuching will be able to launch the new operation from the 8th onwards.

Having received the above telegram, the Southern Army issued its Operation Order A, No. 34 on the next day, the 6th, which read: "Detachment Commander Kawaguchi shall promptly seize, mainly by land, enemy airfields near Bengkayang and ports in Dutch Borneo which lead to these [airfields]."⁽²³⁾ [Editor's note: The orders concerning the Kawaguchi Detachment are quoted in slightly different redactions on pp. 143, 198, 299.]

The Kawaguchi Detachment (with its commander in Miri) received the above Southern Army order and drew up the outline of the Ledo operations roughly as follows:^(23, 91)

Outline of the Ledo Operation by the Kawaguchi Detachment

1. Operational Objective
 - (1) [The detachment] shall promptly seize the enemy airfields near Bengkayang and the ports in northwestern Borneo which lead to these [airfields].
2. Mission
 - (2) The detachment shall promptly seize the airfields near Bengkayang and the ports which lead to these [airfields] with its main force both by land and by sea.
3. Operational Directives
 - (3) An element of the Kuching guard unit shall be advanced to the area of the upper reaches of the Sarawak River near the border to set up a line-of-communication route.
 - (4) The 1st Unit ([consisting of] five companies under the command of the regimental commander) shall assemble near the upper reaches of the Sarawak River to attack the airfields by land.
 - (5) The 2d Unit ([consisting of] three companies under the command of the battalion commander) shall land in or near Pemangkat by sea and then capture Singkawang and Pontianak. An element of the unit shall directly cooperate with the 1st Unit in its attack on the Ledo airfields.
 - (6) The timing of the landing of the 2d Unit shall be decided depending on the progress of the preparation for the operations of the 1st Unit.

Then, on 8 January, the Kawaguchi Detachment reported to the Southern Army that "the completion of the line of communication will be delayed by a few days from the scheduled date, the 9th, because fragile log bridges were found at several places near the border, and in some places streams flow over thirty meters [wide]," and that "on the path leading to Siluas in Dutch [Borneo] there are dozens of log bridges and suspension bridges that are so [flimsy] that they barely allow a single native to cross; it would take about two weeks [for us to repair them] so that military forces can consecutively cross them." Further, on the 11th, it reported that the "the advance party from Kuching attacked some 500 enemy troops in or near [Jagui]babang (about 115 kilometers southwest of Kuching) in Dutch Borneo on 10 January," and the same day, it reported on the state of the Kuching airfield as follows:⁽²³⁾

The state of the Kuching airfield

1. A runway of 100 meters wide and 800 meters long was completed on 3 January. The extension work is still in progress, and we expect to extend it to 100 meters wide and 1,000 meters long by 20 January.

2. The extension plan is [to construct a runway of] 300 meters wide and 1,000 meters long from east to west, and [another of] 300 meters wide and 1,500 meters long from north to south.
3. There are 57 holes caused by explosions of land mines.

In the meantime, on 10 January, the Southern Army completed its air operation plan based on the air [support] arrangement concluded with the [Navy] Malaya Unit on the 3d. It stated that "the Navy air unit shall promptly advance its main force to the bases in western Borneo near Kuching or Ledo, and an element of its force to northern Malaya, and strive to destroy the enemy warships near Singapore and the enemy air power in Singapore, eastern Sumatra and Java."⁽²⁾

Detachment Commander Kawaguchi, who, positioning himself in Miri, had pursued [the task of] seizing Sandakan and other vital places in northeastern British Borneo, and rescuing Japanese nationals there, returned from Jesselton to Miri on 11 January, and arrived in Kuching on the evening of 14 January.^(23, 92) During this period, the Southern Army was worried and irritated to the highest degree.⁽²³⁾

On the next day, the 15th, Detachment Commander Kawaguchi wired to the Southern Army from Kuching to report on the progress of assembling the detachment for the Ledo operation: "(1) Three infantry companies under the command of the battalion commander and one machine gun company [have assembled] in the area between Risau (eight kilometers northeast of Siluas), and [Jagui]babang (twelve kilometers northeast of Siluas) by 13 January, one infantry battalion and one artillery section by the 14th, and further, the regimental headquarters, one infantry company, and one antitank gun company by the 15th. (2) The detachment headquarters, one infantry battalion (minus one company), and one engineer platoon have assembled in Kuching by the 15th. (3) Machine gun units and others [will join] on and after the 16th." He also added: "We have given instructions to launch an attack on Siluas, after the main force of the regiment, which is now assembling to attack the immediate enemy, advances to [Jagui]babang (scheduled for the 15th)."⁽²³⁾

Three days later, on the evening (of the 18th), Staff Major Shiraishi of the [Kawaguchi] Detachment unexpectedly turned up at the Southern Army headquarters. The headquarters thought that he had come to report the seizure of the Ledo airfield and the [current] situation, only to be greatly disappointed to hear to their surprise that he [only] had come to make an interim report. [The headquarters] explained to him in no uncertain terms that "the seizure of the Ledo airfield would determine the success of the next operations, those against Bangka and Palembang in particular." The 38th Division charged with the Bangka and Palembang operations was in the middle of embarkation at Hong Kong, and scheduled to depart from the port in two days (on the 20th) to head southward. On the next day, the 19th, Staff Officer Shiraishi sent the following telegram to Detachment Commander Kawaguchi in Kuching:⁽²³⁾

1. I contacted the headquarters. The [Southern] Army recognized the activities of the detachment and expressed appreciation.
2. The [Southern] Army has high expectations [of us], as it considers that the detachment's rapid seizure of airfields in and near Ledo, Singkawang and Pontianak would decide the success of the coming operations.

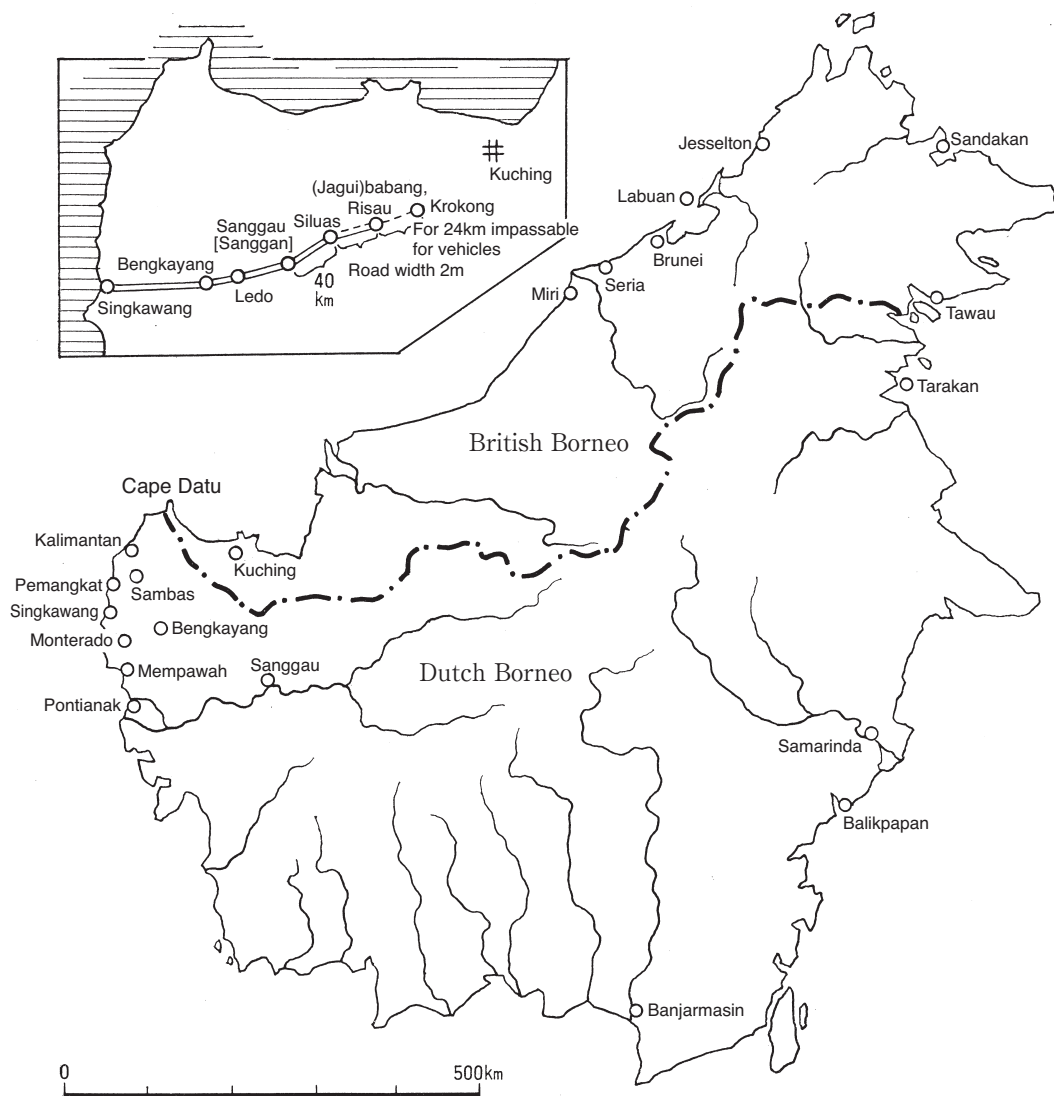


Illustration No. 19—Map of Ledo and Borneo

3. In view of the important position [the detachment was given] to decide the [success] of the operations, it is considered necessary for the detachment to seize [the airfield in] Ledo by all means and make it ready for use by the end of January at the latest. Navy planes will use the airfield in Ledo.

Then, the Southern Army received the following telegram sent on 18 January from the Kawaguchi Detachment:⁽²³⁾

1. Five infantry companies under the command of the regimental commander ([hereafter] called the 1st Dutch Borneo Unit) have assembled in and near Dobare [Tebarau?] without trouble.
2. Three infantry companies under the command of the battalion commander ([hereafter] called the 2d Dutch Borneo Unit) have assembled in Kuching today, the 18th.

3. The Siluas unit is scheduled to launch an attack on the 19th. Accordingly, we are urging it to destroy the enemy in and near Sanggau [Sanggan] to [swiftly] advance to Ledo, but it is expected to take a few days. We are making inquiries as to [the progress] of the regiment, and we will report to you as soon as we know.

Then, the Southern Army received another telegram from the Kawaguchi Detachment sent on the 19th to the effect that "Kuching and vicinity was suffering from the heaviest rainfall in the past twenty years, and that the condition of the roads in the border area had become so bad that the mud was knee-deep." The Army further received the following telegram sent on the same day:⁽²³⁾

The overland attack to complete the mission to seize the Bengkayang airfield has not progressed as planned due to natural and geographical [factors], and enemy resistance; all forms of transport are interrupted, and provisions and fodder sent in advance are gradually decreasing. Thus, we cannot exclude the possibility of total failure and we are preparing an attack by advancing [a unit] by sea under XX (note by the author: the two characters in the original text are illegible) to land near Pemangkat. The plan is as follows:

1. The first echelon shall consist of about two infantry companies under the command of the battalion commander equipped with a machine gun, a battalion [Type92] gun, and a regimental [75-mm. Type41 mountain] gun in six large-sized motorized [landing] craft, six small-sized motorized [landing] craft and four fishing boats. It shall leave Kuching on the night of the 22d, reach the bay south of Cape Datu on the morning of the 23d, leave there around noon on the same day, and land in or near Pemangkat at dawn on the 24th.
2. The second echelon shall consist of one infantry platoon equipped with two machine guns, and one battalion gun in two seized motorized sailing boats. It shall leave Kuching on the morning of the 23d and land in Pemangkat.
3. The third echelon (accompanied by the detachment commander) shall consist of two infantry platoons equipped with one machine gun and one battalion gun in a passenger boat ([of] 173 tons) seized on the coast. It shall leave around noon on the 23d, and land in Babakappa [?] on the morning of the 24th.
4. After landing, an element shall seize Sambas and the main force shall seize Singkawang and advance towards Bengkayang, though [the operation] shall depend on the enemy's movements.
5. We would like the Navy to provide cover against enemy aircraft and surface warships from morning till sunset on the 23d and during the morning from daybreak [on the 24th], but if it is impossible, we shall carry out the attack on our own.

The above was the situation concerning Ledo until the day (the 19th) when the Southern Army received the already-mentioned telegram from the Southern Task Force, which wished "to postpone the date of [the operation to] capture Java by about ten days [due to] the difficulty in advancing its bases to eastern Borneo [and further east]."

The Effect on the Malaya Unit and the Order of the Southern Army

The telegram of the Southern Task Force (the Second Fleet) on the 19th, which proposed the postponement [of the Java operation] by ten days, [also] affected the Malaya Unit.

As previously mentioned, the Southern Army immediately wired back to the Southern Task Force concerning the latter's telegram of the 19th, and [also] sent a telegram to the Army

Department of IGHQ on the same day. On the next day, the 20th, the senior staff officer of Section 1 of the Southern Army, Ishii Masayoshi, along with the senior staff officer of Section 4, Tanikawa Kazuo, and the Navy staff officer with the Southern Army, Ishihara Itsu, left Saigon and first made a stopover at Cam Ranh on their way to Manila. There Ishii made the arrangement relating to Operation S (the arrangement about the operation to put ashore the units connected with the air units and their matériel in Endau in two transport ships on the 26th) with the chief of staff and others of the First Southern Expeditionary Fleet (the Malaya Unit). He also held talks on the subsequent operations. At the meeting, [the Navy Malaya Unit] shocked Ishii and his group by bringing up [a request] to the effect that "we would like you to agree to a delay of Operation L (the operations against Bangka and Palembang) by two weeks, because the Kuching airfield is in bad condition with no prospect of [when it will be] ready for use due to the heavy rainfall, and there is no prospect of when the Ledo airfield will be seized and made ready for use either."⁽²³⁾ (Note: Col. Tanikawa Kazuo wrote in his diary for this day, "I left Saigon in the morning, arrived in Cam Ranh, and contacted the [First] Southern Expeditionary Fleet. It tabled a bombshell motion to change the timing of Operation L.")

Although Colonel Ishii found "[the time frame] far too leisurely and the argument containing many objectionable points," he firmly determined, "there is no need to agree to such a preposterous proposal. Anyway, let's argue the case in Manila."⁽²³⁾

Staff Officer Shiraishi of the Kawaguchi Detachment, who accompanied the group, "looked greatly impressed, seemingly taken aback by the significance of the Ledo operation [he was reminded of] anew."⁽²³⁾ After the meeting was over, he sent the following telegrams:⁽²³⁾

To Detachment Commander Kawaguchi

From Staff Officer Shiraishi (dated 21 January)

Yesterday, the 20th, we had talks with the Southern Expeditionary Fleet at Cam Ranh Bay.

1. In the wake of the Army, the Navy will transport fuel and ammunition to Singkawang by sea. The 2d Unit shall seize as many trucks as possible in and near Singkawang in order to facilitate the transport of fuel and ammunition by land. It shall further take actions necessary to go up the Sambas River, and unload them near Ledo.
2. In order for the Navy to transport the fuel and ammunition, I would like you to let the Navy use the two small cargo ships (or motorized sailing boats, if unavailable) which the Army seized, and instruct them to advance right after the Army's boat units.
3. [According to the Navy] it will shortly advance its base to the Anambas (note by the author: [a group of islands] located halfway between Singapore and Ledo), and there are no mines laid by the enemy in the waters north of Cape Datu.
4. The cooperation of Navy aircraft while we are sailing cannot be expected due to [the location of] their bases.
5. The [Southern] Army from the commander in chief down has high hopes that the detachment will put up a good fight. Besides, I paid a call to the division commander at Cam Ranh Bay. He expressed satisfaction with the detachment's service.

To Detachment Commander Kawaguchi

From Staff Officer Shiraishi (dated 22 January)

Please pass on [the following information] to the commander of the 1st Dutch Borneo Unit (note by the author: Regimental Commander Oka).

1. The situation in Tarakan has failed to come up to expectations. Delay in progress [of the operations] through the area is unavoidable. Right now, the value of the Ledo airfield has become immense and the operation of the 1st Unit will give the Navy a tacit prod.
2. I reported that the 1st Unit has been fighting bravely in spite of the bad weather, which pleased the [Southern] Army. However, in view of the fact that [the Army Department] of IGHQ and others pin their hopes on the ongoing operation as a key to the success of the coming operations, the Southern Army earnestly hopes for swift success at all costs.

The plan which the Malaya Unit presented at the above-mentioned meeting on the 20th was that Operation S [would be conducted] up to 28 January, the Ledo operation from 31 January to 5 February, and Operation L (the Bangka and Palembang operations) from 11 to 18 February, and the landing in Bangka and Palembang on 18 February.⁽²⁴⁾

Staff Officer Shiraishi reported to [18th] Division Commander Mutaguchi as mentioned in the above telegram. Due to the change of the outline of Operation S which the Southern Army was forced to make on 17 January, the main force of the 18th Division left Cam Ranh on 20 January escorted by the 3d Destroyer Squadron, landed in Singora on 22 January,⁽¹¹⁸⁾ and then headed for Singapore by land along the west coast.⁽⁵³⁾

As previously told, the Southern Army was shocked by the proposal from the Southern Task Force to postpone the capture of Java by ten days, which was followed by the "bomb-shell motion"⁽²⁵⁾ on the next day, the 20th, by the Malaya Unit to postpone the capture of Bangka and Palembang for about two weeks. The Southern Army highhandedly issued the following order on the same day.^(23, 24) It was an order that the Sixteenth Army, a corps under the command of the commander in chief of the Southern Army, should carry out the Java operations as had been agreed with the commander in chief of the Navy in the Southern Area.

Southern Army Order

Saigon, 20 January

1. The overall operations of the Southern Army are progressing as scheduled.
2. In conjunction with the Navy, I intend to swiftly capture Java. The cooperation with the Navy shall be based on General Agreement No. 2 and No. 4.
3. The commander of the Sixteenth Army shall swiftly capture Java in the following manner:
 - (a) Exploiting the results of having gained command of the air over Java, he shall land his main force in western Java and almost simultaneously an element [of his army] in eastern Java. When conducting the landing operations, he should expect interference from the naval and air forces of the enemy.
 - (b) After the landing, he shall defeat the enemy and promptly seize Batavia, Surabaya and Bandung.
 - (c) He shall swiftly make air bases in Java ready for use.
(Note by the author: Item No. 4 and No. 5 refer to the tasks of the Third Air Force commander and the captain general of the Shipping Transport Command. See the previous description [p. 155].)
6. I shall [command from] Saigon.

Count Terauchi Hisaichi, commander in chief of the Southern Army

The Situation in the Eastern Part of the Dutch East Indies

In the eastern part of the Dutch East Indies, under the already-described circumstances, the Dutch East Indies Unit (the Third Fleet) Commander V. Adm. Takahashi Ibō, who had advanced to Davao on 6 January, the same night issued an order to “postpone the capture of Tarakan and Menado by one day, and also the subsequent schedule by one day.” [Consequently,] the landings in Tarakan and Menado were carried out on 11 January, one day behind the schedule specified in the Cam Ranh Agreement (General Agreement No. 4).

However, in conducting the next operations against Balikpapan and Kendari, other problems came up. (General Agreement No. 4 had scheduled the date of landing [in these places] for 20 January.)

First, the airfield in Tarakan was smaller than expected, and therefore it needed to be extended and made ready for use, while fuel and ammunition also needed to be accumulated there. However, the sweeping of mines laid all over the waterway was not making much progress, partly because two out of the four [available] minesweepers had been shelled and sunk.⁽¹¹⁹⁾ As for the progress of the minesweeping, twenty-seven mines had been disposed of on 15 January, nineteen mines on the 16th, eighteen mines on the 17th, and a total of seventy-seven mines by the 17th; by the 24th, a total of 173 mines were disposed of.⁽¹¹⁹⁾ As for the airfield, on the 16th, they barely managed to extend the runway to 30 meters wide and 700 meters long, which made the commander of the 1st Escort Unit (R. Adm. Nishimura Shōji, commander of the 4th Destroyer Squadron) wire on the 16th to the commander of the 2d Kure Special Landing Force and the leader of the construction squad that “if the Tarakan airfield cannot be made ready [in time] for the advance of [the Navy] land-based medium-sized attack planes, it will greatly hinder the coming operations. As the scheduled date to launch the next operations is getting close, you shall make the airfield ready for use at any cost as soon as possible so that the land-based medium-sized attack planes can use [the airfield].” On the 18th, the situation [didn’t seem to have changed] so he again wired to the commander of the 2d Kure Special Landing Force that “the task of guarding [is important but] all possible efforts shall be devoted to transporting the unloaded matériel and getting the airfield ready at any cost, as making the airfield ready is at present the most important [matter] for the [coming] operations.”⁽¹¹⁹⁾ Such was the situation as of the 18th, despite the fact that the landing in Balikpapan was set for 20 January, and accordingly departure from Tarakan on 17 January in the Cam Ranh Agreement (General Agreement No. 4).

Secondly, the 1st Air Raid Unit (i.e. the 21st Air Flotilla in Davao), charged with the support of the operations in the east of Celebes, had sent the following telegram [to the commander of the Dutch East Indies Unit] on 14 January:

According to the reconnaissance of our land-based reconnaissance planes conducted today on the 14th, some thirty enemy submarines were going underwater dispersed between Labuha and the west point of the Sula Islands about 1650. They can be calculated to reach the vicinity of Menado tomorrow morning. In addition, in Ambon, about twenty-five enemy aircraft have gathered and one mid-sized cruiser [was also spotted]. Tomorrow, the 15th, our unit will attack Ambon with all of our land-based medium-sized attack planes and fighter planes, and search for enemy submarines and attack them with all of our flying boats (ten available at most). Further, we will postpone advancing our headquarters to Menado scheduled for tomorrow, the 15th.

For the above reasons, about 0900 on 15 January Vice Admiral Takahashi, commander of the Dutch East Indies Unit, ordered R. Adm. Takagi Takeo, commander of the Eastern Attack Unit ([and] commander of the 5th Cruiser Division) to attack the enemy submarines in the Molucca Sea, and also issued an order “to delay the date of [the operations to] seize Kendari and Ambon to 24 January and to 29 January respectively. The [new] dates for the subsequent invasion schedule will be announced after they are determined depending on the construction units’ preparations for departure, and on the progress in making the bases ready.”⁽¹¹⁷⁾ At that time, the *Tokyo-maru* and the *Ken’yō-maru*, which were supposed to transport the 1st Construction Squad to be redeployed from Legaspi, had left the [Japanese] mainland behind schedule, and were expected to reach Legaspi no sooner than 15 January.^(117, 145)

Just on this day (the 15th), the following report came to the Dutch East Indies Unit (i.e. the Third Fleet) from Tarakan:⁽¹¹⁹⁾

Sent by the 1st Escort Unit at 2300 on the 15th

The seizure of Balikpapan was scheduled to start on the 21st, and we were proceeding with the preparations. Then the army changed its operation outline in the light of the course of things during the Tarakan operation, among which is that the Tarakan airfield needs to be made fully ready. We discussed [these matters] with Detachment Commander Sakaguchi and decided to conduct the operation in tandem with the Kendari operation on the 24th.

In summary, when the 4th Destroyer Squadron, which had carried out the landing operation in Tarakan on the 11th, considered it difficult to conduct the coming [operation to] seize Balikpapan as scheduled due to [the condition of] the Tarakan airfield and the [presence of] mines, the 21st Air Flotilla [stationed] in Davao had just reported on the state of the allied warships in the Molucca Sea on the 14th. This was followed by the order on the 15th, issued by the Third Fleet [also stationed] in Davao to the Eastern Attack Unit ([consisting of] the 5th Cruiser Division, the 2d Destroyer Squadron, and others), to postpone [the operations to] seize Kendari and Ambon. With the underlying facts that [the operations to] seize Balikpapan and Kendari were originally planned to be conducted simultaneously, and that Yano Tsuneo, staff officer of the Sakaguchi Detachment, again showing his resourcefulness, had proposed new “Operational outline for seizing in the coming operation the oil resources in Balikpapan intact, in the light of the fact that the oil resources in Tarakan had been destroyed in advance,” the 1st Escort Unit saw in the order to postpone [the operation to] seize Kendari an opportunity to report its decision to “also postpone [the operation to] seize Balikpapan until the 24th.”

The commander of the Dutch East Indies Unit ([and] commander in chief of the Third Fleet) approved this telegram from the 1st Escort Unit, and issued the following order by telegram on the 16th:⁽¹¹⁹⁾

Sent by the Dutch East Indies Unit at 2400 on the 16th

In view of the readiness of the Tarakan base and other [factors], the [date of] advancing into Balikpapan will on account of these [factors] be changed to about 24 January.

At that time, the 2d Carrier Division ([consisting of] the aircraft carriers *Sōryū* and *Hiryū*), had been transferred from the Combined Fleet to the Southern Task Force by the order of 8

January; it had left the Bungo Channel at 0600 on 13 January, and was sailing southward, heading first for Palau.⁽¹¹⁷⁾ The [Army] Eastern Detachment charged with seizure of Ambon had left Hong Kong on 12 January and was under way, heading first for Davao.⁽¹¹⁷⁾

While the [Navy] Dutch East Indies Unit (i.e. the Third Fleet [stationed] in Davao) and the [Navy] air unit (i.e. the Eleventh Air Fleet, whose commander in chief had advanced into Davao on 7 January one day behind the commander in chief of the Third Fleet) were in the above situation, Commander of the Southern Task Force ([and] Commander in Chief of the Second Fleet) Vice Admiral Kondō advanced into Palau on 18 January and took command of the Eastern Support Unit, which he had organized and dispatched previously (on 23 December).⁽¹⁰³⁾ The main unit of the Southern Task Force ([under the command of] Vice Admiral Kondō) had left Cam Ranh Bay on 8 January after signing the Cam Ranh Agreement on 1 January, and advanced to Palau on 18 January via Magong (which he left on the 14th), because the Malaya area operations had passed the critical point, and the time [to conduct] the Dutch East Indies operations was approaching.^(103, 109) On advancing into Palau, the Southern Task Force immediately invited Capt. Yamaki Akira, senior staff officer of the Third Fleet, and Capt. Takahashi Chihaya, senior staff officer of the Eleventh Air Fleet, to meet and started talks with them.^(113, 136) At the meeting, Captain Yamaki strongly demanded a two-week postponement of the schedule of the subsequent Dutch East Indies operation:⁽¹¹³⁾

1. The seized airfields in Davao, Jolo, Tarakan and Menado 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 would be required after their seizure 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 [operations to] gain command of the air by the land-based air units 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 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, caused a 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, and [they] break down one after another. [Moreover,] the officers and crew are exhausted because they cannot take time off [either], which makes us worry about the prospect [for the coming operations] if the operations continue [in this way].
6. In the current circumstances, it will be difficult to provide escort forces at the time of [the operation to] seize Banjarmasin. Even if escort can be provided, it will be dangerous to pass in front of Java with the enemy on your flank.

The staff officer of the Eleventh Air Fleet (the [land-based] air unit), Takahashi Chihaya, also requested a postponement of the invasion date(s):⁽¹³⁶⁾

1. It has taken more days than expected to make the airfields ready for use, which has resulted in a successive delay in the forward deployment of the air units. I am of the same opinion as the Dutch East Indies Unit on the postponement of the schedule.

2. As for the air operations prior to the invasion of Java, it is all right to conduct those against eastern Java from Balikpapan and Makassar, and call off [the seizure] of Banjarmasin.
3. Among the recently seized documents in Tarakan, detailed materials were found on the airfield on Bali. As the airfield on Bali seems far better than we expected, we really want this airfield to be seized before the landing in Java.

In response to these views, the Southern Task Force stated that a postponement of the invasion schedule would be awkward both from the point of view of the general conduct of the operations and from the point of view of good faith towards the Southern Army and demanded [more] effort [to keep to the original schedule]. In the end, however, it accepted that [a postponement] was unavoidable, but consolidated the views on a two-week postponement into a ten-day postponement and, as previously told, sent the telegram to the Southern Army.

The Manila Conference

In accordance with the Cam Ranh Agreement (the agreement of 1 January between the Southern Army and the [Navy] Southern Task Force), the Manila Conference had been prepared as the place where the Sixteenth Army and the [Navy] Dutch East Indies Unit were to make arrangements [for the Java operation], but putting aside the Sixteenth Army, the Southern Army turned it into a scene of dispute with the Southern Task Force [about the invasion schedule].

On the 21st, Col. Ishii Masayoshi, senior staff officer of Section 1, Col. Tanikawa Kazuo, senior staff officer of Section 4, [both] from the staff of the Southern Army, Lt. Col. Miyashi Minoru, chief of operations staff of the Third Air Force, [Navy] Capt. Ishihara Itsu, staff officer [of the Second Fleet] seconded to the Southern Army, and [Navy] Capt. Tomari Mitsuyoshi, senior staff officer of the First Southern Expeditionary Fleet, directly flew to Manila across the South China Sea by a naval land-based attack plane.⁽²³⁾

Colonel Ishii felt confident because when he had already gone to bed in Cam Ranh the night before, Staff Officer Arao [of the Southern Army] had visited him from Saigon, bringing the following telegram [from Tokyo]:⁽²³⁾

To Chief of Staff, Southern Army

From Vice Chief, Army General Staff

I acknowledge Southern Army Staff Section 1 Telegram No. 557.

As a result of our contact with the Navy, [we learned that] the Navy General Staff is of the same opinion as the Army, and that it does not wish to postpone the operation schedule. Further, it very well understands the sentiments of the Army. In addition, according to the telegram(s) from the Combined Fleet to the Second and the Third Fleets, the former demands [an explanation of] the reasons [to request] the postponement of the operation schedule. As this is the situation [at the Navy], the Navy General Staff, according to the above communication, may be expected to send a telegram to the Combined Fleet, the Second and the Third Fleets that "keeping in mind that the postponement of the operation schedule may have a significant impact on all parties, [they should] prudently deal with it." [This] XX (note by the author: two characters in the original text are illegible) situation is for you to keep in mind in your negotiations with the Navy side.

On the Navy side, Senior Staff Officer Capt. Yanagisawa Kuranosuke and Gunnery Staff Officer Cdr. Fujita Masamichi, [both] of the Second Fleet, Capt. Yamaki Akira, senior staff officer of the Third Fleet, and Capt. Takahashi Chihaya, senior staff officer of the Eleventh Air Fleet, four in total, flew from Palau on the night of the 19th to Manila. From Gaoxiong, Cdr. Yoshikawa Shūkichi, senior staff officer of the 5th Destroyer Squadron also joined them. From Saigon, [Navy] Lt. Cdr. Iguchi, liaison staff officer with the Third Air Force, and Cdr. Kimura Kenji, senior staff officer of the 12th Seaplane Tender Division (who was to be transferred and attached to the Third Fleet headquarters), came accompanying [Navy] Capt. Tomari Mitsuyoshi, senior staff officer of the First Southern Expeditionary Fleet. As for the Sixteenth Army, Commander Lieutenant General Imamura, Chief of Staff Major General Okazaki, and Senior Staff Officer of Section 1 Colonel Takashima had arrived in Manila at 1330 (on the 21st) from Taiwan.^(32, 33) Staff Officer Oda had arrived from Saigon.⁽⁴⁰⁾

On arriving at the Manila Hotel, Staff Officer Ishii of the Southern Army requested the holding of immediate talks (on the 21st) between Colonel Tanikawa of the Southern Army, [Navy] Captain Yanagisawa of the Second Fleet, [Navy] Captain Takahashi of the Eleventh Air Fleet, [Navy] Captain Tomari of the First Southern Expeditionary Fleet, [Navy] Captain Yamaki of the Third Fleet, and himself only, excluding the presence of the personnel of the Sixteenth Army, who had been put up at the same hotel.⁽²³⁾ The meeting was held as requested and on that day, following [Navy] Captain Yamaki's explanation, they discussed [the matter] until 0130.⁽²³⁾ [Navy] Captain Yamaki explained that he had "visited the Second Fleet and earnestly requested a postponement of [Operations] L and H for two weeks, but that Commander in Chief Kondō had sternly demanded to reduce the number of days [of the postponement]." And he requested, "I would like you to accept a postponement of ten days, that is, to set H on day $x + 80$, as there is no other way."⁽²³⁾ [Navy] Captain Yamaki gave the following grounds [for his request]: "The airfields occupied so far are in an unexpectedly bad condition and they require at least two weeks before allowing the [naval] land-based medium-sized attack planes to use them; a [naval] land-based medium-sized attack plane weighs twelve tons fully-loaded, which imposes particular requirements; from now on the Third Fleet has to seize a number of airfields such as those in Balikpapan, Kendari, Makassar, etc. one after another, and the details of [their condition] are [still] unclear; what is more, [the farther] the Third Fleet proceeds southward, the vaster the minefields will become, and sweeping them is not easily done; furthermore, the above-mentioned schedule with a ten-day postponement of the operation has already dropped the whole [operation against] Banjarmasin, and included instead the seizure of the airfield on Bali just before day H (the date of landing in Java) ([because] the capture of Banjarmasin is out of the question in the light of the enemy movements and the time required, because the seaway leading there [passes] just in front of Surabaya, and because it is difficult to arrange warships for the [Banjarmasin] convoy); furthermore, if the [main] convoy leaves Lingayen on 8 February, and sails at a speed of eight knots, it will arrive in Java no sooner than the 19th, [which means] it cannot be on time if H (the date of landing in Java) is set on day $x + 70$, i.e. 16 February, [and thus] setting H on day $x + 70$ is totally out of the question."⁽²³⁾

On the next day, the 22d, the negotiations with the First Southern Expeditionary Fleet were conducted from morning onwards with the staff officers of the Sixteenth Army taking part, too.⁽²³⁾ Senior Staff Officer Captain Tomari of the First Southern Expeditionary Fleet for the present insisted on the proposal of a two-week postponement which the Fleet had pre-

sented to the Southern Army at Cam Ranh Bay.⁽²³⁾ The Southern Army firmly opposed it, arguing that the Navy should try and use airfields in Malaya as its base if the Kuching airfield was in bad condition and [the usefulness of] the airfields in Ledo was unknown, and that attacks against L (Bangka and Palembang) and H (Java) would not be totally impossible if the airfields in Kluang and Kahang in Malaya were seized, which was regarded as certain judging from the progress of the operations of the Twenty-fifth Army, and thus the heated negotiations went on and on.⁽²³⁾ The staff officers of the Sixteenth Army considered the attitude of the staff officers of the Southern Army incomprehensible, wondering why a postponement of a mere ten days had to be so stubbornly refused, and spoke for the Fleet.^(23, 38, 40) In the end, they decided to [first] settle on a compromise proposed by Captain Yanagisawa of the Second Fleet, and, at 1500, [Senior] Staff Officer Ishii of the Southern Army sent the following telegram to Saigon:⁽²³⁾ [Editor's note: According to the description on p. 222, the final compromise was proposed by Colonel Kawagoe, chief of staff of the 48th Division.]

To Chief of Staff, Southern Army, sent at 1500 on 22 January

Since yesterday, the 21st, we have negotiated the dates of L and H with the fleets as best as we could. The Navy has also made the utmost efforts to reduce the days [of the postponement], but it turned out that they could not be reduced any further than the following schedule:

L was set on day $x + 64$. (Note by the author: originally set on day $x + 60$)

Western part of H was set on day $x + 75$. (Ditto: originally set on day $x + 70$)

Eastern part of H was set on day $x + 77$. (Ditto: originally set on day $x + 70$)

Makassar was set on day $x + 63$.

Kupang was set on day $x + 74$. (Note by the author: originally set on day $x + 65$)

The seizure of Banjarmasin shall be omitted in order to shorten the [delayed] schedule, and air operations against H will be conducted from Makassar and Balikpapan. However, if possible, the airfield on Bali will be seized around day $x + 75$. Furthermore, OSAMU-SHÜDAN (note by the author: the Sixteenth Army) wishes to conduct the landings on eastern and western H almost simultaneously on day $x + 77$ for reasons of control of the army.

Please [inform me of] your ideas and give your instructions about the above as soon as possible.

Although the Sixteenth Army's wish for landings both in eastern and in western Java on day $x + 77$ was mentioned in the above telegram, Colonel Ishii rejected it because he thought that "the [Navy] Dutch East Indies Unit would probably have much more difficulties in proceeding with its operations than the Malaya Unit had, which means that the schedule would be pushed back more and more if simultaneous landings were laid down as a principle."⁽²³⁾ The headquarters of the Southern Army in Saigon sent the following reply:⁽²³⁾

From Chief of Staff, [Southern Army]

To Staff Officer Ishii

Although the postponement of the invasion schedule was extremely disappointing, we will adopt the shortest schedule indicated in your report as the new invasion schedule. From now on, through even closer cooperation between the Army and the Navy, we are determined to successfully carry out Operation H, firmly keeping to the new invasion schedule. Finally, we appreciate the great efforts you and the other [officers] have made. Meanwhile, according to the OSAMU [Sixteenth Army] Staff Section 1 Telegram No. 43, it seems that [the army] accepted the

Third Fleet's proposal concerning a significant change in the schedule of [the operation to] seize Ambon. However, this is a matter to be decided between the [Southern] Army and the Second Fleet, and as this applies to subsequent operations as well, you must warn [the army] about it.

As the above telegram reached Manila on the 23d, Staff Officer Ishii and his group and the staff officers of the Sixteenth Army took it as [approval] that "the new schedule was decided," and discussed concrete arrangements with the Navy based on it. The same evening, [Sixteenth] Army Commander Imamura invited the staff officers of the Southern Army and the naval staff officers, Captain Yanagisawa, Captain Yamaki, Captain Tomari and Captain Takahashi, to thank them for their efforts, and asked for their continuous support and cooperation.⁽³²⁾

Colonel Ishii and his group left Manila at 1000 on the next day, the 24th, and returned to Saigon.⁽²³⁾ Colonel Ishii reported: "So far as it goes, agreement was reached by suppressing the requests from the units under the control of the Second Fleet. However, the invasion schedule was curtailed to the limit. In particular, this was achieved based on the idea that [the convoys] should depart when the air units were ready for deployment, and not on the idea that the convoy should depart after the enemy air power was totally destroyed. The airfields in Ledo will be pivotal as they will enable us to bombard as far as Surabaya, but if they cannot be prepared in time for the operations against Bangka and Palembang, the airfields in Malaya will be used to launch [bombardments] instead. Such was the way in which we worked out [the schedule]." ⁽²⁴⁾ Naval Staff Officer Ishihara stated: "We would like the Army not to force on us unreasonable [operations], as this schedule is [shortened] to the limit."⁽²⁴⁾

Soon [the proposal for] the agreement (dated 25 January) on the standard schedule for landings based on the results of the Manila Conference got to the commander in chief of the Southern Army in Saigon from the commander in chief of the Second Fleet in Palau.⁽²³⁾ However, in this agreement, the word "around" had been added to each of five [newly-scheduled] landing dates, which provoked controversy again.⁽²³⁾ Some argued that it was necessary to determine the exact dates [and remind the Navy of the sense of exactness] by having it delete the word "around."⁽²³⁾ However, the sender was the commander in chief of the Navy in the South, and besides, it was also forwarded to the commanders in chief of fleets. Consequently, [the Army] reluctantly settled [the matter] by letting [Navy] Captain Ishihara send the following telegram to the chief of staff of the Second Fleet [R. Adm. Shiraishi Kazutaka]:⁽²³⁾

From Staff Officer Ishihara

To Chief of Staff, Second Fleet

The [Southern] Army received the 2F (note by the author: the Second Fleet) Classified Telegram No. 750, and found it regrettable that the word "around" appeared in front of the scheduled dates of invasion. The army considered the fact that the word "around" was added despite the serious negotiations at the Manila Conference, which were primarily about deciding the dates, would make the decisions at Manila meaningless. [The army] wanted the deletion of the word "around" from the [formal] agreement so desperately that it would have requested [another] discussion on this issue. However, in the light of the fact that this was formally [proposed as an] agreement by the [commander in] chief of your fleet, I managed to convince the army at last after various negotiations, and succeeded in bringing [the situation to a point] where after waiting a while, the return telegram from [the Army General Staff in] Tokyo with the reply of no objection was received [from them as well]. Such being the case, it is hoped that, in view of

the difficult circumstances of the Manila Conference, you will consider this invasion schedule as the standard, regardless of the word "around," and do your very best to seriously keep to this [schedule.]

The above-mentioned telegram of the official [proposal for the] agreement sent by the commander in chief of the Second Fleet was as follows:⁽¹¹⁹⁾

To Commander in Chief, Southern Army

From Commander in Chief, Second Fleet

CC Combined Fleet, Southern Task Force, Chief of Navy General Staff

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.

Schedule for L and the western part of H

The schedule for the landings in Bangka and Palembang (L) and western Java (H) was arranged on the 22d as follows:⁽²³⁾

1. The airfields in Kluang and Kahang shall be seized by around 25, or 26 January (day $x + 48$, or day $x + 49$) at the latest.
2. The army aircraft shall be ready in Malaya by 3 February (day $x + 57$). The Navy shall make efforts to have those of its aircraft which are to be deployed in Malaya ready by the same day as well.
3. The deployment of the naval [land-based] medium-sized attack planes to the airfield in Ledo shall be completed by 6 February.
4. The advance party of the units for seizing Bangka and Palembang ([consisting of] two battalions of the 38th Division as its core, in seven transport ships) shall leave Cam Ranh on 4 February (day $x + 58$) and come ashore in Bangka and Palembang on the night of 10 February (day $x + 64$). The 3d Destroyer Squadron (reinforced with four destroyers and four minesweepers) shall leave Cam Ranh on 5 February [editor's note: the text says "March," which clearly is a misprint] (day $x + 59$) to escort them.

5. The main force of the 38th Division (in twelve transport ships) shall leave Cam Ranh on 6 February (day $x + 60$), and come ashore in Palembang on the night of 11 February (day $x + 65$). The cruiser the *Yura*, four destroyers, and a few minesweepers shall leave Cam Ranh on 7 February (day $x + 61$) to escort them.
6. The convoy of the main force of the Sixteenth Army ([consisting of] the 2d Division and the Shōji Detachment as its core) shall leave Cam Ranh Bay on the night of 12 February (day $x + 66$), and come ashore in western Java on the morning of 21 February (day $x + 75$). The 5th Destroyer Squadron ([consisting of] eight destroyers, if possible, reinforced with two destroyers of the 4th Destroyer Squadron) shall accompany and escort them. The ships to be charged with the escort of the main force of the 38th Division shall join the 5th Destroyer Squadron at sea on the night of 17 February (day $x + 71$), after replenishing at Anambas on 16 February (day $x + 70$).

[Thus,] the increase of forces to escort the convoy of the main force of the Sixteenth Army, an issue about which Commander Imamura of the [Sixteenth] Army was worried, and about which Commander in Chief Ozawa [of the First Southern Expeditionary Fleet] had given him kind assurances, was taken up.

The Issue of the Eastern Part of H and Bali

The postponement of the schedule [for the operation against] eastern Java gave time, which was welcomed by those in the Shipping Transport Command, the Sixteenth Army and the 48th Division. However, the sudden decision to capture Bali disconcerted the people concerned. The capture of Bali was included neither in the central agreement nor in the Tokyo agreement of the Southern Army. Although it had come up in the arrangement between the [Navy] Dutch East Indies Unit and the Sixteenth Army at the Iwakuni Conference, it was [again] completely ignored in the Cam Ranh Agreement of the Southern Army. Consequently, it had fallen out of the scope of both the Southern Army and the Shipping Transport Command. In the end, however, it was decided that one battalion of the 48th Division would be assigned [for its capture]. In order to rush headlong toward [the island] under circumstances where control of the air as well as of the sea was yet to be gained, faster ships had to be allocated. [Chief] Shipping Staff Sendō Shunzō of the Sixteenth Army was quite at loss considering that “[most of] the faster ships are already badly damaged in [previous operations in] various areas. If the ships have to be arranged out of those already allocated to the Sixteenth Army, it will be depressingly [difficult].”⁽⁴⁴⁾ Staff Officer Ueno Shigeru of the Shipping Transport Command painstakingly made inquiries, found two faster ships, the *Sasako-maru* and the *Sagami-maru* in the middle of unloading in Singora, and arranged for them immediately (on 25 January).⁽²⁷⁾ Both ships quickly completed unloading, left Singora, entered port at Cap Saint Jacques on 28 January and left the port on the 31st after hasty preparations to hurry to Lingayen.⁽²⁷⁾

The Banjarmasin Issue

As previously mentioned, Colonel Ishii had wired at 1500 on 22 January that “the seizure of Banjarmasin shall be omitted in order to shorten the [delayed] schedule,”⁽²³⁾ because the Navy had stated that the air operations against Java would be conducted from southern Celebes and Balikpapan [first], and then also from Bali once the island had been captured. However,

the seizure of Banjarmasin before [the operation to] capture Java had been reported to the Emperor and included in the orders issued by the Army and the Navy Departments of IGHQ to the Southern Army and the Southern Task Force. [Consequently,] previously in Tokyo, the Southern Army had ordered the Sixteenth Army to capture [Banjarmasin] by the order of 20 November. Also, the Southern Task Force had given an order to capture the place, as mentioned previously. Neither the staff officers of the Southern Army nor those of the Southern Task Force could ignore the IGHQ order (of 6 November), and sent on the 23d the following lame telegrams:⁽²³⁾

To Vice Chief of Army General Staff

From Chief of Staff, Southern Army, 23 January

Southern Army Staff Section 1 Telegram No. 604

1. According to the current study of the invasion schedule conducted in Manila, the [rapid] progress of the entire H (note by the author: the Java operation) is hoped for by omitting the seizure of Banjarmasin.
2. We request your understanding [of the above] in advance, as its seizure is among the items in the central agreement.
3. However, we expect to seize Banjarmasin almost at the same time as [the operation against] eastern Java or when the opportunity arises afterwards.

To Navy Department of the IGHQ

From Senior Staff Officer of the Second Fleet at Manila

Classified Telegram No. 175 of the 23d

As a result of research and discussions with the [Southern] Army headquarters and other parties concerned (the Third Fleet, the First Southern Expeditionary Fleet, the Eleventh Air Fleet, the Sixteenth Army and the Third Air Force), an agreement was reached and the following definite plan was worked out. We would like you to urgently let us know your view. Further, we would like the Navy General Staff to pass on the contents of this telegram to the Army General Staff, too.

1. Standard dates [to implement operations] of capture
 - (a) Ambon: day x + 54, 31 January
 - (b) Makassar: day x + 63, 9 February
 - (c) Bangka and Palembang: day x + 64, 10 February
 - (d) Kupang: day x + 74, 20 February
 - (e) Western Java: day x + 75, 21 February
 - (f) Eastern Java: day x + 77, 23 February
2. In order to put [the entire operation] within the invasion schedule of the preceding item, it was decided to call off the surface escort of the Sakaguchi Detachment, and to plan an overland seizure of Banjarmasin from Balikpapan [instead]. In addition, as an air base [to be used] at the time of landing in eastern Java, Bali shall be captured. It is scheduled for day x + 75 (21 February).
3. In order to use the Ledo airfield for the air operation at the time of [the operations to] seize Bangka and Palembang, both the Army and the Navy shall cooperate with each other as much as possible. Also, the naval air forces shall be advanced to the seized bases in southern Malaya.
4. The reinforcement of the army forces for mopping up [enemy remnants] in Mindanao shall be considered at the [Southern] Army headquarters.

The Army Department of IGHQ sent the following reply telegram on the next day, the 24th (the day the participants of the Manila Conference headed back).⁽²³⁾

From Vice Chief of Army General Staff, sent at 1440 on 24 January

To Chief of Staff, [Southern Army]

Army General Staff Telegram No. 551

We respectfully acknowledge Southern Army Staff Section 1 Telegram No. 604.

The key to the operations to capture Java lies in the success or failure of the air operations, for which, as you are well aware, the seizure of Banjarmasin is invaluable. Thus, the operation plan approved by the Emperor as well as the central agreement paid particular attention to it. Furthermore, in view of the fact that the enemy efforts to strengthen the defense of Java [have progressed so much that] they cannot be taken lightly, we are deeply concerned about the results of air operations in a situation where the cooperation of the aircraft carriers cannot necessarily be expected. If there are difficulties in conducting the operation from the sea, are there no other ways, such as an overland seizure or maneuvering along the coast in small boats? [Furthermore,] even if there is not enough time after the seizure to make the base ready for use before the launch of operations to capture Java, may it not be better to occupy [Banjarmasin] in order to ensure [the success of] subsequent operations? Please pay further attention to these points.

While feeling that the telegram was “very considerate,”⁽²³⁾ the Southern Army was [more] concerned about the delay in the agreement with the Second Fleet (the Southern Task Force) and sent the following telegram to [the Army Department of] IGHQ on the next day, the 25th:⁽²³⁾

To Vice Chief of Army General Staff

From Chief of Staff, Southern Army, sent on the 25th

Southern Army Staff Section 1 Telegram No. 622

1. We respectfully acknowledge Army General Staff Telegram No. 551.
2. We are absolutely of the same opinion about the value of Banjarmasin. However, we omitted [the operation] from the new plan because the seizure [of the place] in conjunction by the Army and the Navy might cause a significant delay in the invasion of Java.
3. Nevertheless, in order to securely carry out the invasion of Java, we decided to seize Banjarmasin by land as well as by the sea, and took [the necessary] steps.
4. Further, we intend to capture Bali with two faster ships together with the Navy no later than day $x + 75$.

The Southern Army eagerly awaited the reply telegram from [the Army Department of] IGHQ, but since no reply came, it lost patience⁽²³⁾ and sent the next day, the 26th, another telegram to [the Army Department] of IGHQ:⁽²³⁾

To Vice Chief of Army General Staff

From Chief of Staff, Southern Army, sent on the 26th

Southern Army Staff Section 1 Telegram No. 632

Concerning the omission of Banjarmasin [from the new plan], mentioned in Southern Army Staff Section 1 Telegram No. 604, your urgent reply is requested because of [the time required

for] the revision of the agreement between the Army and the Navy. In this regard, we would like you to refer to Southern Army Staff Section 1 Telegram No. 622.

In response to this telegram, the Army Department of IGHQ sent the following reply:⁽²³⁾

From Vice Chief of Army General Staff, sent on the 26th

To Chief of Staff, [Southern Army]

Army General Staff Telegram No. 591

We respectfully acknowledge Southern Army Staff Section 1 Telegram No. 632. I am contacting you again, praying for certain success in the operation [to] capture Java.

We have also been negotiating about the cooperation from aircraft carriers in the Java operation. However, at present it cannot be expected for sure, as the Navy is extremely cautious about sending them to a sea where the enemy air force is [still] strong. Although the value of seizing Banjarmasin for the air operations against Java remains to our mind unquestionable, we would like to know the status of the discussions between the Army and the Navy on the prospects for success of the air operations at your end. As to your view that the capture of Java might be significantly delayed if the Army and the Navy in conjunction should capture [Banjarmasin], the Navy General Staff has doubts, too. Although it thinks that it might represent the view of the Navy on site, we want to know the true state of affairs. For your information, the Navy General Staff also fully recognizes the necessity of seizing Banjarmasin, and has already ordered [the units] on site that the place needs to be seized and made ready for use before the landings on Java.

When the staff officers of Section 1 of the Southern Army Staff read the telegram, they felt "worse than ever."⁽²³⁾ Chief of Staff Lt. Gen. Tsukada Osamu, who had orchestrated the southern operation plan as vice chief of Army General Staff until just before he was transferred as chief of staff [of the Southern Army], was also disgusted with the attitude of [the Army Department] of IGHQ, and gave vent to his frustration by saying: "[The Army Department of] IGHQ got it wrong. At the beginning of the preliminary study on the southern operation, the original plan was that [the airfield in] Banjarmasin would be used by army aircraft for the attack on Java. Despite the fact that the Navy is now in charge of this area, they must be saying all these things out of recollections from that time. Why do they keep on grumbling about such trivial things when the Navy says it won't use [the airfield]?"⁽²³⁾ The Southern Army wired [again] the following telegram on the next day, the 27th:⁽²³⁾

To Vice Chief of Army General Staff

From Chief of Staff, [Southern Army], dated 27 January

Southern Army Staff Section 4, Telegram No. 658

We are deeply aware of the significance of the seizure of Banjarmasin, which was mentioned in Army General Staff Telegram No. 591 (in which you requested reconsideration of our decision regarding its seizure). The Army and the Navy on site have been studying [the feasibility] of carrying out [the seizure] according to plan as best as possible. However, as a result of a detailed study of matters related to the escort to be provided by Navy warships, the [possible] dates of seizing air bases, the setting up [of our bases] and making them ready for use, and to other [factors] in the entire Java operation, we regrettably came to the conclusion that conducting the seizure of Banjarmasin as planned would cause another delay of about two weeks in the capture

of eastern Java. Although both the Army and the Navy fully realize that the air operations in the Java invasion operation will never be easy, they do not believe that the tactical value of seizing Banjarmasin as planned can compensate for the strategic disadvantage of a two-week delay in the invasion schedule. Thus, in order to make up for the disadvantage of revising the [prepared] plan, the decision was made to capture Bali as well as swiftly seize Banjarmasin by land and by maneuvering small boats along the coast, of which you were already informed in the previous telegrams.

The reference in the above telegram to "Southern Army Staff Section 4" indicates that this telegram was drafted by Section 4 of the Southern Army Staff, that is, the section in charge of air-related matters of the Southern Army. Seven days of exchanging telegrams had not yet settled the matter, and without a settlement, the Southern Army and the Southern Task Force could not conclude the Manila Agreement.

How did [the Army Department of] IGHQ, which had stated in its report to the Throne that the seizure of Banjarmasin would take place ahead of [the Java operation] and had given orders accordingly, view the strength of the allied air and naval forces? Col. Tanikawa Kazuo, senior staff officer of Section 4 of the Southern Army wrote in his diary for 3 February as follows:

The state of reinforcement of [enemy] air forces in the Far East ([source:] Army General Staff)

1. [number of aircraft] already sent in:
100 aircraft in Burma, 110 aircraft in Malaya, 10 aircraft in the Dutch East Indies, 100 aircraft in India, which make a total of 320 aircraft (40 aircraft from Chongqing included).
2. [number of aircraft] diverted within the East Asia:
40 aircraft to Burma from India, 40 aircraft to Malaya from the Dutch East Indies, 50 aircraft to Malaya from Australia, 30 aircraft to the Dutch East Indies from Australia.
3. [number of aircraft] to be sent to East Asia shortly:
245 aircraft from the British mainland and Egypt ([consisting of] 64 bombers and 181 fighter planes), 40 aircraft to the Dutch East Indies from the United States (fighter planes), 80 Australian Air Force aircraft returning from the British mainland and north Africa ([consisting of] three bomber squadrons and two fighter plane squadrons), which make a total of 365 aircraft.
4. 240 aircraft to Egypt from the British mainland.
5. The increase of U.S. aircraft in the above:
Already increased: 90 aircraft to Malaya, 10 aircraft to Dutch East Indies, which make a total of 100 aircraft ([consisting of] 60 fighter planes and 40 super heavy bombers).
To be sent in shortly: 40 aircraft to the Dutch East Indies.

As for the allied naval power, the U.S. Far East Fleet in the Philippines had retreated to the Dutch East Indies without a fight, and the British Fleet in Malaya was also expected to retreat to the Dutch East Indies. On 20 January, the Southern Army submitted the Southern Army Special Report No. 5, in which it stated: "Lieutenant General MacArthur still seems to remain in Corregidor Island. Java now serves as the operational command center of the allied forces, replacing Singapore. In fact, the General Headquarters of the allied forces of the Southwestern Pacific has been set up in Surabaya, and the commander in chief of the U.S. Asiatic Fleet, Hart, also seems to have stationed himself there. It seems that the U.S. Fleet based on Surabaya and Ambon has taken charge of the waters of Celebes and further east."⁽²³⁾

The Southern Army had never thought that the concept of [strategic] pursuit was easy [to implement], either. As previously mentioned, [Sixteenth] Army Commander Imamura had considered directly requesting Commander in Chief [of the Southern Army] Terauchi for an increase in warships to escort [his army]. Also Colonel Tanikawa, senior staff officer of Section 4 of the Staff Department of the Southern Army headquarters, who was responsible for planning and directing the air operations of the Southern Army, held a grim but determined view and wrote in his diary for 2 February as follows:

My beliefs regarding the Bangka, Palembang and Java operations

The time has really come for the final stage of the southern operation, the Bangka, Palembang, and Java operations. While various studies and discussions have been conducted about [the prospects for] success or failure in these operations, my beliefs are as follows:

1. We shall definitely succeed in the Bangka, Palembang and Java operations. However, the degree of risk and damage involved will be the most serious in the whole southern operation, and we must be fully prepared for that in advance.
2. Some elements in the operational environment of the Bangka, Palembang and Java operations, such as the movements of the enemy and the terrain, may of course make the operations incomparably more difficult than those in the initial stages of the Malaya landing operations. However, what makes me believe in our certain success is based on the nature [of the enemy], which is essentially a colonial army. When the high command of the German Eastern Army started doubting the success of its operations in the middle of the Battle of Tannenberg, only Hoffmann, who alone grasped the nature of the Russian Army, was not shaken, believing in the success [of the operation]. My belief is just like that.
3. That we have to carry out the Bangka, Palembang and Java operations without waiting for the results of the air operation to destroy the enemy power, nay, because we are unable to afford to wait, simply cannot be helped. After all, if we do not conduct the operations this way, we will remain unable to estimate when to conduct the operations and, moreover, a great strategic disadvantage will be the result. It simply is the inevitable fate of the Southern Army to swiftly carry out the risky operations against Bangka, Palembang and Java. We did expect the risks from the beginning. Nevertheless, I believe that we will be absolutely successful. The most important thing is to be mentally prepared not to waver in the middle of the operations.

Incidentally, on the next day, the 28th, the issue of the seizure of Banjarmasin came to an abrupt end. The Southern Army received the following telegram from [the Army Department of] IGHQ on the 28th:⁽²³⁾

From Chief of Army General Staff, sent at 1130 on the 28th

To Commander in Chief, Southern Army

Army General Staff Telegram No. 611

Reply to Southern Army Staff Section 1 Telegram No. 604

Although there were various arguments about the seizure of Banjarmasin, we learned from Sixteenth Army Operation Order A, No. 119 ([sent to us in] OSAMU [Sixteenth Army] Staff Section 1 Telegram No. 84) that the army planned to seize the airfield on its own and make it ready for use by early February. Since it became clear to us that you also intended to attach great importance to the place for the Java operation, we approved everything.

The staff officers of the Southern Army looked at each other in dumb surprise.⁽²³⁾ Sixteenth Army Operation Order A, No. 119 was a surprise, but the attitude of [the Army Department of] IGHQ was [even] more of a surprise.

Now at last, the commander in chief of the Southern Army and the commander in chief of the Navy in the South were able to sign the Manila Agreement. It was actually [already] 28 January.⁽¹¹⁹⁾

What on earth was stated in Sixteenth Army Operation Order A, No. 119 mentioned in the above telegram from the chief of Army General Staff, and how had it come about? Things had gone as follows: after the discussions on the 21st and on the morning of the 22d in Manila, Colonel Ishii had sent a telegram to the Southern Army in the afternoon of the 22d that "[the seizure of] Banjarmasin will be omitted," and [likewise] [Navy] Captain Yanagisawa had sent a telegram to the Navy General Staff, the Southern Army and others that "an overland attack [will be made]."⁽²³⁾ On the next day, the 23d, the Southern Army had wired [the Army Department of] IGHQ that "the seizure [of Banjarmasin] in advance [of the Java operation] will [reluctantly] be omitted. However, we expect to seize [Banjarmasin] about the same time as the landings in Java or when the opportunity arises afterwards,"⁽²³⁾ [in reply] to which, the Army Department of [IGHQ] had wired the Southern Army on the next day, the 24th, to the effect that "We want you to seize it in advance by all possible means."⁽²³⁾ At that time, the Sakaguchi Detachment had left port in Tarakan at 1700 on the 21st, started landing in Balikpapan before daybreak of that day (the 24th), and was in the middle of a fight to seize the city [and surrounding] areas.⁽¹¹⁹⁾ However, that morning, some destroyers of the allied forces came to attack the anchorage of the convoy of the Sakaguchi Detachment, and some damage was caused.⁽¹¹⁶⁾ On learning the intention of the Army Department of IGHQ, the Southern Army immediately (about the night of the 24th) wired the Sixteenth Army to order "the Sakaguchi Detachment to take charge of guarding Balikpapan and make the airfield ready for use once the place was seized, and also capture Banjarmasin by land and by sea on their own." In this order, [the Southern Army] demanded that the Sakaguchi Detachment make every effort, while giving as example the operation of the Kawaguchi Detachment in western Borneo when it sailed the distance of some four hundred kilometers in small boats.⁽²³⁾ After the Manila Conference, the Sixteenth Army headquarters returned from Manila to Gaoxiong on the 24th, where it received the above Southern Army order and, on the 25th, issued the following order:⁽²²⁾

OSAMU [Sixteenth Army] Operation Order A, No. 119

Sixteenth Army Order, Gaoxiong, 25 January

1. Based on the requirements of the general situation, it has been decided that there will be no direct escort provided by Navy warships for the seizure of Banjarmasin.
2. After the seizure of Balikpapan, the detachment shall leave [part of] its force with the required strength to take charge of guarding the place and cooperate in making the Balikpapan airfield ready for use. Then (by early February at the latest), it shall promptly seize the Banjarmasin airfield on its own in the way described below, so that the Navy can advance its air base there. It shall keep in mind that the rapid seizure of the airfield and making it ready for use is of extremely great significance, as [the airfield] will be the one and only base for the fighter plane units charged in particular with the air operations to destroy the air power of the enemy, [which is essential to] the conduct of the entire operation of the army.

- (a) An element of [the detachment] will seize Banjarmasin and its airfield by land.
 - (b) Another element of [the detachment] will take core personnel of the Navy Airfield XX (note by the author: the two characters in the original text are illegible) and as much fuel and ammunition for fighter planes as possible from Balikpapan in motorized boats, and fishing boats and others in possession of the Navy, and by maneuvering along the coast seize Banjarmasin and make its airfield ready for use.
 - (c) In cooperation with the naval core personnel, the army will mainly take charge of making the airfield ready for use. For that purpose, [the army] shall make efforts to draft local people.
3. Sanga Sanga and Samarinda shall be seized mainly by land with another element of the force.

In other words, whereas [the Army Department of] IGHQ sent the already-mentioned telegram on the 26th and for two days, the 26th and the 27th, made the Southern Army feel “worse than ever,”⁽²³⁾ the Sixteenth Army had simply given an order on the 25th based on the talks with the Third Fleet and the Eleventh Air Fleet at the Manila Conference, to seize [Banjarmasin] no later than 10 February, thirteen days ahead of the date of landing in eastern Java (day x + 77, i.e. 23 February), and had [already] settled the issue on the 25th. Ultimately, [the confusion] was caused for the following three reasons:

- 1. Staff Officer Ishii had gathered from [the discussions in] Manila that “the seizure of the [Banjarmasin] airfield, which had been intended for the Navy’s use, was no longer necessary if the Navy wouldn’t use it,” and the Southern Army had assumed that the Sixteenth Army had shared the impression.
- 2. The Southern Army had not thought that the Sakaguchi Detachment could attack Banjarmasin so soon. However, the Sakaguchi Detachment, which had come ashore on the morning of the 24th despite the fact that its anchorage had been raided by several [enemy] destroyers, had [already] advanced its headquarters to the city of Balikpapan before daybreak on the 25th, and had started operations to mop up [the enemy] on the 26th.
- 3. As mentioned previously, the Sixteenth Army gave the order to the Sakaguchi Detachment on the 25th, but it was not until one day later that it reported the full text of the order to [the Army Department] of IGHQ and the Southern Army by OSAMU [Sixteenth Army] Staff Section 1 Telegram No. 84 sent at 1545 on the 26th. Then again, it was not before the 28th that the signal section of both [the Army Department] of IGHQ and the Southern Army belatedly decoded [the telegram].

The Sixteenth Army did not know that the Southern Army and [the Army Department of] IGHQ had been exchanging telegrams [over the seizure of Banjarmasin], or that this issue had been delaying the conclusion of the Manila Agreement until the 28th, either.^(36, 40)

After signing [the Manila Agreement] on the 28th, the commander in chief of the Second Fleet gave the following order:⁽¹¹⁹⁾

Southern Task Force Telegraphic Order No. 78 (at 1700, 28 January)

The supplemented and revised agreement on Operation H with the commander in chief of the Southern Army has come into effect as Second Fleet Classified Telegram No. 750 (note by the

author: the already-described telegram of 25 January). Each unit shall conduct operations in conjunction with the relevant army units conform to the above agreement.

As seen in Army General Staff Telegram No. 591 of the 26th, the Navy Department of IGHQ, too, strongly felt the necessity of seizing Banjarmasin and had sent telegram(s) to the units on site to reaffirm the necessity of seizing [the airfield of] the town and making it ready for use ahead of the Java landings. However, ultimately, the units on site could not give what they did not have, and the Dutch East Indies Unit (the Third Fleet) sent the following telegram to the 1st Escort Unit (the 4th Destroyer Squadron) on 28 January.⁽¹¹⁹⁾ [Consequently,] two days later, the 30th, the 4th Destroyer Squadron left Balikpapan for Lingayen Gulf in order to escort the 48th Division from the Philippines to Java.⁽¹¹⁹⁾

We will cancel [the task of] the 1st Escort Unit to provide an escort to Banjarmasin. It has been decided that the Sakaguchi Detachment will seize Banjarmasin by land as well as by boat by maneuvering them along the coast. The 2d Base Unit shall have an element with fishing boats as its main [force] transport the base matériel, fuel, etc. of the Eleventh Air Fleet, and cooperate with the Sakaguchi Detachment.

The Plan of the Sixteenth Army and the Dutch East Indies Unit, and the Arrangement Between Them

As already described, at the Manila Conference, [the entire meeting] on 21 January was spent on discussions between the Southern Army and the Navy, and although the Sixteenth Army was included in the conference on the 22d, the Southern Army kept on taking the lead. The chief of staff of the 48th Division, Col. Kawagoe Moriji, who attended the conference on that day, recalled the situation as follows:

In the meeting on the 22d, the Navy insisted that the seizure and preparation of airfields had not progressed as planned, and that, in eastern Borneo, [the whole operation of] seizing the Banjarmasin [airfield], making it ready and accumulating fuel and ammunition [there] would be completed around the date set in the plan before the opening of hostilities [at the earliest], and could not be done as scheduled in the recent Cam Ranh Agreement, and such was the case in Celebes. On the other hand, the Southern Army insisted that what had been decided at the recent Cam Ranh Agreement could not be changed because it had been reported to [the Army Department of] IGHQ. Both would not yield a bit, strongly insisting that they would not mind arguing their points all night that night. The argument was broken off once at my suggestion, and resumed in the afternoon, but once again became so heated that you could not imagine when it would come to an end. Explaining that [actually] the 48th Division would be in the biggest trouble, I presented a compromise adopting half of each argument. The Navy agreed with it right away, but the Southern Army did not give an inch. [Then,] in response to that, the Navy argued that it was the airfields for fighter planes that were the biggest problem. (Note by the author: Staff Officer Ishii's telegram of 1500 already mentioned in the above was sent at this juncture.) As the arguments did not come to an end, I spoke again and suggested seizing Bali ahead of the Java landing operations and conducting airstrikes on Java from Bali. [The reason for my suggestion was that] while the main force of the Sixteenth Army was supposed to come ashore in western Java under cover of the Army



Chief of Staff of the
48th Division, Col.
Kawagoe Moriji

air units (and of part of the Navy air units as well), my division was expected to come ashore in eastern Java under cover of the Navy air units only. My words greatly changed the direction of the discussion. The Southern Army staff officers asked me which units [I had in mind] to capture Bali and when, to which I answered that the 48th Division shall capture it with a force consisting of one infantry battalion, one mountain artillery battery, one engineer platoon and one medical platoon as its core, and the best timing would be about one week prior to the landing in Java. They all immediately agreed, and told me that I should go to Davao and make arrangements with the Eleventh Air Fleet, as the Dutch East Indies Unit [the Third Fleet] was in the middle of the operations to seize Balikpapan and Kendari at that time, and that the Third Fleet would abide by the results. That was how the difficult agreement was reached at last. (Note by the author: [Navy] Staff Officer Yanagisawa's telegram of the 22d already mentioned in the above was sent at this juncture.)

On the next day, the 23d, the staff officers of the Sixteenth Army held preliminary talks with the Navy in Manila,⁽³²⁾ and Chief of Staff of the 48th Division Kawagoe flew to Davao accompanied by Staff Officer Akatsuka Kazuo.⁽⁸⁰⁾ The airfield in Davao was rough and bumpy, crudely made with wire netting laid out [over the runway], on which they barely managed to land.⁽⁸⁰⁾ Chief of Staff Kawagoe felt that he [now] understood the trouble the Navy had in constructing airfields. He had talks with Commander in Chief of the Eleventh Air Fleet V. Adm. Tsukahara Nishizō and his chief of staff, Ōnishi Takijirō, in which it was decided that the landing location would be the narrow sandy beach on the southeast coast of Bali, and detailed arrangements were made.⁽⁸⁰⁾ Commander in Chief Tsukahara shocked Chief of Staff Kawagoe by saying: "Two fast transport ships with a speed of over seventeen knots will be necessary. We would like the Army to arrange them. If impossible, we will look into the [possibility that] the Navy arrange them."⁽⁸⁰⁾ This led to the already-described search for faster ships and the choosing of the *Sasako-maru* and the *Sagami-maru*. Chief of Staff Kawagoe and his companion returned to Manila the next day, the 24th.⁽⁸⁰⁾ On that day (the 24th), the participants of the Manila Conference returned [to their units].^(23, 32) It was also the day that the landings in Balikpapan and Kendari were carried out, which will be described later.^(117, 119)

The Situation of the Sixteenth Army and its Operation Plan

The situation as of the 23d, when the Sixteenth Army held talks with the Dutch East Indies Unit in Manila, was roughly as follows:

1. The Sakaguchi Detachment was sailing southward from Tarakan in order to land in Balikpapan before daybreak of the next day, the 24th.⁽¹¹⁹⁾
2. The Eastern Detachment had arrived in Davao on the 18th, and was preparing for the seizure of Ambon.⁽¹¹⁷⁾ Although the landing in Ambon was scheduled for 25 January in the Cam Ranh Agreement, on 15 January it was postponed by the Dutch East Indies Unit until the 29th, and [again] on 19 January further postponed until the 31st.⁽¹¹⁷⁾
3. The 38th Division, which had left Hong Kong on 20 January, was approaching Cam Ranh Bay.⁽⁶⁶⁾ (It reached the bay on the 24th.)
4. The 48th Division, whose task at the battlefield in Bataan had been taken over by the 65th Brigade on 8 January, was preparing for the Java operation in Manila.⁽⁷⁹⁾
5. As for the 2d Division, following the IGHQ Army Department Instruction No. 1037⁽¹⁾ of 24 November, the headquarters of the division had arrived [at the maneuvering

grounds] in Narashino from 7 to 8 December, the 4th Infantry Regiment at the foot of Mt. Fuji from the 11th to the 17th, the 16th Infantry Regiment [also] in Narashino from the 3d to the 6th, the 29th Infantry Regiment in Toyohashi from the 1st to the 4th, while the other units had also arrived by train generally in the same way, and [all of them] had started training at the maneuvering grounds.⁽⁵³⁾ Later on 27 December, they were ordered by the Sixteenth Army (in Tokyo at that time) to advance to Gaoxiong. However on 3 January, while preparing for the move, 448 personnel, 1,700 horses, and some matériel were transferred to units on the mainland,⁽³¹⁾ which was followed by the order that some of the men and horses of the 16th Infantry Regiment (197 men and 178 horses) and the 3d Battalion of the 2d Field Artillery Regiment would be transported in the second and later transports and follow on.⁽³¹⁾ The Division embarked during the period of 15 to 23 January at Ujina left the port, and [its ships] arrived in Gaoxiong one after another from 21 January onwards (the arrival [of the ships] was completed on the 26th).⁽³¹⁾ On 14 January, the Navy Department of IGHQ had ordered by Instruction No. 40 that "the commander in chief of the Combined Fleet shall provide the convoy transporting the Army 2d Division (in about thirty-three transport ships), which will leave Moji on 18 January, with direct escort from Moji to Gaoxiong. The commander in chief of the Chinkai Guard District shall put the 32d Destroyer Division under the command of the commander in chief of the Combined Fleet regarding the above escort."⁽¹⁾ On 15 January, by Telegraphic Operation Order No. 43, the commander in chief of the Combined Fleet gave the order that "the 9th Cruiser Division commander shall provide the escort to the Army transport convoy [mentioned] in IGHQ Navy Department Instruction No. 40. The force to be employed for the escort shall consist of the 9th Cruiser Division, the 1st Section of the 27th Destroyer Division, and the 32d Destroyer Division."⁽¹²⁹⁾ The 9th Cruiser Division consisted of the light cruisers *Oi* and *Kitakami* and its commander was R. Adm. Kishi Fukuji.⁽¹²⁹⁾

As already described, in the operation plan of the Sixteenth Army (which was the revision of the previous operation plan after [the army] had on 5 January received the Southern Army's order to prepare for the invasion of Java) as well as in the recent Manila Conference, three issues had arisen: (1) the issue of capturing Bali with an element of the 48th Division ahead of [the Java operation], (2) the issue of the seizure of Banjarmasin, and (3) the issue of a shortage of naval forces to provide [sufficient] escort. At that time (as of the 23d), the forces which [the Navy] could afford to employ for the escort of the large convoy of fifty-six ships with the main force of the Sixteenth Army aboard to western and central Java was just one light cruiser and eight destroyers (i.e. the *Natori* under the command of Rear Admiral Hara, commander of the 5th Destroyer Squadron with the 5th and the 22d Destroyer Divisions) ([as seen in] the order of the Southern Task Force of 4 January). [Therefore,] the Navy was reluctant to separately land the Shōji Detachment (in Patrol), which was rather close to the naval port of Surabaya. It also stated that it would not be able to fully guarantee the safety [of the army] against a threat from the Indian Ocean if the main force of the army landed in Merak. So, the strengthening of the escort force by bringing in part of the [Navy] Malaya Unit and others became the topic of this conference.

The Situation of the [Navy] Dutch East Indies Unit and its Operation Plan

As of 23 January, the situation of the [Navy] Dutch East Indies Unit was roughly as follows:

1. The South China Sea: Of the 5th Destroyer Squadron ([consisting of] one light cruiser and eight destroyers) that had finished escorting the main force of the 33d Division, one regiment of the 5th Division, and others to Bangkok and Singora, the flagship the *Natori* and the four destroyers of the 22d Destroyer Division had left Singora on 9 January, arrived in Magong on 16 January, left port on the 21st, and arrived in Gaoxiong on the same day, where they had stayed since then. The four destroyers of the 5th Destroyer Division [of the 5th Squadron] had left Singora on the 12th and arrived in Magong on the 18th. Thereafter, they had joined the main force, and were also in Gaoxiong.⁽¹²⁰⁾
2. The Makassar Strait: The Western Attack Unit was escorting the Sakaguchi Detachment for the landing operations in Balikpapan which would be conducted on the next day, the 24th.⁽¹¹⁹⁾ The Western Attack Unit consisted of the 1st Escort Unit (the main force of the 4th Destroyer Squadron), the 2d Base Force, and the 1st Air Unit ([consisting of] the auxiliary seaplane tenders the *San'yō-maru* and the *Sanuki-maru*), and they were under the direct control of the Dutch East Indies Unit commander.⁽¹¹⁹⁾ Leaving Davao on this day (the 23d), the Dutch East Indies Unit commander was sailing southward, leading the main force [of the unit] (the 16th Cruiser Division) to support [the operation to] seize Balikpapan.⁽¹¹⁹⁾
3. The Molucca Sea: The Eastern Attack Unit under the command of the 5th Cruiser Division commander was sailing southward to go ashore in Kendari on the next day, the 24th. The Eastern Attack Unit consisted of the Support Unit (the 5th Cruiser Division), the 1st Base Unit (with the 1st Base Force as its core), the 2d Escort Unit ([made up of] the main force of the 2d Destroyer Squadron), and the 2d Air Unit (i.e. the 11th Seaplane Tender Division with the seaplane tenders *Chitose* and *Mizuho*).⁽¹¹⁷⁾
4. Tarakan and Menado had been captured on the 11th, one day behind the schedule set in the Cam Ranh Agreement. The upcoming operations against Balikpapan and Kendari were to be conducted on the 24th, four days behind the schedule of the Cam Ranh Agreement. The operation to seize Ambon was also changed and to be conducted on the 31st, six days behind the schedule of the Cam Ranh Agreement.^(117, 119)

While this was the situation of the Dutch East Indies Unit, the plan for its [coming operations] was that its Eastern Attack Unit would have to head eastward to seize Ambon right after the seizure of Kendari, then head westward to seize Makassar, and again head eastward to seize Kupang, while its Western Attack Unit would seize Balikpapan [first], then cooperate in the seizure of Makassar while conducting the operation to seize Banjarmasin at the same time, and on top of that, escort the 48th Division from the Philippines to Java. [For the Dutch East Indies Unit,] it was absolutely impossible to strictly keep to the schedule of the Cam Ranh Agreement, and [the unit] was also painfully aware that it had a serious shortage of destroyers. In these circumstances, the cancellation of the escort in the operation to seize Banjarmasin was of help in terms of both the schedule and the scarcity of destroyers. However, if the reason to omit [the operation against] Banjarmasin had been “the danger of sailing immediately north of Surabaya and exposing the flank [of the convoy to the enemy naval port],” then the previously described arguments for an attack on Bali [naturally] raise the question: “Then what about Bali? Would that not be all the more dangerous?” Ultimately, [the tight schedule and the shortage of forces brought about that] the commander of the 4th Destroyer Squadron would leave Balikpapan (on 30 January), about two weeks before the seizure of Makassar

(12 February), for the Philippines with his main force escort to the 48th Division; that the element left behind [in Makassar] to support the seizure of the place would be withdrawn immediately after its cooperation; and that the dangerous [operation] to capture Bali would be supported by just a small force commanded by the 1st Base Force commander [R. Adm. Kubo Kyūji]. The details will be described later along with the issue of the escort of the main force of the Sixteenth Army.

The Arrangements between the Sixteenth Army and the Air and Naval Units

(See Illustration No. 20)

With all the above-mentioned problems involved, the Sixteenth Army concluded the following arrangements on 23 January in Manila with the air and naval units concerned:

Memorandum of the Arrangements for Operation H between the Sixteenth Army, the Third Air Force, the Third Fleet and the Eleventh Air Fleet

I. Distribution of the landing forces, landing points, names for landing sectors and their reconnaissance

1. Landing points and names for landing sectors

(1) Units in the first transport

- {1} Area No. 1 ([assigned to] the 2d Division and the main force of the units under the direct control of the army)

Sector A Landing Unit ([consisting of] 2 infantry battalions and 1 reconnaissance regiment as its core): on the south side of Merak

Sector B Landing Unit ([consisting of] 2 infantry battalions as its core): on the north side of Merak

Sector C Landing Unit ([consisting of] the main force of the [2d] Division and the main force of the units under the direct control of the army): along Bantam Bay

Note by the author: Although Lt. Col. Sendō Shunzō, chief shipping staff of the Sixteenth Army, explained in detail and stressed the unsuitableness of the coast of Bantam Bay and the advantages of the coast of Merak, the Navy emphasized the threat from the Indian Ocean and finally overcame [the opposition of] the army.⁽⁴⁴⁾

- {2} Area No. 2 ([assigned to] the Shōji Detachment, [consisting of] 2 infantry battalions as its core): [on the coast near] Patrol

Note by the author: The Navy expressed disapproval of the idea of separately [landing] the Shōji Detachment, particularly of putting it ashore closer to the naval port of Surabaya, but this time the army had its way.⁽⁴⁴⁾

- {3} Area No. 3 ([assigned to] the 48th Division as its core)

Sector D: Right Wing Unit ([consisting of] 3 infantry battalions as its core): on the north side of Krangan

Sector E: Left Wing Unit ([consisting of] the main force of the division): on the south side of Krangan

Note by the author: Although the Sixteenth Army initially planned to put Sector D and Sector E at a considerable distance [from each other], the 48th Division opposed this.⁽⁸⁰⁾

(2) Units in the second transport

Area No. 1: Batavia (or Bantam) about 100,000 tons

Area No. 3 Surabaya (or Krangan) about 50,000 tons

(3) Units in the third transport

Area No. 1: Batavia (or Bantam) about 100,000 tons

2. Reconnaissance of the landing points

(1) Reconnaissance by aircraft

Army: Thirty copies of the photomaps on a scale of about 1 to 25,000 of the landing coasts of Areas No. 1 and 2 shall be delivered to the [Sixteenth] Army headquarters in Saigon by around 10 February (three copies of which shall be delivered to the 12th Seaplane Tender Division (the *Kamikawa-maru*) in Cam Ranh).

Navy: Thirty copies of the photomaps on a scale of about 1 to 25,000 of the landing coast of Area No. 3 shall be delivered to the 48th Division in Jolo (the Pata anchorage) by around 10 February.

(2) Other prior reconnaissance, if necessary, shall be conducted by arrangement between the commanders of the landing corps, escort units and air units.

II. Assembly points, arrival and departure dates of the transport ships

Transports	Areas	Assembly Points	Dates of Arrival	Dates of Departure
First	Areas No. 1 and No. 2	Gaoxiong, then Cam Ranh	Leave Gaoxiong during the period from the beginning till 6 February one after another, and assemble in Cam Ranh	H – 8
	Area No. 3	Lingayen, then the Jolo/Pata anchorage	Complete embarkation by 7 February, leave on 8 February, and assemble at the Pata anchorage on 12 February	I – 7
Second	Area No. 1	Advance from mainland Japan to Cam Ranh first, and then go ashore in Batavia (or Bantam)		
	Area No. 3	Advance from Lingayen to Jolo or Davao, and then go ashore in Surabaya (or Kragan)		
	The Sixteenth Army commander shall determine the second and later transports after due consultation with the commanders of the 4th and 5th Destroyer Squadrons			

Note by the author: “H” indicates the date of landing on western Java, which was 21 February, and “I” that on eastern Java, which was 23 February. At the Manila Conference, the dates of landing in western and eastern Java were respectively set five days and seven days behind those specified in the Cam Ranh Agreement, which allowed [the units concerned] to call at Cam Ranh and Jolo respectively.

III. Starting date and time of the landings and the schedule

1. Starting dates of landings

The first day of the landings are set as follows:

Eastern Java: on day I

Western Java: on day H

Although day I and day H are scheduled for “XX,” the Sixteenth Army commander shall fix [them] after due consultation with the commander in chief of the Third Fleet by 1200 on day H – 9. However, if further changes [to these dates] become necessary after the departure [of the units], [new dates] shall be decided upon through consultations each time.

Note by the author: “XX” had been set as day $x + 75$, and day $x + 77$, that is, 21 and 23 February. However, on 10 February, both of them were changed to day $x + 80$, that is, 26 February. This had come about in the following way:

On 21 January at the Manila Conference, it was agreed that the dates [of the landings] would be set as day $x + 75$ and day $x + 77$, and that the Third Air Force commander and the commander in chief of the Eleventh Air Fleet would be included in those with whom arrangements on H would be made. On 23 January, staff officers of the Sixteenth Army, the Third Fleet, the Third Air Force and the Eleventh Air Fleet made a draft of this memorandum of the arrangement for Operation H in Manila.

On 25 January, the Second Fleet sent the formal [proposal for the] agreement to the Southern Army. On 28 January, the agreement between the Second Fleet and the Southern Army came into effect.

On the 30th, this memorandum of the arrangement for Operation H officially came into effect.

On 4 February, a postponement of [Operation] L for four days came up as an issue.

On the 6th, a postponement of [Operation] L for another two days came up.

On the 10th, the Southern Army and the Second Fleet reached an agreement to set the schedule of both H and I on day $x + 80$.

2. Start of the landings

Entry into the anchorage shall be made around 0000 for both day H and day I. Although the start of the landings is set at 0200 for both day H and day I, [the landings] in each area shall be started as soon as [the units] in the area are ready.

3. Landing schedule

(1) Units in the first transport

Area No. 1: [shall be completed] in about seven days.

Area No. 2: [shall be completed] in about five days. Depending on the circumstances, on day $H + 2$ and onwards, units yet to be debarked may be [again] transported and put ashore at Area No. 1. The decision of whether to implement [this] shall be made by the Sixteenth Army commander after due consultation with the 5th Destroyer Squadron commander.

Note by the author: The sentence after the phrase "depending on the circumstances" was added reflecting the Navy's opinion.⁽⁴⁴⁾

Area No. 3: [shall be completed] in about five days.

(2) Units in the second transport

Area No. 1: [shall be completed] in about five days.

Area No. 3: [shall be completed] in about five days.

IV. Distribution of the convoy of transport ships, the commander's whereabouts, and the escort forces:

Note by the author: Of the ships in the table below, the *Natori* was the flagship of the 5th Destroyer Squadron, the *Yura* was the flagship of the 5th Submarine Squadron, and the *Sendai* was the flagship of the 3d Destroyer Squadron. The *Yura* and the *Sendai* belonged to the Malaya Unit. As of 23 January, only the 5th Destroyer Squadron had been decided as the force to escort [the transport ships] to Areas No. 1 and No. 2, and [its task] was planned as shown in this table. However, a reinforcement with two destroyers from the air unit (the Eleventh Air Fleet) was announced on 28 January, which was followed by a reinforcement with the *Yura* and five destroyers from the Malaya Unit on 17 February. "No. 333" is unknown.

Transport	Areas and Convoys		Units	Number of Ships	Commander's whereabouts		Escort Forces
					Army	Navy	
First	Area No. 1	1st convoy	Sector A landing unit	8	Infantry group commander / the <i>Kōyō-maru</i>	The <i>Natori</i>	5th Destroyer Squadron and 6 destroyers, 1 light cruiser, and 5 minesweepers of the First Southern Expeditionary Fleet as the core
		2d convoy	Sector B landing unit	6	Regimental commander / the <i>Reiyō-maru</i>		
		3d convoy	Sector C landing unit (main force of the division and main force of the unit under the direct control of the [Sixteenth] Army)	27 munitions ships 1 No. 333 1 water supply ship 1 coaling ship 1 repair ship	Army commander / the <i>Sakura-maru</i> Division commander / the <i>Ayatosan-maru</i>		
	Area No. 2	4th convoy	Shōji Detachment	7	Regimental commander / the <i>Suwa-maru</i>	The <i>Yura</i> or the <i>Sendai</i> (depending on situation)	
	Area No. 3	5th convoy	Right Wing Unit	6	Regimental commander / the <i>Aden-maru</i>	The <i>Naka</i>	4th Destroyer Squadron (minus 1 destroyer division) An element of the 2d Base Force
		6th convoy	Left Wing Unit (main force of the division)	19 munitions ships 1 water supply ship 1 coaling ship 1 hospital ship 1 repair ship	Division commander / the <i>Teiyō-maru</i> Infantry group commander / the <i>Tonegawa-maru</i>		
Second	Areas No. 1 and No. 3	To be determined depending on the situation at the time					

V. Route of the convoys

As shown in Supplement No. 1 (omitted by the author)

VI. Reconnaissance and diversions

The Navy air units shall conduct feint bombings of enemy naval bases and others in the Probolinggo area (note by the author: southeast of Surabaya).

VII. Anchorage and the formation at the anchorage:

Anchorage and the convoy's formation at the anchorage shall be determined by the commander of the landing corps after due consultation with the commander of the escort.

VIII. Outline of landing attack

Although [the landing shall be made] as a surprise landing in principle, it shall be carried out by assault if the situation should require it.

IX. Use of air units

1. Forces to be employed

(1) The Eleventh Air Fleet

About 80 Type-1 land-based attack planes, about 35 Type-96 land-based attack planes, about 70 Type-0 fighter planes, and about 5 land-based reconnaissance planes.

(2) The Third Fleet

About 50 reconnaissance seaplanes

(3) The Third Air Force

About 15 command reconnaissance planes, about 4 army reconnaissance planes, about 40 Type-1 fighter planes, about 50 Type-97 fighter planes, about 20 assault planes, about 20 twin-engine light bombers, and about 30 heavy bombers.

The above forces may slightly be increased or decreased depending on the situation.

2. Bases to be used

(1) [Bases] in Sumatra, Borneo and others

{1} The Palembang [airfield] shall be made ready and used by the Army. The Navy may use this [base] by advancing some land-based attack planes, or as a relay base for about thirty-six land-based attack planes when attacks on enemy surface forces in the Indian Ocean are necessary.

{2} The Mentok [airfield] shall be made ready for use mainly by the Army, but with the cooperation of the Navy. The Army and the Navy shall share the airfield and each shall advance thirty fighter planes. However, when the Army starts using the Tanjungkarang airfield, the Navy shall exclusively use the Mentok airfield.

{3} The Ledo [airfield] shall be used by the Navy. However, the Army may advance some command reconnaissance planes there.

{4} As for the airfields other than the above, those in Sumatra shall be used by the Army, and those in Borneo by the Navy.

(2) [Bases] in Java

{1} [The airfields in] Batavia and Cililitan (note by the author: east of Batavia [editor's note: south of Batavia; the civil airfield, Kemayoran, was east of the city]) shall be made ready for use by the Army and shared by the Army and the Navy in the following way:

The Navy: about 36 land-based attack planes and about 27 fighter planes.

The Army: about 20 twin-engine light bombers and about 15 command reconnaissance planes.

{2} The Buitenzorg [Bogor] and Kalijati [airfields] shall be made ready and used by the Army. However, if the Batavia or Cililitan airfields cannot be used or if it takes more time than expected to make them ready, the Navy shall advance about 27 fighter planes to the Kalijati [airfield].

3. Outline of operations

(1) [We shall] promptly destroy the enemy air power in Java. The areas assigned [to the Army or the Navy] in particular are as follows:

{1} The areas assigned [to the Army and the Navy] after the advance of the Army air units to Palembang are roughly decided as follows:

The Navy: [the area] east of 108° east

The Army: [the area] west of 108° east

{2} In general the Navy shall mainly take charge of destroying the remnants of the enemy air power after the Army has gone ashore.

(2) The attack on enemy warships shall be mainly assigned to the Navy.

(3) Covering of the convoy under sail and at anchorage

{1} The main force of the Sixteenth Army

- (a) The Navy shall be charged with the cover before and on day H – 2.
 Note: The cover in the area northward of 5° north shall be provided by the First Southern Expeditionary Fleet.
- (b) The cover of the convoy up to the point of separation of the Shōji Detachment from the main force of the army (indicated as point “j” in Supplement No. 1) on day H – 1 shall be charged to the Navy. After that, the Navy shall take charge of the cover of the Shōji Detachment, and the Army of the cover of the rest of the main force of the army. However, guarding against [enemy] submarines shall be wholly assigned to the Navy.
- {2} The 48th Division
 Along with guarding against [enemy] submarines, the Third Fleet shall take charge of guarding the sky [over the anchorage] as well, from the time when the convoy enters the anchorage until the advance of the fighter planes of the Eleventh Air Fleet there. After that, the Eleventh Air Fleet shall take over [the task of] guarding.
- {3} The guarding of the sky over the anchorage
 The guarding of the sky shall be provided by the Army all the time until sunset on day H + 2 over the anchorage for the units landing in Bantam, and on day H + 1 over that for the units landing in Merak. After that, it shall provide air cover as needed depending on the situation.
- (4) Support of the ground operations
 - {1} The area of the main force of the Sixteenth Army
 - (a) The Army shall be in charge of the direct support of the ground operations.
 - (b) The Navy shall be in charge of cutting off the transport routes of the enemy in the Cilacap area. It shall [also] be in charge of attacking enemy reinforcements or forces in retreat when requested by the Army.
 - {2} The area of the 48th Division
 The Third Fleet shall be in charge of direct support of the ground operations and the Eleventh Air Fleet shall provide appropriately provide support at the request of the Army. The Army shall join in [the direct support] if possible.
- 4. Information
 - (1) Military gains of [the operation] to destroy the enemy air power
 The results of reconnaissance of enemy airfields, weather information and others shall promptly be shared between the Army and the Navy air units.
 - (2) Other information concerning enemy movements and others shall be exchanged every time [it is obtained].
- 5. Allotment [of facilities] and rules about the use of the shared airfields
 The allotment [of facilities] and rules about the use of the airfields shared by the Army and the Navy shall be arranged between senior commanding officers of the Army and the Navy [units] which [actually] use the airfield.
- 6. Identification of friends
 Conforms to the agreement between the Southern Army and the Combined Fleet.
- X. Defense facilities of landing bases
 - 1. The landing bases shall be set up as follows:
 For Areas No. 1 and No. 2: Batavia (Bantam shall be used at the beginning.)
 For Area No. 3: Surabaya (Kragan shall be used at the beginning).
 - 2. The Navy shall take charge of the sea defense, the Army of the defense on land, and both shall jointly take charge of the air defense.
- XI. Move of the transport ships after the completion of disembarkation
 After completing disembarkation, [the transport ships] shall be moved to the required areas under the direct or indirect cover of the escort unit in the area.

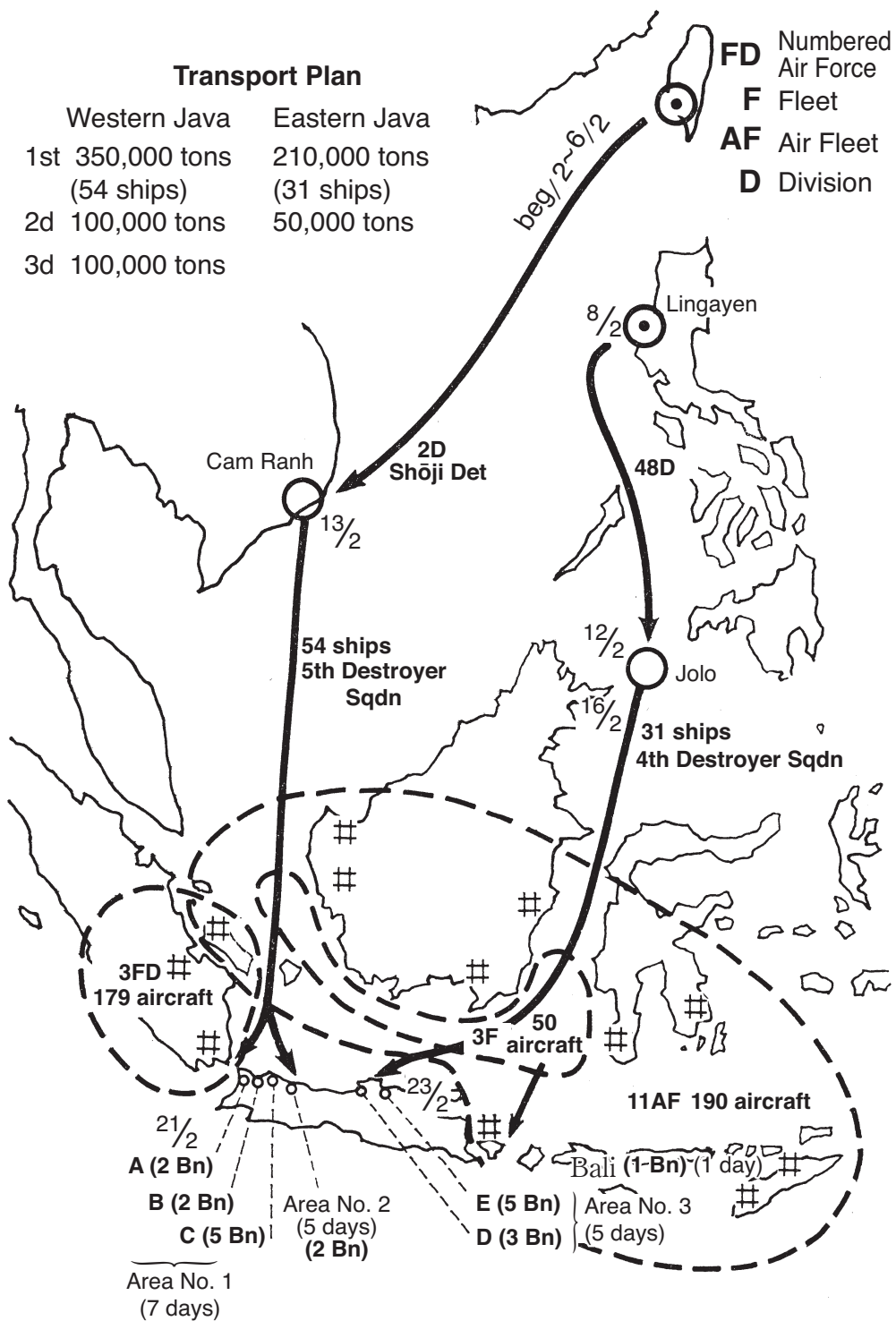


Illustration No. 20—Overview of the Arrangements for Operation H

XII. Signal Communications

As specified in the signal communication arrangement in the separate volume (omitted by the author).

XIII. Others

1. The 48th Division shall have an element seize the Bali airfield in conjunction with the Navy no later than day I – 2 to make it ready for use, with the aim of advancing a naval air base.
Note by the author: On 28 January, when the cancellation of the seizure of Banjarmasin by sea and the [implementation of] the new [plan of] capturing Bali was decided, the Southern Task Force issued the order to “capture Bali around 21 February (day I – 2).” However, the Dutch East Indies Unit changed the order to “capture Bali on 18 February (day I – 5).” This shall be described later.
2. The Navy, in concert with the ground operations, shall take control of the waters south of Java, and block the enemy's retreat.
3. Details other than the above shall be discussed and decided between the commanders of the landing corps, escort forces and air units concerned.

As mentioned earlier, while the Manila Agreement had officially become effective on 28 January, this draft of the arrangement on Operation H (of 23 January), [officially] came into effect on 30 January.⁽¹³⁵⁾ [Later] on 10 February, only the dates of “day H and day I” were modified.⁽⁹⁶⁾

The Navy's Shift to Phase-Three Operations and the Decision to Bring in the Carrier Task Force

The above arrangements on Operation H stated that the Navy would take control of the waters south of Java, and block the enemy's retreat. This was a critical matter when considering the fact that the allied forces, which had retreated from the Philippines and Malaya after the opening of hostilities, and those reinforced from the United States, Britain and Australia, had been concentrated in Java. However, on 23 January, when this preliminary arrangement for Operation H was made, the participation of the First Air Fleet (the Carrier Task Force), the Sixth Fleet (the Submarine Fleet) and others in the Java operation had not yet been decided.

On 23 January, when this preliminary arrangement for Operation H was made, the South Seas Detachment with the cooperation of the Fourth Fleet, was in the middle of its landing operation on Rabaul, which was also supported by the First Air Fleet.⁽¹¹⁶⁾

At that time, the Combined Fleet, which had supported the Rabaul landing operation, was also interested in implementing Carrier Task Force operations on the northeast coast of Australia, following the Rabaul operations.

The reason why the Army Department of the IGHQ repeatedly requested the Southern Army during the time after the Manila Conference until 27 January to seize Banjarmasin ahead [of the Java operation] was that it intended to tell [the army] that the latter should seize Banjarmasin before landing on Java just to be on the safe side, as it was difficult to expect the cooperation from the Carrier Task Force.

Because of the Army's request to have the Carrier Task Force participate in the Java operation, the concern of the Combined Fleet about the risky operation to capture Bali, and the [possible] military gains for the Carrier Task Force when it participated in the Java operation compared to conducting operations against the northeast coast of Australia, the Navy de-

cided on 30 January to have part of both the Carrier Task Force and the Sixth Fleet join the Java operation. The details will be described later.

Regarding the Navy's shift to phase-three operations (the operation to capture Java), the Combined Fleet ordered the shift to take effect as of 1200 on 24 January.⁽¹¹⁷⁾ [The shift to phase-three operations] was ordered by the Southern Task Force on the same day (the 24th),⁽¹¹⁷⁾ and by the Dutch East Indies Unit on 28 January when the issues of Banjarmasin and Bali were settled.^(117, 119)

The most distinctive feature of the phase-three disposition of the Dutch East Indies Unit was that [the task of] escorting the convoy of the main force of the Sixteenth Army ([to be conducted by] the 3d Escort Unit, [consisting of] the 5th Destroyer Squadron as its core) in the South China Sea was newly added to the current [tasks of providing] escorts along the Makassar Strait front ([provided by] the 1st Escort Unit, [consisting of] the 4th Destroyer Squadron), and in the Molucca Sea ([provided by] the 2d Escort Unit, [consisting of] the 2d Destroyer Squadron). The second distinctive feature was that the escort of the Sakaguchi Detachment would be provided no farther than Balikpapan, and that the [forces for the cancelled part of the escort] would be diverted to the escort of the 48th Division, and that the Celebes front was extended from Kendari to Bali via Makassar. The phase-three disposition of the Dutch East Indies Unit (ordered on 28 January) was supposed to be as follows after the ongoing operation to seize Ambon (on 31 January):

Main Unit [consisting of] the 16th Cruiser Division (minus the *Nagara*, which left the heavy cruiser *Ashigara* as its only component), one section of one destroyer division of the 4th Destroyer Squadron: Shall support the entire operation mainly in the eastern part of the Java Sea, [sailing] from Davao, to the Makassar Strait and Surabaya.

1st Escort Unit [consisting of] the main force of the 4th Destroyer Squadron: Shall escort the 48th Division from Lingayen Gulf to Surabaya.

2d Base Unit: Shall work in conjunction with the Sakaguchi Detachment's [operation to] seize Banjarmasin, [the operation of] the Eleventh Air Fleet to prepare the Banjarmasin air base, and [the operation of] the 1st Base Force to seize Makassar. After that, it shall join the escort of the 48th Division.

2d Air Unit [consisting of] the 11th Seaplane Tender Division ([made up of] the seaplane tenders, *Chitose*, and *Mizuho*): After cooperating in the seizure of Ambon and Makassar, it shall cooperate with the 1st Escort Unit and the 2d Base Unit.

3d Escort Unit [consisting of] the 5th Destroyer Squadron (which was reinforced with one section of the 6th Destroyer Division, and also with the light cruiser *Yura*, the 11th and the 12th Destroyer Division of the Malaya Unit): Shall escort the main force of the Sixteenth Army from Gaoxiong to western Java.

1st Air Unit [with] the auxiliary seaplane tenders *Kamikawa-maru* and *San'yō-maru*: Shall cooperate with the 3d Escort Unit.

Eastern Support Unit [of the Dutch East Indies Unit, consisting of] the 5th Cruiser Division (minus the *Myōkō* under repair in the mainland; namely, the heavy cruisers *Haguro* and *Nachi*) and one and a half destroyer divisions: Shall support the 2d Escort Unit and the 1st Base Unit.

2d Escort Unit [consisting of] the main force of the 2d Destroyer Squadron: Shall escort the Eastern Detachment and [take part in] the operations to seize Kupang.

1st Base Unit [consisting of] the light cruiser *Nagara* and the 21st Destroyer Division, but reinforced with two destroyer divisions for [the operation to] seize Makassar [till its completion] and (one destroyer division for Bali [till its completion]): Shall take part in the Makassar and Bali invasion operations.

Celebes Guard Unit
Ambon Guard Unit

The destroyers employed in the Dutch East Indies Unit were insufficient as already described, and consisted of eight destroyer divisions, that is, the 8th, the 15th, and the 16th Destroyer Divisions of the 2d Destroyer Squadron (note: the 18th Destroyer Division initially included in the squadron was transferred to the Carrier Task Force), the 2d, the 9th and the 24th Destroyer Divisions of the 4th Destroyer Squadron (note: the 4th Destroyer Division initially included in the squadron was transferred to the main force of the Southern Task Force, and later to the carrier-based air units), the 5th and the 22d Destroyer Divisions of the 5th Destroyer Squadron. [Because of the insufficient strength,] it was decided to newly add the following four and a half destroyer divisions as reinforcements:

In [the order] issued on 21 January, the 21st Destroyer Division (with four destroyers) was transferred from the main-force unit,⁽¹¹⁴⁾ and participated in [the operations] to seize Kendari and Makassar, and in the operation of the Kanemura Detachment to capture Bali.

In [the order] issued on 28 January, the 7th Destroyer Division (with three destroyers) was transferred from the Carrier Task Force (the First Air Fleet),⁽¹¹⁴⁾ and participated in [the operations] of the Eastern Detachment to seize Ambon and Timor.

In [the order] issued on 28 January, the 1st Section of the 6th Destroyer Division (with two destroyers) was transferred from the Air Unit (the Eleventh Air Fleet),^(114, 120) and joined the escort of the main force of the Sixteenth Army, which headed from Cam Ranh Bay to western Java.

In [the order] issued on 17 February (though it was informally decided at the Manila Conference), the 11th Destroyer Division (with three destroyers) and the 12th Destroyer Division (with one destroyer) were transferred from the Malaya Unit (the 3d Destroyer Squadron)⁽¹²⁰⁾ and joined the escort of the convoy of the main force of the Sixteenth Army from Anambas southwards.

In this way, the number of destroyers to escort the convoy of the main force of the Sixteenth Army, which [Sixteenth] Army Commander Imamura had been concerned about, was increased from the eight destroyers of the 5th Destroyer Squadron ([consisting of] the 5th and the 22d Destroyer Division) to fifteen destroyers.

3. [Army Commander Imamura's] Orders to the 48th Division, the Sakaguchi Detachment, and the Main Force of the Army

After completing the arrangements with the Third Fleet, the Third Air Force, and the Eleventh Air Fleet on 23 January, [Sixteenth] Army Commander Imamura, in Manila on the next day, the 24th, gave the 48th Division the orders regarding the Java operations and returned to Taiwan on the same day.⁽³²⁾ On the next day, the 25th, in Gaoxiong, Army Commander [Imamura] wired the Sakaguchi Detachment the order regarding [the operation to] seize Banjarmasin.⁽²²⁾ On the day after the next day, the 27th, the leadership of the [Sixteenth] Army made arrangements about the Java operation with the commander of the 5th Destroyer Squadron in Gaoxiong.⁽¹²⁰⁾ After completing these arrangements, [Sixteenth] Army Com-

mander Imamura passed down his order regarding the Java operation to the main force of the army ([consisting of] the 2d Division, the Shōji Detachment, and others) in Gaoxiong on 30 January.⁽³¹⁾ Then the army commander gave instructions about the assembly and embarkation of the main force of the army and flew from Gaoxiong to Saigon on 3 February,⁽³²⁾ which was the day before the date, the 4th, when the 38th Division was to start leaving Cam Ranh Bay for the Bangka and Palembang operations (in the renewed schedule set at the Manila Conference). On the 4th, the following day in Manila, the 48th Division commander made arrangements for the Java operation with the 4th Destroyer Squadron commander, who had sailed in from Balikpapan.⁽¹¹⁹⁾

[Army Commander Imamura's] Orders to the 48th Division

(See Illustration No. 21)

As previously mentioned, the army commander had given his orders to the 48th Division on 24 January. In the afternoon two days before this (the 22d) in Manila, the [48th] Division Commander Lieutenant General Tsuchihashi and his staff and commanding officers had presented themselves before Army Commander [Imamura.] [Commander Imamura] gave instructions and invited the commanding officers of the division in the evening, where he thanked them for their service in the invasion of the Philippines over dinner, and requested them to put up a good fight in the Java operation.⁽³²⁾ As previously described, Chief of Staff Kawagoe and Staff Officer Akatsuka [of the 48th Division] had flown to Davao on the previous day (the 23d) to make arrangements about [the operation to] capture Bali with the Eleventh Air Fleet, and they had returned on that day (the 24th).⁽⁸⁰⁾ Staff Officer Akatsuka had previously (on 8 January) reported to the [Sixteenth] Army command post in Saigon by order of Division Commander Tsuchihashi, but, due to the circumstances at that time, he had returned with no particular instructions given.⁽⁸⁰⁾

The order of the Sixteenth Army passed down on the 24th was roughly as follows:⁽³¹⁾

1. The transfer of command of the units currently in the Philippines and to be brought under the control of the 48th Division shall take effect at the time of their departure from the ports in the Philippines, and for the others at the time of their arrival at ports in the Philippines. However, the division commander was given authority to give the necessary commands concerning preparations for operations to the former before the specified time.
2. [The 48th Division shall] embark at Lingayen during the period from 1 to 7 February and leave the gulf about 8 February to advance to the anchorage at Jolo (Pata).
3. With the aim of advancing a naval air base, the division shall have an element ([consisting of] about one infantry battalion and one mountain artillery section as its core) capture the Bali airfield in conjunction with the Navy no later than day I – 2, and swiftly make it ready together with the Navy air base ground crew.
4. The division shall come ashore in the areas south and north of Kragan before dawn on day I, and have part of its force promptly secure the crossing point of the Solo River and the oil resources in Cepu.

About the same time, the main force of the army shall land in western Java.

Day I is tentatively set on 23 February, and the exact date shall be announced later. Even if day I should be delayed, [the division] shall leave Lingayen more or less as scheduled, stand by in Jolo, and decide the time for leaving Jolo so that it shall be able to land in or near Kragan before dawn on day I.

5. Next, while destroying the enemy, the division shall promptly seize Surabaya, and at the same time when a good opportunity arises, have a powerful element [of the division] dash toward Cilacap to block the enemy's retreat. After [successfully] seizing Surabaya, [the division] shall promptly set up a landing base there.
6. After that, [the division] shall act in concert with the main force of the army and mop up [the enemy] in eastern Java. During the action, it shall make efforts to prevent the destruction of the existing resources and to secure airfields.

The Arrangements of the 48th Division with the 4th Destroyer Squadron

The 4th Destroyer Squadron (under the command of R. Adm. Nishimura Shōji) originally consisted of its flagship the *Naka* and the 2d, the 4th, the 9th, and the 24th Destroyer Division (each of which was made up of four destroyers). When the commander escorted the Sakaguchi Detachment and was engaged in the Balikpapan landing operation on 24 January by leading the *Naka*, the 24th Destroyer Division, the 9th Destroyer Division (minus the *Yamagumo*), the 2d Destroyer Division (minus the *Murasame*) as the 1st Escort Unit, he received an order from the Dutch East Indies Unit on 29 January, and left Balikpapan on the 30th with the *Naka* and the 2d Destroyer Division (with three destroyers) to hurry to Manila.⁽¹¹⁹⁾ The 9th Destroyer Division and two destroyers of the 24th Destroyer Division would rejoin his formation at Jolo after supporting the seizure of Makassar.⁽¹¹⁹⁾ During this [operation], the other two destroyers of the 24th Destroyer Division had been transferred to the main unit of the Dutch East Indies Unit,⁽¹¹⁹⁾ while the 4th Destroyer Division had remained part of the main force of the Southern Task Force.⁽¹¹⁹⁾ As soon as Rear Admiral Nishimura arrived in Manila, 48th Division Commander Tsuchihashi immediately made arrangements with him (on 4 February), which were in outline as follows:⁽¹¹⁹⁾

Summary of the Arrangements Between the 48th Division and the 4th Destroyer Squadron

1. Outline of action:
[The division] shall leave Lingayen Gulf on 8 February, arrive in Jolo on 12 or 13 February, from where it shall depart on day I – 7, and enter the anchorage in Kragan on the night of day I – 1.
2. Tasks [to be discharged] at the assembly points:
7 February: arrangement of signal communications between the ships' captains at Lingayen Gulf
14 February: arrangements between the escort unit, the transport convoy and the ships' captains in Jolo.
3. Outline of the transport from Lingayen Gulf to Jolo: (omitted by the author)
4. Distribution of the convoy:
1st Section [consisting of] six ships: (1) the *Yamagiku-maru*, (2) the *Kenkon-maru*, (3) the *Hague-maru*, (4) the *Nankō-maru*, (5) the *Aden-maru* (with Regimental Commander Imai on board), and (6) the *Kōnan-maru*.
2d Section [consisting of] six ships: (21) the *Johore-maru*, (22) the *Takaoka-maru*, (23) the *Holland-maru*, (24) the *Hokkō-maru*, (25) the *Kyokusei-maru*, and (26) the *Taiei-maru* [*Daiei-maru*].
3d Section [consisting of] six ships: (31) the *Kenzan-maru*, (32) the *Himalaya-maru*, (33) the *Havre-maru*, (34) the *Arizona-maru* (with Division Commander Tsuchihashi on board), (35) the *Anzan-maru*, and (36) the *Chōkō-maru*.
4th Section [consisting of] six ships: (41) the *Nisshū-maru* [*Nichihide-maru*], (42) the *Biyō-maru*, (43) the *Italy-maru*, (44) the *Asaka-maru*, (45) the *Kashū-maru*, and (46) the *Yoneyama-maru*.

5th Section [consisting of] six ships: (51) the *Hakuroku-maru* [*Hakushika-maru*], (52) the *Teiyō-maru* (with Infantry Group Commander Abe on board), (53) the *Hamburg-maru*, (54) the *Denmark-maru*, (55) the *Arabia-maru*, and (56) the *Tokushima-maru*.

6th Section [consisting of] six ships: (61) the *Miyadono-maru*, (62) the *Jinsan-maru* [*Jinzan-maru*], (63) the *Wales-maru*, (64) the *Suez-maru*, (65) the *Tamon-maru*, and (66) the *Yasukawa-maru*.

7th Section [consisting of] three ships: (71) the *Satsuma-maru*, (72) the *Minryō-maru*, and (73) the *Hozugawa-maru*.

Other than the above: (two ships) the *Sagami-maru* and the *Sasako-maru*.

Total (excluding the two ships above): thirty-nine ships

Note: The *Sagami-maru* and the *Sasako-maru* carrying the units for the surprise attack on Bali shall join the main convoy at the Makassar Strait and sail along with it. The number before the name of each ship indicates her number in each section [of the convoy].

5. Landing points and distribution of forces:

The Imai Unit ([consisting of] two infantry battalions and one mountain artillery battalion, under the command of Col. Imai Kazufumi, commander of the 1st Taiwan Infantry Regiment, as its core) shall come ashore in sector (B) of Kragan. After landing, it shall advance to Sedan and Mazeran." (Note by the author: "Sedan" seems to be in the vicinity of the Serang River. "Mazeran" is taken as Magelang. Whether the word "advance" above meant an advance in a strict sense or not is unclear.) [Editor's note: Sedan is actually located about ten kilometers south-southwest of Kragan at the foot of Mount Lasem. "Mazeran" could not be identified. It is unlikely to be Magelang, which is more than two hundred kilometers to the southwest in central Java and was not reached by the Japanese forces until a week after the landings. The author shows his doubts about the identification with Magelang by his remark on "advance in a strict sense." However, "Mazeran" might be a corruption of "Semarang."]

The Kitamura Unit (the 48th Reconnaissance Regiment under the command of Lt. Col. Kitamura Kurō, commander of the regiment) shall [also] come ashore in sector (B) of Kragan. After landing, it shall advance to Bojonegoro.

The Abe Unit ([consisting of] three infantry battalions, two tank squadrons, and two mountain artillery battalions, under the command of Maj. Gen. Abe Kōichi, commander of the 48th Infantry Group, as its core) shall come ashore in sector (A) of Kragan. After landing, it shall advance into Ponjōru (Bulūjaku) (note by the author: these seem to be located several kilometers south of Kragan). [Editor's note: "Ponjōru" is almost certainly "Bancar," and "Bulūjaku" is a corruption of "Bulujowo." Both are located on the coast southeast of Kragan. See also *Illustration No. 63*, p. 556.]

The Tanaka Unit ([consisting of] two infantry battalions and one mountain artillery battalion, under the command of Col. Tanaka Tōru, commander of the 2d Taiwan Infantry Regiment, as its core) shall [also] come ashore in sector (A) of Kragan. After landing, it shall advance to Cepu.

6. Landing date and time, and the schedule:

(1) Day I, the starting date of the landings, is [tentatively] scheduled for day x + 77 (23 February); [the division] shall leave Jolo on day I – 7, anchor at 0100 on day I, and start the landing [operation] at 0200 on the same day. However, if mines are found at the anchorage and need to be removed, it may wait for the completion [of the minesweeping] before entering the anchorage.

(2) The landing shall be completed in five days. For the disembarkation of munitions, the anchorage shall be changed to the area east of Cape Bendo.

7. Outline of the escort:

(1) Sea route plan: as shown on separate sheet (omitted by the author).

(2) Navigation speed: eight knots normal speed.

(3) Direct escort shall be provided.

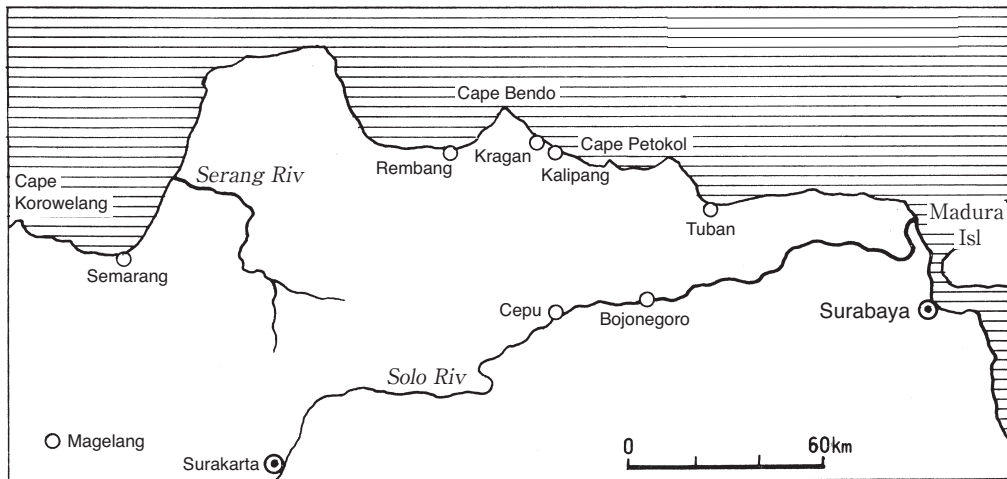


Illustration No. 21 — The Area of the 48th Division

Forces [to be employed for the escort] are:

One cruiser and four destroyers [for the route] between Lingayen and Jolo, however, three submarine chasers and one minelayer shall be added as far as the Apo [Reef] Channel. And one cruiser, nine destroyers, two minesweepers, six submarine chasers and one minelayer shall be employed for [the route] between Jolo and Kragan.

Note by the author: At the time of this arrangement (4 February), the 2d Destroyer Division, (three destroyers of) the 9th Destroyer Division, one section (two destroyers) of the 24th Destroyer Division and two minesweepers of the 2d Base Force were to be employed as the destroyers and the minesweepers in the escort force. However, when the operation was actually conducted, one destroyer of the 24th Destroyer Division was removed and two minesweepers of the 2d Base Force were added instead.

(4) Formation to be adopted when sailing during an alert: (omitted by the author)

8. Entry into the anchorage, landing under combat conditions, and cover:

(1) The commander of the escort [unit] shall give the command to "get into formation to enter the anchorage" at an appropriate moment before entering the anchorage. The formation is as shown in the separate drawing (omitted by the author).

(2) Anchoring formation is as shown in the separate drawing (omitted by the author).

(3) Although the landing shall be made as a surprise landing in principle, it shall be expected that it may be carried out by assault.

(4) Covering fire at the landing front by the Navy warships shall [only] be provided upon request of the division commander and the wing commanders. However, naval bombardments of the area west of Cape Bendo (inclusive) and the area east of Cape Petokol (inclusive) shall be provided at the discretion of the naval commander.

(5) Guarding in [and from] the sky shall be assigned to the Third Fleet and the Eleventh Air Fleet.

9. Actions of the transport ships after disembarkation:

(1) After completing the disembarkation, the transport ships shall return to the designated ports under direct or indirect escort of the escort units.

(2) If possible, the escort unit may make a feint by leading transport ships on their return to the vicinity of the mouth of the Kuto River (located eight nautical miles west of Cape Korowelang). [Editor's note: About thirty kilometers west of Semarang.]

10. Others:

- (1) By the time of departure from Jolo, the naval air unit shall prepare aerial photographs of the vicinity of the landing points and send them to the 48th Division.
- (2) The actions of the commanding officers after landing
The 48th Division commander shall land in area (A) in the 3d landing on day I, and position himself in Kalipang (three kilometers southeast of Kragan).
The commander of the 1st Escort Unit shall be on board the *Naka*, and timely take action near the anchorage [when necessary].
- (3) A seaplane base shall be set up near the landing points by the seaplane tenders *Chitose* and *Mizuho* of the Third Fleet.
- (4) With the aim of removing [obstacles] from the Surabaya Strait [and securing the waterway there], the stronghold on Madura Island shall be captured as swiftly as possible after the seizure of Surabaya. For that purpose, the landing forces shall [start] from the vicinity of Kragan or Tuban [and] go ashore on Madura Island by maneuvering along the coast using boats. The minesweeping and cover necessary for this operation shall be separately arranged with the naval units concerned.
- (5) Signal communication and exchange of information (omitted by the author).

[Army Commander Imamura's] Order to the Sakaguchi Detachment to Seize Banjarmasin

As already described, [Sixteenth] Army Commander Imamura, who ordered the 48th Division to capture eastern Java after the Manila Conference and returned to the army headquarters in Gaoxiong on the 24th, simply gave the Sakaguchi Detachment the order to seize Banjarmasin by 10 February on the 25th, when the Southern Army and the [Army Department of] IGHQ were in the middle of exchanging telegrams, both of them feeling frustrated and worried the whole time. The reasons have already been touched upon, but in detail they were as follows:

1. The Southern Army thought that the Sakaguchi Detachment was in a difficult situation because, firstly, the detachment, which started [the operation to] land in Balikpapan before daybreak on the day before (the 24th), was reported to have four transport ships (the *Tsuruga-maru*, the *Kuretake-maru*, the *Sumanoura-maru* and the *Tatsugami-maru*) sunk, and two transport ships (the *Kumagawa-maru* and the *Asahisan-maru*) and one patrol boat seriously damaged by several destroyers of the allied forces which had devastated the anchorage in the middle [of the operation]; and secondly, [the Southern Army] judged it impossible for the Sakaguchi Detachment to be ready to seize Banjarmasin by land and that it would be difficult to seize the place overland before the Java landing [operation] due to the terrain and the distance. [The Southern Army] also judged it difficult to seize [the place] even by sea before the Java landing [operation], because of the previously described situation at sea, and the fact that the cooperation of the Navy could not be expected.⁽²³⁾
2. In contrast to this, the Sixteenth Army and the Sakaguchi Detachment had no doubts at all because they had been ordered to seize Banjarmasin by the Southern Army's order of 20 November of the previous year.^(40, 87) The detachment's resourceful staff officer, Lieutenant Colonel Yano, had already worked out a plan to carry out surprise attacks both overland and by landing craft, even if the Navy did provide an escort.⁽⁸⁷⁾ On receiving a telegram of the Sixteenth Army from Manila (to the effect that cooperation from Navy warships could not be expected), the Sakaguchi Detachment immediately informed the Sixteenth Army that it definitely reckoned on seizing [Banjarmasin] both by land and by landing craft before 10 February; moreover, that the loss [sustained due to] the sinking of the transport ships was no more than thirty-nine men, and that

the operation to seize Balikpapan had progressed [so] favorably [that] its headquarters had [already] entered the city before dawn on the 25th.⁽⁸⁷⁾ Accordingly, on the night of the 25th as already described, the Sixteenth Army gave the Sakaguchi Detachment the order to seize Banjarmasin and on the morning of the next day, the 26th, wired a copy of the order to the [Army Department] of IGHQ and the Southern Army.⁽²²⁾ Both the Sixteenth Army and the Sakaguchi Detachment never even dreamed that until the 28th, IGHQ and the Southern Army would have a heated argument [about Banjarmasin].^(40, 87)

The Arrangements of the Main Force of the Army with the 5th Destroyer Squadron (See Illustration No. 22)

Two days later, on the 27th, the Sixteenth Army, along with the 2d Division and the Shōji Detachment, made arrangements with the 5th Destroyer Squadron in Gaoxiong for the western Java invasion operation.⁽¹²⁰⁾ The situation at that time was as follows:

Eastern Detachment: left Davao on that day (the 27th), with the intention to land in Ambon on 31 January.⁽¹¹⁹⁾

Sakaguchi Detachment: was preparing for the [operation to] seize Banjarmasin after having landed in Balikpapan on the 24th and completed mopping up [the enemy] on the 26th.⁽⁸⁸⁾

38th Division: having arrived in Cam Ranh on the 24th, it was preparing for the Bangka and Palembang operations and was scheduled to leave port on 4 February.⁽⁶⁶⁾

48th Division: was in Manila waiting for the arrival of the 4th Destroyer Squadron commander from Balikpapan following the army's order of the 24th.⁽³⁶⁾

2d Division: had been arriving in Gaoxiong one after another from the 21st onward, and had completed its arrival the previous day, the 26th.⁽⁵³⁾

Shōji Detachment: its convoy was scheduled to leave Hong Kong on the 29th and arrive in Gaoxiong on the 31st. The detachment commander had flown in ahead on the 25th.⁽⁷⁵⁾

5th Destroyer Squadron: its main force had arrived in Magong from Singora on 16 January and the remainder on the 18th.⁽¹²⁰⁾

1st Base Unit: had landed in Kendari with the support of the 5th Cruiser Division and the 2d Destroyer Squadron on the same day as the Sakaguchi Detachment [in Balikpapan] (24 January), and was preparing for the operation to seize Makassar.⁽¹²⁰⁾

The contents of the arrangements were roughly as follows:

A Summary of the Arrangements Between the Commanders of the Sixteenth Army, the 2d Division, the Shōji Detachment, and the 5th Destroyer Squadron for the Western Java Landing Operations

1. Assembly point(s) and tasks [to be discharged] there:

(1) The transport ships shall arrive in Gaoxiong one after another by 5 February and then gather in Cam Ranh Bay by 10 February according to the following schedule:

Eleven transport ships (under the escort of the *Nagatsuki* and the *Minazuki*) shall leave Gaoxiong at 1000 on 1 February.

Seventeen transport ships (under the escort of the *Harukaze* and the *Hatakaze*) shall leave Gaoxiong at 1000 on 3 February.

Eighteen transport ships (under the escort of the *Fumizuki* and the *Satsuki*) shall leave Gaoxiong at 1000 on 5 February.

Eight transport ships (under the escort of the *Asakaze* and the *Matsukaze*) shall leave Gaoxiong at 1000 on 6 February.

Note by the author: the names within parentheses are of the destroyers belonging to the 5th Destroyer Squadron.

(2) Tasks [to be discharged] at Cam Ranh Bay

11 February: Arrangements between the landing units within each sector, those between the escort units within each area, those between the ship captains, and those for signal communications

12 February: Training of the army itself

2. Distribution of the Convoy:

1st Convoy: [consisting of] eight ships; the *Kōyō-maru* (with Infantry Group Commander Nasu [on board]), the *Nichiwa-maru*, the *Hokumei-maru*, the *Shinshū-maru*, the *Colombia-maru*, the *Atlas-maru*, the *Ryūnan-maru*, and the *Genkai-maru*.

2d Convoy: [consisting of] seven ships; the *Akitsū-maru*, the *Momoyama-maru*, the *Pacific-maru*, the *Kizan-maru*, the *Reiyō-maru* (with the commander of the 4th Infantry Regiment, Fukushima, [on board]), the *Tsuyama-maru*, and the *Sydney-maru*.

3d Convoy: [consisting of] thirty-two ships

1st Section: [consisting of] six ships; the *Tatsuno-maru*, the *Haridono-maru* [*Somedono-maru?*], the *Takesato-maru* [*Taketoyo-maru?*], the *Heian-maru*, the *Akagisan-maru*, and the *Hōrai-maru*.

2d Section: [consisting of] five ships; the *Atsuta-maru* (with Division Commander Maruyama [on board]), the *Ryūjō-maru* (with Army Commander Imamura [on board]), the *Fushimi-maru*, the *Shinanogawa-maru*, and the *Ayatosan-maru*.

3d Section: [consisting of] six ships; the *Taizan-maru*, the *Dainichi-maru*, the *Hōeizan-maru*, the *Tōsei-maru*, the *Taihei-maru*, and the *Genoa-maru*.

4th Section: [consisting of] five ships; the *Brazil-maru*, the *Tōfuku-maru*, the *Toyooka-maru*, the *Mizuho-maru*, and the *Sakura-maru*.

5th Section: [consisting of] five ships; the *Maebashi-maru*, the *Tokiwa-maru*, the *Tempei-maru*, the *Miikesan-maru*, and one munitions ship.

6th Section: [consisting of] five ships; the *Erii-maru*, the *Zuishō-maru*, the *Tōhō-maru* [B], the *Gifu-maru*, and one munitions ship.

4th Convoy: [consisting of] seven ships; the *Daigen-maru* No. 3 [*Taigen-maru?*], the *Naples-maru*, the *Calcutta-maru*, the *Glasgow-maru*, the *Suwa-maru* (with Detachment Commander Shōji [on board]), the *Kōzan-maru*, and the *Yamazuki-maru* [*Yamatsuki-maru*].

Fifty-four ships in total.

3. Landing points and distribution of forces:

Area No. 1

Sector A (south of Merak): the unit [consisting of] two infantry battalions and reconnaissance regiment as its core, under the command of Maj. Gen. Nasu Yumio, the 2d Infantry Group commander, which shall be [transported] in the first convoy (in eight ships).

Sector B (north of Merak): the unit [consisting of] two infantry battalions as its core, under the command of Col. Fukushima Kyūsaku, the 4th Infantry Regiment commander, which shall be [transported] in the second convoy (in seven ships).

Sector C (western part of Bantam Bay): the main force of the 2d Division and that of the unit under the direct control of the Sixteenth Army, which shall be [transported] in the

third convoy (in thirty-two ships). The transport shall be under the command of Col. Satō Hanshichi, the 29th Infantry Regiment commander.

Area No. 2

The Patrol coast: the unit [consisting of] two infantry battalions as its core, under the command of Col. Shōji Toshishige, the 230th Infantry Regiment commander, which shall be [transported] in the fourth convoy (in seven ships).

4. Date and time of the landings and the schedule:

- (1) Day H, the starting date of the landings, is [tentatively] scheduled for day $x + 75$ (21 February). It shall be fixed by 1200 on day $H - 9$.
- (2) Departure from Cam Ranh Bay shall be at 1000 on day $H - 8$.
- (3) Scheduled time for anchoring is around 0000 on day H (for every area).
- (4) Scheduled time to start landing is around 0200 on the same day ([landings] shall be launched as soon as [the units] are ready).
- (5) Landing schedule
Sectors A and B (Merak): about five days.
Sector C (Bantam Bay): about seven days.
Area No. 2 (Patrol): about five days.

- (6) Depending on circumstances, on day $H + 2$ and onwards, the units supposed to be put ashore in Area No. 2 may be taken to Area No. 1 for debarkation. The implementation shall be discussed and decided by the commanders of the Sixteenth Army and the 5th Destroyer Squadron.

Note by the author: the 5th Destroyer Squadron considered it dangerous to carry out landing [operations] in Patrol.

5. Outline of escort:

- (1) Scheduled route: as shown in the separate drawing (omitted by the author)
- (2) Navigation speed: eight knots normal speed
- (3) Direct escort shall be provided. Forces [to be employed for the escort] consist of the *Natori*, the *Yura*, sixteen destroyers, five minesweepers, and another ship, of which the *Yura*, six destroyers, and five minesweepers shall join later.

Note by the author: As for destroyers, the 5th and the 22d Destroyer Division of the 5th Destroyer Squadron participated from the beginning, the 6th Destroyer Division of the 1st Destroyer Squadron joined at Cam Ranh Bay, and the 11th and the 12th Destroyer Division of the 3d Destroyer Squadron joined from Anambas.

- (4) Formation to be adopted when sailing during an alert: as shown in the separate drawing (omitted by the author).

6. Entry into the anchorage, landing under combat conditions, and cover:

- (1) The commander of escort [unit] for [each landing sector] shall give the command to “get into formation to enter the anchorage” at an appropriate moment before entering the anchorage. The formation is as shown in the separate drawing (omitted by the author).
- (2) Anchoring formation is as shown in the separate drawing (omitted by the author).
- (3) Although the landings shall be made as surprise landings in principle, they shall be carried out by assault depending upon the situation.
- (4) In Area No. 1, an element of the 1st landing unit shall raid and seize Merak Island and Panjang Island.
- (5) Covering fire at the landing front by the Navy warships shall [only] be provided upon request of the landing unit (detachment) commander of each landing sector.

7. Actions of the transport ships after debarkation and the succeeding transport ships:

- (1) After completing the disembarkation, the transport ships shall return appropriately. In principle indirect escort shall be provided on the way back; however, depending on the move-

- ments of the enemy, they might be escorted as far as the vicinity of the Karimata Strait (note by the author: about 500 kilometers northwest of Batavia).
- (2) The ships of the second transport ([consisting of] about twenty-five ships) for Area No.1 shall leave Cam Ranh Bay around day H + 14, and enter [the anchorage of] Bantam (or Batavia) for debarkation around day H + 22 under the escort of the Navy.
8. Others:
- (1) The actions of the commanding officers after landing
 The Sixteenth Army commander: shall go ashore in Sector C before dawn on day H, and advance his command post to Serdang [editor's note: "Sedan" in the Japanese text here is probably a corruption of "Serdang"].
 The 2d Division commander: shall land along with the units of the second landing on day H, and advance toward Serdang first.
 The Shōji Detachment commander: shall land in or near Patrol along with the units of the second landing on day H, and thereafter advance along the Batavia Highway.
 The 5th Destroyer Squadron commander: shall directly escort the transport convoy. After arriving in Sector C, he shall generally positioned himself on the waters outward of the sector and adopt an appropriate guarding posture.
- (2) Signal communications (omitted by the author)
- (3) Exchange of information (omitted by the author)

In [making] this arrangement, the Navy again opposed [the idea of] separately putting the Shōji Detachment ashore in Patrol out of concern about the escort.^(44, 138) However, as this [plan] had become fixed since the studies conducted at [the Army Department of] IGHQ before the opening of hostilities, the Sixteenth Army did not listen to the Navy's [advice].⁽⁴⁴⁾ The Navy decided to leave fate to Heaven and agreed to it.⁽¹³⁸⁾ When [making] this arrangement, the Navy side asked, "Which ship are you going to take, Commander?"⁽¹³⁸⁾ to which Army Commander Imamura replied, "I will go aboard the *Ryūjō*."⁽¹³⁸⁾ The *Ryūjō-maru* was a best ship along with the *Akitsu-maru*. It was able to carry thirty to forty large-sized motorized [landing] craft and more small-sized ones; it was also equipped with a deck to carry and launch aircraft, and had a unique appearance.⁽⁹⁴⁾ The Navy tentatively suggested with a laugh: "We think it better for you, Commander, to go on board the poorest ship because [the *Ryūjō-maru*] will inevitably come under attack from the enemy once you enter the Java Sea." However, [the Navy] left it at that, presuming that he had intentionally chosen [it] for its convenience of command as well as to boost the morale [of his men].⁽¹³⁸⁾ [As a matter of fact,] this ship, the *Ryūjō-maru*, was torpedoed in Bantam Bay, and the army commander ended up swimming in the sea which was covered with fuel oil; however, this indeed boosted the morale of the army.

[Army Commander Imamura's] Orders to the 2d Division and the Shōji Detachment

When Army Commander Imamura had given the order on the 25th to the Sakaguchi Detachment to seize Banjarmasin, he had also ordered the main force of the army to advance its assembly point to Cam Ranh Bay, and on the 30th, as soon as the above-mentioned arrangements with Rear Admiral Hara, the 3d Escort Unit commander (and the 5th Destroyer Squadron commander) had been completed on the 27th, he gave the main force of the army the following order concerning the Java invasion operation:⁽³¹⁾

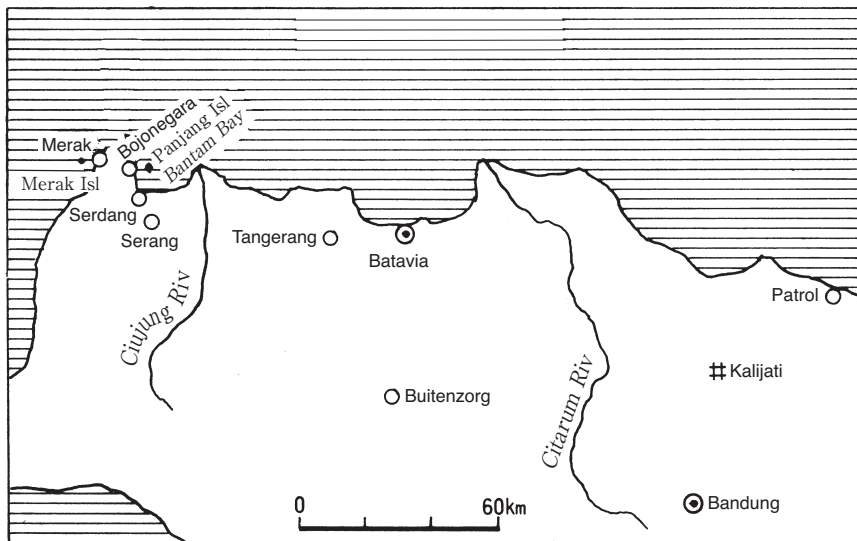


Illustration No. 22 — The Area of the Main Force of the Army

Sixteenth Army Order

1. The army, in conjunction with the 5th Destroyer Squadron, shall have the units of the first transport ([consisting of] the 2d Division (minus one artillery battalion) and the Shōji Detachment as its core) leave Cam Ranh Bay on day H – 6, go ashore on western Java before dawn on day H, and destroy the enemy to promptly seize Batavia first and then Bandung.
Day H indicates the first day of landing and the date shall be given later by an order.
About the same time, the 48th Division shall land in eastern Java, and promptly seize Surabaya first. The Third Air Force and the air units under the command of the First Southern Expeditionary Fleet shall closely and directly cooperate in the operations of the main force of the army. The main force of the First Southern Expeditionary Fleet shall be charged with the indirect escort for the main force of the army.
2. The 2d Division shall promptly seize Batavia first in the following manner:
 - (1) Part of the army shall land in or near Merak and the main force near Bojonegara before dawn on Day H, and they shall promptly advance to the Ciujung River line first.
 - (2) A powerful element of the army shall rush to Buitenzorg [Bogor] in order to divide the enemy into those in the Batavia area and those in the Bandung area, to cut off their escape and reinforcement routes, and to secure a foothold as far forward as possible for the army's subsequent seizure of Bandung.
 - (3) The main force of the division shall advance through the areas along the road between Serang – Tangerang – Batavia towards Batavia and the area to its south, and promptly seize them.
 - (4) [The division] shall give the air units as much support as possible in making the airfields ready for use and in transporting fuel and ammunition.
3. The Shōji Detachment shall land in or near Patrol before dawn on day H, promptly seize and secure the Kalijati airfield, and also gain control of the crossing point over the Citarum River in order to divide the enemy in the Bandung and the Batavia areas, and to cut off their escape and reinforcement routes. Depending on the situation, the detachment shall have one element prepare for participating in seizing Batavia. The air units shall be provided with as much support as possible in making the airfields ready for use; moreover, the detachment shall also be responsible for arranging their quarters, supplies, guarding, etc.

The Army's Plan and Conduct of the Operation

The enemy position on Java as far as it was known to IGHQ before the opening of hostilities has already been described. Since then, the Sakaguchi Detachment, which had landed in Tarakan on 11 January, had reported in mid-January, as information obtained from prisoners, the following deployment of the Dutch East Indies Army:⁽²⁴⁾

In Java, one division had been deployed in each of the eastern and western parts, and later an additional division was established in central Java. The army commander was Lieutenant General Ter Poorten, who was positioned in Bandung. In eastern Java, a unit [consisting] of three infantry battalions as its core was stationed in Malang and another [consisting] of one infantry battalion as its core in Surabaya. In central Java, a unit [consisting] of three infantry battalions as its core was stationed in Magelang, and one [consisting] of one infantry battalion as its core in Surakarta and Cilacap. In western Java, a unit [consisting] of three infantry battalions as its core was stationed in Bandung and another [consisting] of three infantry battalions as its core in Batavia.

Since before the opening of hostilities the Government-General in Batavia had reportedly been moving to Bandung one [department] after another. It was only natural to expect that the allied forces would put up strong resistance by taking advantage of the pillbox positions set on the steep mountainsides surrounding the four fronts of Bandung, turning the Bandung stronghold into a bastion. However, it was unlikely that from the outset they would abandon Batavia, which was the capital and the center of politics, the economy, communications, transport, etc., and which, on top of that, had the good harbor of Tanjung Priok.

What made it even more unlikely that the allied forces would abandon Batavia from the outset, but on the contrary might be expected to launch aggressive counterattacks near Tangerang, was the consideration that reportedly there were a considerable number of pillbox positions around the perimeter of Batavia, especially in the west and northwest of Tangerang, and also waterside obstacles and defense facilities all along the north coast, and that according to successive reports after the opening of hostilities, the Dutch East Indies Army had been further enlisting troops, that the British Indian Army in Malaya was being reinforced and so was the Australian Army in the Dutch East Indies, that the forces repelled from the Philippines and Malaya had been gathering in Java, and that the reinforcements intended for Malaya had been redirected to Java. As previously described, when Army Commander Imamura advanced to Saigon in early January, he revised the operation plan which had been drawn up in Tokyo in early mid-December. Even in late January the plan remained unchanged. If anything, he had become rather more cautious than in early January. [After all,] the Sakaguchi Detachment had sustained the loss of four transport ships and serious damage to two ships in Balikpapan, which was merely an advance base of the allied forces. The Southern Army, on the other hand, insisted that the departure of the convoy for the Java invasion should be synchronized with the occupation of air bases in Sumatra, Borneo and Celebes, and that the air operation should be launched at the same time as the departure of the convoy. However, only a couple of destroyers of the U.S., British and Dutch fleets had been sunk other than the *Prince of Wales* and the *Repulse*. Although the number of the destroyers to escort the large convoy of fifty-four ships was increased from eight to sixteen (in reality, fifteen) at his request, he was worried about how many ships of the convoy would be able to arrive in-

tact. After due consideration of these matters, the army commander set the initial mission of the 2d Division. His idea was that [the division] should first seize Batavia, and then the Bandung stronghold, but to [decide later] how to carry it out depending on the subsequent situation.⁽³⁶⁾

Army Commander Imamura was the most concerned about the Shōji Detachment. First of all, for various reasons, in particular those related to the distribution of forces among the Shōji Detachment, the main force of the 38th Division, and the Eastern Detachment, he had been forced to limit the strength of the Shōji Detachment to only two battalions as its core. Secondly, both the [Navy] Dutch East Indies Unit and the 5th Destroyer Squadron objected to the landing point due to its riskiness. Thirdly, the Kalijati airfield, which the detachment was to seize, was also of great importance to the allied forces and, what is more, it was very close to the Bandung stronghold (in the vicinity of which the main division of the Dutch East Indies Army should be expected). Moreover, it was also close to Cilacap, where British and Australian reinforcements were expected to land. [The detachment] was definitely short of strength. [However,] Chief of Staff Okazaki set his eyes on Lt. Col. Ōno Takeo, commander of the 2d Independent Antitank Gun Battalion, whose companies had been separately assigned to other corps in different areas.⁽³⁶⁾ He right away assigned the latter to the Shōji Detachment, and put him in charge of the command at the landing point (note: the disembarkation of the detachment was scheduled to take five days), so that Detachment Commander Shōji would be able to rush toward Kalijati and the bridge over the Citarum River, free of worry about his rear.⁽³⁶⁾ As the operations of the Shōji Detachment were not only highly risky but also closely and inseparably linked to the operations of the 2d Division, Army Commander Imamura decided to specially assign his Assistant Operations Staff Officer (Maj.) Yamashita Yutaka to the Shōji Detachment.⁽³⁶⁾ Prior to this (when he attended the Manila Conference and assigned the 48th Division its mission), Army Commander Imamura had assigned Intelligence Staff Officer Maj. Kuriya Tsugunori, and Line-of-Communication Staff Officer Maj. Nishiura Setsuzō to the 48th Division.⁽³⁶⁾

The Situation of the 2d Division

The 2d Division had left Ujina during the period from 15 to 23 January, and arrived in Gao-xiong from 21 to 26 January. After it had concluded arrangements with the 5th Destroyer Squadron on the 27th, and received the order of the army on the 30th, it left Gao-xiong for Cam Ranh Bay during the period from 1 to 6 February. We may illustrate the movements of the division from its time in the Japanese mainland onwards by citing the following records of the 3d Battalion of the 4th Infantry Regiment, which boarded the *Tokiwa-maru*.⁽⁶⁰⁾

16 – 21 September 1941: Landing training of the 4th Infantry Regiment on the coast of Ishinomaki

9 October: Given the order of mobilization

16 October: The first day of the mobilization

29 October: Completion of the mobilization

4 November onwards: Joint training with transport ships near Matsushima

17 December: Arrival of the regiment at the barracks at the foot of Mt. Fuji

12 January 1942: Departure from Gotemba

13 January: Arrival in Hiroshima

- 15 January: Embarkation of the main force of the regiment and lessons in the Indonesian language
- 18 January: Finished loading the *Tokiwa-maru* (with a mixed shipment of the main force of the 3d Battalion, one transport platoon, half a sick horse depot, and one bridge building material platoon), and departure from Ujina to assemble in Shimonoseki
- 21 January at 1000: Departure from Shimonoseki for Magong (?). We were told that we would arrive around the 27th. We were also told that [the ship] would call at Magong (?) for a few days, and that it would take about two weeks to sail to the Dutch East Indies.
- 22 January: Naval aircraft came flying over twice; the course followed the line of the Gotō Islands – the Dan'jo Archipelago – Magong.
- 26 January: Entry into the port of Magong
- 28 January: It was decided that we would "leave the current place at 0700 on the 31st and call at Gaoxiong." We were told that as a divisional reserve battalion, we would be in charge of the disembarkation of some two thousand and several hundred cases of military supplies at the time of landing.
- 29 January: Water filters were distributed.
- 30 January: It was decided that we would leave Magong the next morning and advance to Gaoxiong; the final landing place shall be decided in Gaoxiong.
- 31 January: Departure from Magong at 0700; arrival in the port of Gaoxiong at 1600
 - 1 February: In order to receive the divisional orders, only the commander went ashore in Gaoxiong and learned the plan for the landing in Java.
 - 2 February: We were told that the landing at the northwest tip of Java was scheduled for the 23d of the month. We were also told that [due to the schedule], [the ship] would call at Cam Ranh Bay and depart from there on the 15th.
 - 3 February: From today or tomorrow, bombing raids on Java and Australia are supposed to start. [The ship] came alongside the quay at Gaoxiong. The officers and men were sent ashore to bathe for the first time since Hiroshima. We should depart on the 5th.
 - 4 February: An ordnance unit, an army signal unit, a tank unit, an independent engineer unit, an antiaircraft artillery unit, and others were additionally loaded onto the *Tokiwa-maru*.
 - 5 February: Departure from Gaoxiong for Cam Ranh Bay at 1000 under direct escort of the Navy

From 15 January onwards, the officers and men of this battalion sailed for forty-five days on dangerous waters far beyond the equator, packed in the small space of a ship without bathing.

Confusion at the Port of Gaoxiong

What can be observed based on the above-related movements of the *Tokiwa-maru* is that on the basis of the Cam Ranh Agreement of 1 January, she and the other ships hastily left Shimonoseki; that according to the plan at that time she was supposed to head [straight] for Java with a stop at Magong only for a supply of coal and water, but that the Manila Agreement, which became officially effective on 28 January, gave five extra days to spare, so she changed her route from Magong to also call at Gaoxiong; but that there she ended up being crammed with many more fighting units.

As already mentioned, bringing forward the Java operation necessitated an increase in shipping tonnage of about 300,000 tons. But as the Southern Army understood the predicament of the [Army Department] of IGHQ, it requested an increase of only 150,000 tons. Because the [Army Department of] IGHQ did not even approve this increase of 150,000 tons,⁽²⁴⁾ the Southern Army had to make do [with what it had] and drew up a plan for the period from 16 January onwards based on the following shipping volume:⁽²⁴⁾

First transport:	130,000 tons for the 38th Division
	210,000 tons for the 48th Division
	220,000 tons for the main force of the army
Subtotal:	560,000 tons
Second transport:	150,000 tons
Third transport:	100,000 tons
Total	810,000 tons

Because of the unexpected advance of the operation schedule, the movements and the cargoes of ships hurriedly coming from the Japanese mainland, Manchuria, Korea and China varied from ship to ship. Because the absolute number of ships was too small, and because they had to be loaded in a way to meet [the requirements] of the operation plan, some units had to disembark to be transported later and even units in the first transport had to be switched to other ships. The port of Gaoxiong was in chaos. [Chief] Shipping Officer Sendō of the Sixteenth Army described the situation at that time as follows:⁽⁴⁴⁾

At the assembly point in Gaoxiong, I was swamped by a dizzying amount of all kinds of tasks: taking control of units unexpectedly arriving from all areas without notice, sorting them by area and arranging transportation for them, replenishing a huge number of ships with coal and water, the distribution of landing craft, loading war matériel, changing the ships of the units, and so on. In addition, the cramped wharf was so overflowing with departing, incoming and waiting ships that the anchorage was extended as far as the exposed open sea. Moreover, due to the [limited] tonnage, a considerable quantity of forces, equipment and matériel of the units in the first transport had to be left behind at the assembly point. It remains a painful memory of that time that instead of sympathizing with the feelings of those who were not able to join the glorious front line after having left for the war in high spirits, or imagining the feelings of the unit commanders who left while leaving behind even their weapons and matériel, which they regarded as indispensable for accomplishing their tasks, and the men in charge of this equipment, I steeled myself against taking pity in order to persuade [the commanders] that considering the characteristics of the operations of our army, they should be firmly determined to accomplish their tasks without regret, even if their forces were decimated on the sea.

Similar problems also occurred in Lingayen Gulf. No matter what, the Japanese were short of ships. According to the transportation plan sent to the 48th Division from the Southern Army ([to be precise,] the Saigon command post of the Shipping Transport Command) in mid-January, the 48th Division was divided into three transports:

(See the previously described plan of the Southern Army of 16 January.)

First transport: Division headquarters, two infantry regiments, two mountain artillery battalions, one engineer regiment, one bridge building material company, and one transport company.

Second transport: The other fighting units of the 48th Division, and the 4th Tank Regiment and the units of the 17th Field Heavy Artillery Regiment.

Third transport: The other units.

That is to say, it would take three months to complete all the transportation.⁽⁸⁰⁾ Chief of Staff Kawagoe [of the 48th Division] ordered his staff members: "Though we [calculated accom-

modation] on the basis of seven people per 3.3 square meters in the Philippines invasion operation, try and make a plan this time on a basis of ten people [per 3.3 square-meters].”⁽⁸⁰⁾ The plan was completed the next morning. When he reported it to Division Commander Tsuchihashi, the latter ordered: “Re-plan it so that all the fighting units will be transported in the first transport.”⁽⁸⁰⁾ Although Chief of Staff Kawagoe and his staff reviewed it for three days and nights,⁽⁸⁰⁾ the tonnage was still insufficient. Calculation on a basis of fifteen people per 3.3 square meters did not work, either. Lying in his bed, feeling that he had exhausted every possible means, Chief of Staff Kawagoe looked at the entire ship allocation plan of the Southern Army.⁽⁸⁰⁾ By chance he noticed that about fifteen ships were to call at Gaoxiong from Dalian, Dagu and Shanghai with bridge building material companies, field hospitals and others on board. He immediately roused all staff members from their beds, and ordered them to work out [a new calculation] on the assumption that these ships would be emptied in Gaoxiong and moved to Lingayen Gulf. The next morning, it turned out that the rear units of the division, the 4th Tank Regiment, and the units of the 17th Field Heavy Artillery Regiment would be able to go on board, not to mention the fighting units of the division. Maj. Tanabe Masaki, chief staff officer for the line of communication with the rear, was immediately sent to the branch office of the Shipping Transport Command to make arrangements to cancel the assignment of the previously mentioned units from the Kwantung Army and the China Expeditionary Army to the division, disembark them at Gaoxiong, and have the empty ships hurry from Gaoxiong to Lingayen. This proposal was approved by the Southern Army (the command post of the Shipping Transport Command), which enabled Division Commander Tsuchihashi to go ashore in Java with all the fighting units he had in the Philippines. On the other hand, however, the units forced to disembark at Gaoxiong were not able to participate in the Java operation after all and cursed their luck.⁽⁸⁰⁾

Note: The required tonnage of “three tons per person and nine tons per horse” was the standard in the China operations for military transport ships (cargo ships), and in principle, freight belonging to the units was not specifically included in the count and loaded in vacant spaces. Three tons per person was equivalent to three people per 3.3 square meters. As the southern operation would take place in a tropical region, it was considered [preferable] that more space be allocated than in the case of the above-mentioned China operations. This standard of “three tons per person (three people per 3.3 square meters)” was a calculation based on the premise that double or triple bunks could be used.⁽¹⁴⁸⁾

Especially, I would like to add that the military horses of the 2d Division, mainly bred in Hokkaidō, sailed southward beyond the equator without being allowed to “disembark for bathing,” unlike the people [on board]. Whether they would endure sailing in the tropical zone was a matter of great concern. However, the result came as a surprise. The officers and men from the Tōhoku district were solid, familiar with handling horses, and they really loved horses. During the sailing, [even] the officers voluntarily took the initiative to live in the horse stalls at the bottom of the ships and treated them with tender care day and night. Out of more than 1,000 military horses, only three succumbed during the sailing.⁽⁹⁴⁾

The Army Commander Changes his Departure Date from Gaoxiong

After concluding the arrangements with the 5th Destroyer Squadron on the 27th, Army Commander Imamura paid a visit to the Taiwan Army headquarters and the Government-General of Taiwan in Taipei with Chief of Staff Okazaki on the 28th to express his appreciation and asked them to look after affairs while he was away. The next morning, he returned to Gaoxiong by train, and gave orders to the 2d Division and others on the 30th as already described,⁽³²⁾ which put an end to the main administrative work he had to do in Gaoxiong. In Cam Ranh Bay, the 38th Division was supposed to make arrangements with the Malaya Unit (the First Southern Expeditionary Fleet) on the next day, the 31st, with the 3d Destroyer Squadron and the 9th Base Force on the day after next, 1 February, and leave for Bangka and Palembang on the evening of the 4th.⁽¹¹⁸⁾ (Before the Manila Conference, it was supposed to leave Cam Ranh Bay on 31 January.) While concerned about the 38th Division in Cam Ranh Bay, Army Commander Imamura had planned to leave Gaoxiong by aircraft on 1 February, after observing in person the arrival of the convoy of the Shōji Detachment (from Hong Kong; though the detachment commander had already flown ahead to Gaoxiong on the 25th) and the arrival of part of the convoy of the 2d Division (from Magong), both expected to arrive in Gaoxiong on the 31st, the passing down of orders to the 2d Division and to the Shōji Detachment, and the change of ships of men and freight. However, there was a pile of problems in Gaoxiong. Amid the chaos in Gaoxiong, which has been described, the commanders of the units, who were ordered to disembark and remain in Gaoxiong, pestered the shipping staff, insisting that their men would not be convinced unless they were brought back in the first transport unit, or they would be too ashamed to face [people] at home. Also, he [Imamura] thought it necessary to give all possible instructions to the Shōji Detachment, which was going to put its head into the lion's mouth, so to speak. Originally, when Army Commander Imamura was still an officer attached to a company of the 4th Sendai Infantry Regiment, Colonel Shōji had joined the company as a probationary officer, and was directly trained by him. Then, when Army Commander Imamura graduated from the War College and returned as a company commander of the regiment, Shōji served as a senior officer of the company. Furthermore, when Army Commander Imamura was the commander of the Twenty-third Army, Shōji served as the regimental commander of a division under the control of the army. Only a few companies in infantry regiments had a probationary officer (1 person) assigned to it, and the officers who trained probationary officers and the latter were usually bound by deep comradeship. Apart from the relationship from the time when Shōji was a probationary officer, Army Commander Imamura and Colonel Shōji also had the other connections mentioned above.

Army Commander Imamura had asked Lt. Gen. Sano Tadayoshi, commander of the 38th Division, to specifically appoint Colonel Shōji as commander of the unit to seize Kalijati. It was partly because the regiment under the command of Colonel Shōji, who was trained in the 4th Infantry Regiment of the 2d Division, would be the most suitable for the joint operations with the 2d Division. However, the main reason was that he expected that with Colonel Shōji as the commander of the detachment, which not only had to cope with difficult circumstances but also conduct its operations in close and inseparable connection with the main force of the army, he would have a detachment commander who would be of one mind with him as army commander and that even if he was unable to communicate with [the detachment] as he wished, [Shōji] would take the appropriate actions.

Because of all the many problems [listed] above, the army commander decided for the time being to postpone his departure, which was scheduled for the 31st.⁽³²⁾ On that day, the army commander learned that the Eastern Detachment had successfully landed in Ambon that morning, which left Bangka, Palembang, Banjarmasin Bali, and Kupang [as places to be seized]. On the next day, 1 February, the first convoy left Gaoxiong.⁽¹²⁰⁾ The second, the third and the fourth (the last) convoys were scheduled to leave Gaoxiong for Cam Ranh on the 3d, the 5th, and the 6th respectively.⁽¹²⁰⁾ The army commander had continuously been directing various units, but receiving a telegram on the next day, the 2d, which will be described later, he left Gaoxiong for Cam Ranh Bay on the 3d, parting from 2d Division Commander Maruyama, 1st Disembarkation Group Commander Itō Shinobu, and Detachment Commander Shōji. He stayed in Sanya that night for aircraft availability reasons.⁽³²⁾

4. The Southern Sumatra Invasion Operation

The Issue of a Second Postponement of Operation L Arises

Army Commander Imamura had put off his departure from Gaoxiong scheduled for 31 January because of the postponement of the invasion schedule (a decision made on 28 January) and the actual situation at Gaoxiong. Then on 2 February he received a telegram from the Malaya Unit (the First Southern Expeditionary Fleet) requesting “a postponement of the operations against Bangka and Palembang.”⁽³³⁾ Considering that “this is a serious matter which may affect the schedule of the landing operation in Java,”⁽³³⁾ [the commander] hastily left Gaoxiong on the following day, the 3d, and flew to Sanya on Hainan Island on the same day.⁽³²⁾ As previously described, the 38th Division (which had left Hong Kong on 20 January and arrived in Cam Ranh on the 24th) had postponed its departure scheduled for 31 January till 4 February as a result of the official conclusion of the Manila Agreement on 28 January and was about to leave Cam Ranh on the evening of 4 February to head for Bangka and Palembang.

Chief of Staff Okazaki, Senior Staff Officers Takashima and Kitamura, Staff Officer Oda and others accompanied Army Commander Imamura, while Staff Officers Kuriya and Nishiura, and Staff Officer Yamashita had been attached to the 48th Division and the Shōji Detachment respectively. Vice Chief of Staff Harada, Staff Officer Sendō and others remained in Gaoxiong to take care of remaining affairs. Earlier, as soon as the outline of the Mersing landing operation had been changed on 19 January (in such a way that the landing operation of the main force of the 18th Division was called off, and that air unit(s) and their matériel were to be put ashore in Endau on the 26th in two transport ships instead), and the arrangements between the [Navy] Malaya Unit and the [Army] Third Air Force had been concluded on the same day based on the [new] outline, [Chief Aviation] Staff Itoda, who had been left in Sagion, had returned to Gaoxiong on the same day (the 19th) to report on the situation.⁽³²⁾ Then he had immediately flown back again to French Indochina, working busily between the Southern Army, the Third Air Force and the 1st [Paratroop] Raiding Group in an effort to realize the Palembang paratroop operation.⁽³⁹⁾ By around 22 January, the Southern Army had abandoned the idea of dropping the [paratroop] raiding unit at Palembang for three reasons: the fact that the 1st [Paratroop] Raiding Regiment had been shipwrecked, the 2d [Paratroop] Raiding Regiment's insufficient level of training and the delay of its departure from

the [Japanese] homeland, and the moving up of the operation schedule. Nonetheless, Staff Officer Itoda zealously persuaded all parties, and by the 25th had convinced them to implement the parachute raid.^(24, 39) After that, he stayed on in Saigon to proceed with the preparation of the specifics of the Palembang paratroop operation.⁽³⁹⁾ In addition, the Sixteenth Army had also dispatched Staff Officer Saiki to French Indochina in order to prepare for the Bangka and Palembang operations.⁽³⁴⁾ He had left Taiwan on 23 January and arrived in Saigon on the 25th, where at the Southern Army headquarters he learned about the [decision in] the Manila Agreement to change the schedule (the departure of the 38th Division from Saigon, which had been set on 31 January in the Cam Ranh Agreement, was changed to 4 February in the Manila Agreement). Arriving in Cam Ranh Bay on the 27th, he visited 38th Division Commander Sano on board the *Gin'yō-maru* to pay his respects and then headed for the *Chōkai*, the flagship of the First Southern Expeditionary Fleet commander in chief, Vice Admiral Ozawa. There, along with Staff Officer Itoda he took part in making preliminary arrangements for the Bangka and Palembang operations between the Sixteenth Army, the [Navy] Malaya Unit (the First Southern Expeditionary Fleet) and the Third Air Force, and returned to Saigon on the 28th. On the 31st, he once again left Saigon for Cam Ranh Bay, this time along with Southern Army Staff Officers Arao and Matsumae, and Sixteenth Army Staff Officer Itoda, to complete the "Arrangements for the air [operations] of the Bangka and Palembang operations between the Sixteenth Army, the First Southern Expeditionary Fleet, and the Third Air Force" on board the *Chōkai*, the flagship of the Malaya Unit, with all parties concerned. Then he attended the conclusion of the "Arrangements for the Bangka and Palembang operations between the 38th Division and the First Southern Expeditionary Fleet," and returned to Saigon on the next day, 1 February. While dealing with these, he [also] worked on, among other things, accommodating the 38th Division's request for an increase in the number of small cargo ships.⁽³⁴⁾

While such was the situation at Cam Ranh Bay, the [Sixteenth] Army commander and his group arrived in Sanya on Hainan Island on the 3d, and then, via the Nha Trang airfield in French Indochina, reached Cam Ranh Bay at 1230 on the 4th. They were met by 38th Division Commander Sano, and paid a visit to [Navy] Commander in Chief Ozawa.^(32, 33) The [Navy] commander in chief and his officers requested Army Commander Imamura that "due to the current condition of the Ledo airfield and other [matters], it is not possible to let the 38th Division start from Cam Ranh Bay tonight. I would like you to agree to postpone the schedule for at least two days."⁽³⁶⁾ Earlier on that day (the 4th), [Sixteenth] Staff Officer Saiki in Saigon had already sent a military classified telegram to [the army commander arriving in] Cam Ranh, signaling the intention of the Southern Army that "it would definitely not agree to a change of schedule."⁽³⁴⁾ Nevertheless, the army commander and his officers shared the feeling that the request of the [Navy] Malaya Unit was inevitable under the circumstances.^(36, 39) In the evening, the army commander and his group arrived from Cam Ranh in Saigon, where four of them, i.e. Senior Staff Officers Takashima and Kitamura, Staff Officer Oda and Navy Staff Officer Wakatsuki (staff officer of the Third Fleet seconded to the Sixteenth Army) went straight to the Southern Army Staff Office to make a "request for consent to a postponement of the schedule."⁽²³⁾ The Southern Army staff turned red with anger as they saw "the Sixteenth Army coming in a body, having sided with the Malaya Unit."⁽²³⁾ Once again a heated exchange concerning the issue of a postponement of the schedule started.⁽²³⁾

(1) Preparations for the Southern Sumatra Invasion Operation

To what extent had the preparations for the Southern Sumatra invasion operation been making progress by this time?

We have already related that as soon as the Cam Ranh Agreement to move up the Java operation had formally become effective (on 1 January), the Southern Army had ordered the Sixteenth Army on 5 January "to prepare for [the operation] to capture Java as well as to carry out [the operations] to seize Bangka, Palembang, Ambon and Kupang," that as soon as the formal arrangement with the Malaya Unit had been concluded on 15 January, [Sixteenth] Army Commander Imamura had given orders to the 38th Division commander on 18 January in Hong Kong to carry out the Bangka and Palembang operations; that the 38th Division had departed from Hong Kong on 20 January and advanced to Cam Ranh Bay on the 24th, but that its departure from Cam Ranh Bay scheduled for the 31st had been postponed to 4 February according to the [decisions] made at the Manila Conference which had been held in the meantime; and that just before the Manila Conference, the change in the outline of the Mersing landing operation, the delay in the Kawaguchi Detachment's [operation to] seize the Ledo [airfields], and the regrettable shipwreck of the 1st [Paratroop] Raiding Group had occurred.

Start of the Southern Sumatra Operation of the Third Air Force

While assisting the Twenty-fifth Army with its operations in Malaya, the Third Air Force had already started preparations for the coming Sumatra operation as early as mid-December. To be concrete, it had had the 81st Air Group reconnoiter the Medan airfield since 11 December, and the airfields of Pekanbaru, Palembang and Mentok since the 17th, while having the 7th Air Division investigate the general situation of [the enemy] air [forces and fields] in Northern Sumatra. [Further,] from the beginning of January, it had the 81st Air Group to continuously watch the Medan and Pekanbaru airfields, while having an element advance and attack these airfields in the following way:⁽⁹⁶⁾

- 28 December: The 3d Air Division ([consisting of] the 59th and the 75th Air Groups, from the Sungai Petani base) attacked the Medan airfield with twenty-five aircraft (seven fighter planes and eighteen light bombers), and blew up or set fire to four aircraft on the ground, hangar(s) and powder magazine(s).
- 16 January: The 3d Air Division ([consisting of] the 59th, the 75th and the 90th Air Group, from the Sungai Petani and Ipoh bases) attacked the Medan airfield with its main force, set fire to one aircraft on the ground and blew up the runway.
- 17 January: The 7th Air Division ([consisting of] the 64th and the 12th Air Groups, from the Alor Setar and Ipoh bases) attacked the Pekanbaru airfield with forty-one aircraft (nine fighter planes and thirty-two heavy bombers), set fire to five aircraft on the ground and warehouse(s), and blew up seven aircraft and the runway.
- 23 January: The 7th Air Division ([consisting of] the 98th Air Group, from the Ketil base) attacked the Palembang airfield with its twenty-seven aircraft (heavy bombers), set fire to one aircraft on the ground, fought against fifteen enemy aircraft which came to intercept, and shot down five of them. Our loss was fourteen aircraft moderately or slightly damaged.

The Situation in Late January

The British Indian Army in Malaya, in expectation of reinforcements being sent in, was seen to put up resistance by taking up successive in-depth positions over a very long distance. In particular, in early and mid-December it put up resistance by taking up strong positions in the Jitra line sector, and from late December to early January in the sector south of the Perak River (the Kampar and Slim sectors), during which time it also strengthened [the defense of] the whole sector of Gemas, Bakri and their vicinities in the south of the peninsula.⁽²³⁾ In mid-January, the Twenty-fifth Army, while getting one after another reports such as "on 15 January, a battleship carrying 1,600 men arrived in Singapore; on 16 January more reinforcements arrived; fifty pursuit aircraft and B-17 bombers arrived [as well]," had carried out attacks on the strong [enemy] positions in the vicinities of Gemas and Bakri with the Imperial Guard Division and the 5th Division.⁽²³⁾ Around that time the 18th Division had been on standby at Cam Ranh Bay since 10 January for the landing operation near Endau and Mersing.⁽²³⁾ The 5th Division had seized the strong position near Gemas [in an engagement] from around the 14th until the 19th,⁽²³⁾ and the Imperial Guard Division those near Bakri [in an engagement] from around the 18th until the 22d.⁽²³⁾ In the meantime, on the 15th, acting on reports that "enemy battleships and an aircraft carrier [had been] spotted at Singapore," the [Navy] Malaya Unit had departed from Cam Ranh Bay and headed south, which, on the 17th, had resulted in the decision to change the outline of the Endau and Mersing landing operations. The Southern Army had ordered this [change] on the 19th, and the 18th Division left Cam Ranh Bay on the 20th, arrived at Singora on the 22d, and started the landing [operation].^(23, 118) As the information concerning the battleships and an aircraft carrier in Singapore had proved false, the main unit of the [Navy] Malaya Unit had returned to Cam Ranh Bay on the 19th.⁽¹⁰³⁾ The Third Air Force, while successively advancing its air bases, had continued its battle to destroy the enemy air power in conjunction with the naval air units of the Malaya Unit, and also assisted the Twenty-fifth Army in its ground operations.⁽²³⁾ Command of the air above the battlefronts and their vicinities was largely in Japanese hands.⁽²³⁾ Nevertheless, the British Air Force still possessed about 150 to 160 aircraft and kept carrying out guerilla-like attacks against our air bases from its base in Singapore.⁽²³⁾ The Twenty-fifth Army's operation became a high-speed pursuit battle after it had destroyed the British Indian Army near Gemas and Bakri.⁽²³⁾ The 5th Division, which had advanced to Labis on the 21st, to Yong Peng on the 24th, and to Kluang on the 25th, [finally] made a long-awaited charge into Johor Bahru at 1530 on the 31st.⁽²³⁾ The Imperial Guard Division advanced to Batu Pahat on the 25th, and to the Strait of Johor line on the 31st.⁽²³⁾ As for the [Navy] Malaya Unit, after calling off the mid-January operation to lure out the battleships and the carrier [believed to be] in Singapore (both of which turned out to be false reports), it provided escort for the transport of the 18th Division between Cam Ranh Bay and Singora from 20 to 22 January, and from the 24th onwards, [the unit] shifted [its operation] to provide escort for the disembarkation operation at Endau (in which [the ground units of] the air units and their matériel transported in two ships were disembarked instead of the cancelled landing operation of 18th Division) and [subsequently] to occupy the Anambas base, both of which were realized on the 26th.^(23, 118, 126) With the advance of the Twenty-fifth Army and the gradual approach of Japanese air bases, the British air forces fled to Sumatra one after another.⁽²³⁾ Now the Dutch East Indies Air Force became the main constituent [of the enemy].⁽²³⁾ The Dutch East Indies Air Force had been gradually reinforced with U.S. air forces, and at the beginning of February, its

strength was estimated at about one hundred aircraft in Sumatra and some three hundred aircraft in Java, including the aircraft of the British air forces which had escaped [the Japanese attacks].⁽²³⁾ Reconnaissance of the general state of the [enemy] air forces and fields in Sumatra and the attack operations against the island had progressed as previously described. As for the U.S., British and Dutch warships, few had sustained any significant damage apart from the *Prince of Wales* and the *Repulse* [which had been sunk].

The Enemy Position at the End of January

The information which the Southern Army had obtained by the end of January on the allied army and air force reinforcements since the opening of hostilities was as follows:⁽²³⁾

1. Burma area

Apart from reinforcements of at least one division and other technical units of the [British] Indian Army, also Chiang [Kai-shek]'s Sixth Army has been moved up close to the border, of which two corps have [already] entered Burma for certain. It appears that the remainder is also taking the route to enter [Burma]. This information is mainly based on the following sources (omitted by the author).

It appears that the air force has been increased by some fifty aircraft.

This information is mainly based on the following sources (omitted by the author).

2. Malaya area

An increase of one brigade of Indian troops [is known] for sure, apart from [this], an increase of about one division of Indian troops as well as elements of British and Australian troops must be assumed. This information is mainly based on the following:

- (1) On 8 January, a brigade of Indian troops had newly assembled at Malacca. As a result of an engagement, it was identified as the 45th Independent Brigade of the [British] Indian Army, which had newly arrived (degree of certainty A).
- (2) Australian reinforcements have successively been sent in, and their strength is said to be seventy thousand something (intelligence from A; degree of certainty B-).
- (3) On the morning of 15 January, 1,600 men (mostly British, but also including some U.S. Air Force personnel) arrived in Singapore in four transport ships (intelligence from A; degree of certainty B).

Apart from the above, the following active movements of convoys have been [observed] recently:

- (a) On 16 January, reinforcements in five transport ships arrived (18 January, intelligence from A).
- (b) At 1250 on 23 January, ten transport ships were heading northward off Cape Jabung (about one hundred kilometers northeast of Jambi) (aircraft reconnaissance).
- (c) On 28 January four 8,000-ton-class transport ships, led by warships, were heading south-westward through the Singapore Strait (reported by the Sugawara Group).
Also on the same day five transport ships under [naval] escort were heading northward through the Bangka Strait (reported by a naval air unit).

Concerning the above, it is by and large certain that these are reinforcements of the [British] Indian Army, as seen in the following [reference] information:

[Reference] information

According to the intelligence from A (Jiemin), it seems that two brigades of the British 18th Division were those in Singapore on the 28th, and one brigade of the division (the 53d Brigade) was apparently the one which had been in Singapore before that [day] (Army General Staff Office Report).

Further, the increase in air [forces] should be over two hundred aircraft (however, some [of them] must have been deployed in Sumatra). This information is mainly based on the following:

- [1] Both on 20 and 24 December, one [air] squadron each heading for East Asia waited for its turn to get aboard at Basra (Army Report from Italy; degree of certainty B).
- [2] On 8 January, a reinforcement of a dozen or more twin-engine bombers arrived from Egypt (intelligence from A and Jiemin report; degree of certainty B).
- [3] On 12 January, aircraft arrived from Australia (though their number was unclear) (intelligence from A and Jiemin report; degree of certainty B).
- [4] Reinforcements sent to Malaya from the Dutch East Indies right after the opening of hostilities consisted of fifteen bombers (statement of (a) Dutch POW; degree of certainty A).
- [5] On 16 January, fifty U.S. aircraft (P-40) arrived (intelligence from A, Jiemin report, and monitored broadcast; degree of certainty B).
- [6] On 28 January, fifty Hurricanes and fifty-one Spitfires will be transported to XX (note by the author: the two characters in the original text are illegible) via Batavia (intelligence from A passed on by Army General Staff; degree of certainty C).
- [7] On 20 January, two Indian [air] squadrons were transported to Singapore from Iraq (information from a military attaché in Italy; degree of certainty C).

3. Dutch East Indies area

Apart from a reinforcement of an estimated two ([or] three) battalions to Sumatra, [the situation] is still unknown. However, up to now the arrival of large troop numbers is unthinkable. This information is based on the following:

- (1) From 25 to 26 January, eighteen transport ships (about a total of 80,000 tons) were anchored in and around the port of Padang on Sumatra (naval air unit information; degree of certainty A).
- (2) Recently, units of allied forces have arrived in a certain port of the Dutch East Indies (broadcast monitored on 27 January; degree of certainty B).
- (3) On 28 January, six U.S. Army regiments arrived in Surabaya (intelligence from A and Jiemin report; degree of certainty C).

Further, as for air force units, U.S. equipment and training personnel must have arrived in considerable numbers, but [details] remain unknown. However, the current number of aircraft is estimated to have reached about five hundred.

This information is based on the following:

- [1] Three thousand U.S. air personnel arrived in Java (information of 28 January and Cheng Jiemin report, degree of certainty C).
- [2] According to the statement of a Dutch East Indies POW pilot, the current number of aircraft in the Dutch East Indies is some seven hundred, and they are dispersed over every airfield (degree of certainty C).

[Editor's note: Cheng Jiemin could not be identified with any certainty. He might have been Chiang Kai-shek's spymaster, whose report the Japanese somehow got hold of, cf. [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/National_Security_Bureau_\(Republic_of_China\)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/National_Security_Bureau_(Republic_of_China)).]

Reconsideration of the Employment of the 1st [Paratroop] Raiding Group

The general condition of the shipwrecked 1st [Paratroop] Raiding Regiment and the 2d [Paratroop] Raiding Regiment has already been mentioned, but in detail their state was as follows: When the 1st [Paratroop] Raiding Regiment was sailing south from Magong along with the main force of the 33d Division, the ship which was carrying the regiment, the *Meikō-maru*, sank due to a spontaneous combustion of its cargo on 3 January.⁽²³⁾ Although [the regiment's] men were rescued by escorting destroyers, all of its weapons and matériel were lost.⁽²³⁾ On

the 7th, Lt. Col. Kinoshita Hideaki, who was attached to the 1st [Paratroop] Raiding Group, sent a telegram from Bangkok to the Southern Army to say that "the regiment will arrive in Bangkok on the 9th. Upon arranging clothes and personal effects for the present, the regiment will leave Bangkok by train on the 12th. I request you to arrange the whole set of paratroop clothing, parachutes, weapons, equipment, supply containers, medical supplies and matériel [sufficient to equip] one regiment to be immediately sent from the Inspectorate General of Aviation."⁽²³⁾ Then on the 9th, Lieutenant Colonel Kinoshita [again] sent the Southern Army a telegram from Bangkok that⁽²³⁾ "I fear that it is highly likely that the 1st [Paratroop] Raiding Regiment cannot be [ready] in time for the date of the operation because of its heavy loss. I request you to keep in close contact with the Inspectorate General [of Aviation for the information] about the date and time of arrival of items subsequently dispatched from the homeland. In my humble opinion, it is faster and more certain to employ the 2d Regiment as an emergency expedient. Therefore, I believe a swift additional assignment of the 2d Regiment as well as resupply of sunken equipment and matériel for the [paratroop] air unit should be given top priority. I would like you to also give consideration to the employment of the 1st Regiment once its re-equipment is completed."⁽²³⁾ It meant that it was impossible for the time being to assign the 1st [Paratroop] Raiding Regiment difficult missions even if the regiment were re-equipped. In a following telegram sent on the 11th, the lieutenant colonel reported: "The bulk of the 1st [Paratroop] Raiding Regiment has come ashore at Bangkok on the morning of the 11th. All arrived with only the clothes they were wearing, but their morale is high."⁽²³⁾ [From this telegram] the Southern Army got the impression that the men had been rescued separately and were coming ashore in small groups. On 15 January, the 1st [Paratroop] Raiding Group Commander, Col. Kume Seiichi, arrived in Guangdong, southern China, with the main force of the [Paratroop] Raiding Air Unit.⁽²³⁾ On the 17th the Inspectorate General of Aviation wired the Southern Army:⁽²³⁾ "The 2d [Paratroop] Raiding Regiment left Moji on the 15th, heading for Haiphong in French Indochina; the regiment brings along weapons, clothes and matériel to be handed over to the 1st [Paratroop] Raiding Regiment, with which, in our expectation, the loss sustained by the 1st [Paratroop] Raiding Regiment in the shipwreck of the *Meikō-maru* can be completely replaced; special operational training for about one week was provided to Lieutenant Tokunaga, 2d [Paratroop] Raiding Regiment 1st Company commander, and his men, a total of sixty-four personnel; the [Paratroop] Raiding Air Unit 3d Squadron is scheduled to depart around 20 January."

As already described, the scheduled date for the Palembang landing set forth in General Agreement No. 4 (Cam Ranh Agreement) was 6 February. Accordingly, the drop of the paratroops at Palembang had been scheduled for 5 February. However, taking into account the physical and mental blow which the 1st [Paratroop] Raiding Regiment had suffered as well as the 2d [Paratroop] Raiding Regiment's insufficient level of training and the shortness of time allowed to prepare for the operation, the Southern Army abandoned the idea of conducting the Palembang [paratroop] raiding operation, for which it had had high hopes since before the opening of hostilities. On 22 January, the Southern Army drew up the following plan concerning the deployment of the 1st [Paratroop] Raiding Group:⁽²⁴⁾

- First Deployment: About day $x + 60$ (6 February)
 Pekanbaru or Jambi in central Sumatra
- Second Deployment: About day $x + 80$ (26 February)

Sabang, Pangkalan Susu, or Pangkalan Brandan in northern Sumatra, and the Andamans in the waters northwest of Sumatra

Third Deployment: About day x + 90 (8 March)
Yenangyaung in Burma

As a matter of fact, on the day when the Southern Army drew up the above plan at Saigon, Staff Officer Ishii unofficially concluded [an agreement] on a four-day postponement of the Palembang [operation] at Manila.⁽²³⁾ It gave an extra four days to spare. Sixteenth Army Staff Officer Lt. Col. Itoda Isamu, who had been involved in the establishment and training of the paratroop raiding group at the Inspectorate General of Aviation, now was staff officer of the Sixteenth Army, which was going to conduct the Palembang landing operation. Staff Officer Itoda passionately advocated the employment [of the paratroop raiding group] at Palembang.⁽³⁹⁾ Also 1st [Paratroop] Raiding Group Commander Colonel Kume, who had just then arrived, made a strong request for conducting the Palembang paratroop operation. Thus, on the 24th (the day when the 38th Division advanced to Cam Ranh Bay), the Southern Army changed its mind to conduct the Palembang paratroop operation.

The Third Air Force Draws up the Outline of the Air Operations [for Operation] L

After the employment of the 1st [Paratroop] Raiding Group (under the direct control of the Southern Army) for the Palembang [operation] was decided (for which operation the raiding group was to be brought under the control of the Third Air Force), the Third Air Force ([led by] Lt. Gen. Sugawara Michiō) drew up the "Outline of the Air Operations [for Operation] L"⁽⁹⁶⁾ on the 25th, based on the "Supplement to the Southern Army's Air Operation Plan" of 10 January.⁽²⁾ L refers to Bangka and Palembang in a narrow sense, and in a broader sense to Southern Sumatra. Here it is used in the broader sense.

Outline of the Air Operations [for Operation] L

I. Mission

1. [We shall] expand the military gains in the Singapore operation and while constraining the Dutch East Indies Air Force from reinforcing or gathering strength in Southern Sumatra, closely cooperate with the Sixteenth Army in its Bangka and Palembang operations.
2. While conducting this operation, [we shall] at the right moment launch the air operations against western Java and prepare [to give] direct cooperation in the landing operation of the main force of the Sixteenth Army in western Java.

II. Directives

1. For the period of the capture of Singapore
 - (1) Prior to the landing (or disembarkation) operation in or near Endau, a Singapore air operation shall be conducted, [in which] the remaining enemy air power shall be destroyed, and through attacks on vital targets in the Singapore area, efforts shall be made to crush the enemy's will to resist.
 - (2) At the time of the Twenty-fifth Army's [operation to] capture Singapore, we shall speed up the capture by bombing vital points on the island along with the bombardment by the army.



Third Air Force
Commander Lt. Gen.
Sugawara Michiō

- (3) When the Kluang, Kahang and Batu Pahat airfields are seized and made ready for use, preparations for the capture of Singapore and Operation L shall be swiftly completed. The deployment plan of the forces is as shown in Supplement No. 1 (note by the author: the contents of Supplement No. 1 is roughly the same as Illustration No. 23).
 - (4) During this period, [forces shall be] assigned to timely conduct attacks on the airfields in Sumatra, cut off the line of retreat of the enemy air power in the Singapore area, pursue them, and constrain the Dutch East Indies Air Force from reinforcing or gathering strength, so that the [operation to] capture Singapore as well as the execution of Operation L will be facilitated.
2. For the period of the capture of southern Sumatra
 - (1) [Forces shall be] assigned to support the operations of the Sixteenth Army's Bangka and Palembang landing units, in conjunction with Navy air units.
 - (2) Between day L – 4 and day L – 2, the chief concern of the fighter plane units of the 3d Air Division shall be to destroy the enemy air power in Palembang.
 - (3) On day L – 1, the [Paratroop] Raiding Group shall be dropped in Palembang. On this occasion one element will facilitate this action.
 - (4) When the airfields in Southern Sumatra are seized and made ready for use, a powerful element shall be advanced [there] without missing an opportunity. Most of the element shall swiftly destroy the enemy air power in western Java, while an element of it shall support the Sixteenth Army's operation to mop up southern Sumatra. Meanwhile, in order to give direct support to the main force of the Sixteenth Army in the western Java landing operation, preparation of the Tanjungkarang airfield shall be accelerated.
 - (5) The outline of the cooperation between the Army and Navy air units in Operation L shall be arranged separately.
 - (6) Before and after the capture of Singapore and right at the launch of Operation L, the remaining force of the [Third] Air Force may also conduct [operations to] search for enemy ships near Singapore and in the Malacca Strait and attack them.
 3. Others
 - (1) Forces not involved in Operation L and the Java operation shall directly cooperate with an element of the Twenty-fifth Army in northern Sumatra. The details shall be planned separately.
 - (2) An element of the fighter plane [unit] may be charged with the air defense of the Singapore area.
- ### III. Disposition of forces to be employed and outline of operations
1. The Attack on Singapore
 - (1) The outline of the attack before the capture of Singapore by the Twenty-fifth Army is as shown in Third Air Force Operation Order A, No. 174 Supplement "Outline of Air Operation Po." [Editor's note: the text has "Bo," which is a mistake for "Po" (Singapore), see Vol. 34 of the War History Series.]
 - (2) Once the Kluang, Kahang and Batu Pahat airfields are seized, the 15th Air Ground Support Unit shall be advanced to southern Malaya with the aim of accelerating the [set-up of] air bases and the accumulation of matériel for Operation L.
 - (3) Prior to the start of Operation L, the distribution of air units shall be changed as follows:
 - [Units] under the direct control of the [Third] Air Force: 81st Air Group, 98th Air Group, and 1st [Paratroop] Raiding Group.
 - 3d Air Division: 15th Independent Air Unit (minus the 51st Independent Squadron), 59th Air Group, 64th Air Group, 75th Air Group, 90th Air Group, and 27th Air Group.
 - 7th Air Division: 51st Independent Squadron, 12th Air Group, and 60th Air Group.
 - 12th Air Division: 1st Air Group, 11th Air Group, and 47th Independent Squadron.
 - (4) Missions of each unit based on the distribution above are as follows:

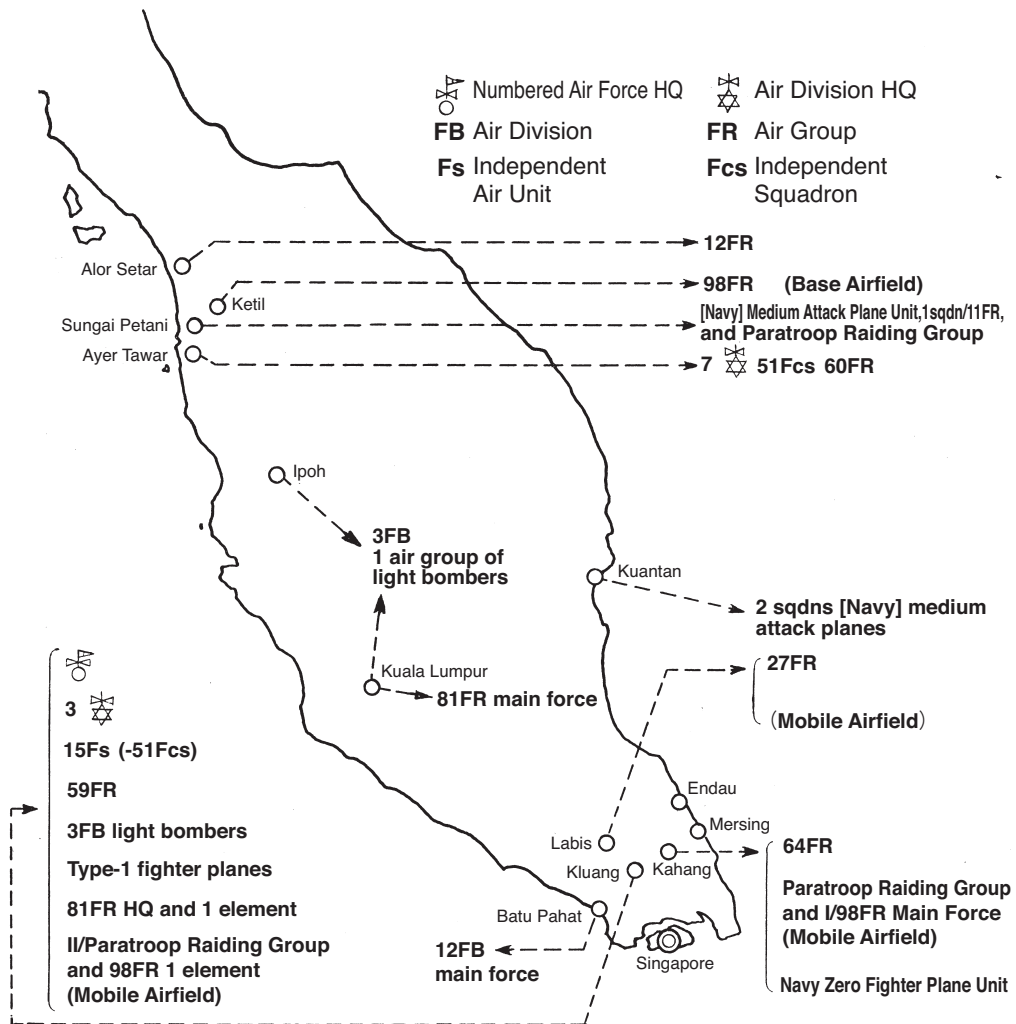


Illustration No. 23 — Scheduled Disposition of Air Units (25 January, 1942)

- (a) 81st Air Group (note by the author: Command Reconnaissance):
Shall undertake general reconnaissance in Sumatra, Java and other locations, especially reconnaissance that will serve as preparation for the invasion of Java. For this purpose, the airfields in Kuching or Ledo in Borneo may be used temporarily. One element of the group shall directly support the [paratroop] raiding group in its operation.
- (b) 3d Air Division:
Shall support the Twenty-fifth Army and also cooperate in Operation L.
- (c) 7th Air Division:
Shall cooperate in the operation to capture Singapore. If required, it shall be employed as reinforcement in Operation L (in preparation for the northern Sumatra operation).
- (d) 12th Air Division:
In cooperation with the 3d Air Division, shall take charge of gaining command of the air in and around Singapore, conducting surveillance of the Pekanbaru airfield. It shall [also] destroy [the enemy] when opportunities arise. If possible, it shall provide

the air defense of the anchorage of the units for Operation L, and [also] make preparations for cooperation in the Java operations.

2. Direct Support in Operation L

- (1) From 1700 until the evening of the day before day L (scheduled for 10 February) an element of the fighter [planes] of the 3d Air Division shall be charged with covering the sailing transport convoy of Operation L.
- (2) Concurrently with Item (1), support shall be provided to the [Paratroop] Raiding Group's execution of its raiding mission. For this purpose, the reconnaissance unit shall be charged with reconnaissance of the drop point in Palembang and vicinity before and after the drop. [Further,] Type-1 fighter plane units shall be charged with direct cover of the [Paratroop] Raiding Air (Transport) Unit.
- (3) After the drop of the [Paratroop] Raiding Group until the arrival of the landing units of Operation L, its fighting power, where necessary, shall be maintained and nurtured [with supplies provided] by descending (landing) airborne (transport) units or by airdrops. Along with this, direct support shall [also] be given to the [Paratroop] Raiding Group during its ground combat, if required.
- (4) When the Palembang airfield is seized and made ready for use, an element of the 12th Air Division and the 3d Air Division each will swiftly advance to the airfield to provide direct support for the landing units of Operation L (including the [Paratroop] Raiding Group) in their ground operations. Further, at an opportune moment, the air operations for the Java [operation] shall be launched. For this purpose, preparation of the Tanjungkarang airfield shall be accelerated so that assault [plane] units and Type-97 fighter [plane] units can be advanced.

At that time, the operation to land air units, fuel and ammunition at Endau was to be carried out on the following day, the 26th.⁽²³⁾ The 18th Division, whose landing [operation in] Endau and Mersing had been cancelled, had left Cam Ranh Bay on the 20th under escort of the 3d Destroyer Squadron, landed in Singora on the 22d, and was now moving south along the west coast of Malaya.⁽²³⁾ The 5th Division had seized Kluang on the 24th, while the Imperial Guard Division was in the middle of attacking the British Indian Army near Batu Pahat.⁽²³⁾ The Twenty-fifth Army wished to capture Singapore by Empire Day (11 February), whereas the Southern Army, for its part, wished to seize Palembang right before that.^(23, 24) Based on these circumstances (the Manila Agreement was to be formally concluded on 28 January), the plan as of that day (the 25th) was that the 38th Division would depart from Cam Ranh on 4 February and land in Palembang on 10 February, and that the 1st [Paratroop] Raiding Group would be dropped on Palembang the day before the landing [operation], namely on 9 February.^(23, 24) The Southern Army had framed a plan to bring the 1st [Paratroop] Raiding Group under the control of the Third Air Force for executing the paratroop operation, and it had unofficially notified [both units].^(23, 24)

The types and the rough number of aircraft kept under the air groups were as follows:⁽²³⁾

59th Air Group: twenty-four fighter planes

1st, 11th, and 64th Air Group: thirty-six fighter planes each

27th Air Group: thirty-six assault planes

75th and 90th Air Group: twenty-seven light bombers each

12th, 60th and 98th Air Group: twenty-seven heavy bombers each

81st Air Group: eighteen command reconnaissance planes

Implementation of the Endau Landing Operation and the Occupation of the Anambas Islands

On the 26th, the day after the Third Air Force had decided on the previously explained "Outline of Air Operations [in Operation] L," the Endau debarkation operation and the operation to occupy Anambas (note by the author: islands in the waters east of Singapore) were carried out.^(118, 126) The landing operations in Endau and Mersing had been planned in order to secure with the main force of the 18th Division air bases for Operation L, as well as to capture and destroy the British Indian Army in the northern part of Johor, which was directly in front of the main force of the Twenty-fifth Army. However, as already explained, on 17 January the plan had been changed to [just] putting ashore air units, fuel, ammunition and matériel in two transport ships. The operation to occupy the Anambas islands, [on the other hand], was to be conducted so that the [Navy] Malaya Unit could advance [air] bases for conducting the southern Sumatra and Java operations.⁽¹⁰²⁾ While the Malaya Unit had been considering the risks and was carefully making preparations for the Endau and Mersing operations that were to be carried out with the main force of the 18th Division, it had from 15 January onwards been engaged in an operation to lure the [enemy] fleet out of Singapore, as previously described ([for this purpose] its main unit had left Cam Ranh Bay on the 15th). However, on the 17th, air reconnaissance had made clear that "no warships other than one cruiser, five destroyers and seven transport ships were found in Singapore naval port." The operation was canceled and its main unit had returned to Cam Ranh Bay on the 19th.⁽¹¹⁸⁾

Note: At 0230 on the 16th, the Malaya Unit had wired all units: "According to photo reconnaissance by naval aircraft on the 15th, [enemy] battleships are anchored at Singapore. It appears that they are accompanying an aircraft carrier. It is likely that the enemy aircraft carrier will conduct an air raid on Cam Ranh Bay."⁽¹¹⁸⁾

Following the cancellation of the [original] Endau and Mersing operations, the Malaya Unit (Vice Admiral Ozawa), who had returned to Cam Ranh Bay, assembled the senior staff officers of all units on his flagship, the *Chōkai*, in the bay on the 20th.⁽¹¹⁸⁾ The 3d Destroyer Squadron was assigned to escort "the two transport ships leaving Singora on the 24th to put ashore [personnel and matériel] at Endau on the 26th," after providing escort to "the 18th Division leaving Cam Ranh Bay on the 20th to arrive in Singora on the 22d."⁽¹¹⁸⁾ The 9th Base Force was set to leave the bay of Puolo Condore (note: southwest of Saigon) on the 24th to conduct [the operation to] occupy the Anambas Islands on the 26th.⁽¹²⁶⁾ The 7th Cruiser Division was set to support both of these operations.^(115, 118, 126)

The two transport ships carrying the 20th Independent Engineer Battalion and other units, aviation fuel and ammunition left Singora on 24 January and reached the Endau anchorage on the morning of the 26th.⁽²³⁾ They came under attack from about thirty [enemy] aircraft around 1630, about twenty aircraft around 1900 and [again] about six aircraft around 2000 on the same day, but the [enemy aircraft] were defeated by our 12th Air Division.⁽¹¹⁸⁾ The transport ships completed debarkation around 1200 on the 28th, sustaining no damage, and headed back [to their base].⁽²³⁾ Meanwhile on the night of the 26th, two allied destroyers attacked the anchorage, but the 3d Destroyer Squadron sank one of them and put the other to flight.⁽¹¹⁸⁾

The 9th Base Force occupied the Anambas on the 26th as planned.⁽¹²⁶⁾

As previously described, the landing operations in Endau and Mersing with the main force of the 18th Division had been changed after, on the 14th, the Twenty-fifth Army had proposed to cancel them and the Malaya Unit had proposed to postpone them, which had been followed by the Malaya Unit's launch of its operation (to lure out and destroy the battleships and the aircraft carrier which were reported to be found in Singapore) on the 15th. Due to the telegrams from the [Navy] Southern Task Force and the Malaya Unit, and the [reported] progress of the operation of the Twenty-fifth Army on the 16th and the 17th, it was decided to change [the operation plan] (by calling off the employment of the 18th Division and replacing it with the transportation [of personnel and matériel] in two ships), and on the 19th the order was given [to change the operation]. But how did this change actually work out? The situation around the time when the operation [plan] was changed was that "the Twenty-fifth Army [had] charged into Kuala Lumpur on 11 January, the van of the army [had] closed in on Gemas on the 14th, and seized the town on the 16th, while it [was] expected to reach Johor Strait around the 25th." However, after that, the war had not progressed very smoothly for the Twenty-fifth Army. It was not able to seize the airfield in Kluang until the 25th, and that in Kahang until the 27th.⁽²³⁾ On the 22d, Southern Army Staff Officer Saitō Tomoo sent the following telegram to the [Southern] Army headquarters from Gemas, which left the Southern Army with the impression that "the fact that it had to shift the 18th Division, which should have been assembling on the coast opposite Penang [in preparation] for the northern Sumatra operation, to the Singapore front had effectually been a wasteful detour, and that the Endau and Mersing operations should have been carried out as planned, even if they had to be implemented a couple of days behind schedule."⁽²³⁾

We arrived in Gemas on the late night of yesterday, the 21st. Although the Twenty-fifth Army has been planning to dispatch a detachment from Kluang to the Mersing area and is making the greatest efforts to clear supply route(s) for the air [unit(s)], [my] estimation of the progress of the next operations is that the Kahang and Kluang airfields will not be ready until around 4 or 5 February at the very best, due to transportation and other [factors] in preparation for the capture of Singapore. It is expected that the use of these airfields as bases to cooperate in Operation L from the 5th or the 6th will lead to terrible confusion. Furthermore, in view of the fact that tenacious resistance from the enemy may be expected in the capture of Singapore, and in view of the present state of its defense facilities, the reality is that it will be necessary [for the Twenty-fifth Army] to request cooperation of the air units of XX (note by the author: the two characters [in the original text] are illegible), heavy bombers in particular. Due to the above matters, I believe that it is highly necessary to re-examine when to launch operation L. In the light of this situation, I also believe that it is necessary for the chief of operations, if possible, the chief or vice chief of staff to get into direct contact with the Twenty-fifth Army headquarters.

Note: On the day that Staff Officer Saitō wired the above, an informal agreement was reached at Manila on a four-day postponement of Operation L.

The Army-Navy Arrangement on the Air Operations [in Operation] L

(See Illustration No. 24)

As explained above, the 38th Division had advanced to Cam Ranh Bay on the 24th, the Third Air Force's operation plan, including the parachuting operation of the [Paratroop] Raiding Group, was completed on the 25th, and the [operations to] disembark [personnel and matériel] at Endau and to occupy the Anambas were carried out on the 26th, which was followed by

the occupation of the Ledo airfield on the 27th.⁽²³⁾ (As for the latter, the seizure was [successfully] carried out but things would not go smoothly at all afterwards, as will be explained later). On the following day, the 28th, the air [operation] arrangement for Operation L was concluded on board the flagship of the Malaya Unit, the *Chōkai*, at Cam Ranh Bay.⁽³⁴⁾ Staff Officers Saiki and Itoda participated from the Sixteenth Army.^(34, 39) The arrangement read as follows:⁽⁹⁶⁾

Arrangement on the Air [Operation 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 in 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 30 heavy bombers.
 - *Indicates aircraft to be advanced to the airfields 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 units of land-based attack planes, about 30 fighter planes, and 6 land-based 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 some 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 + 7 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, about 45 transport planes. The remaining units to be used 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 deployed will be changed.

3. The Army shall be charged with making the Mentok and Palembang [air] bases ready for use. In the preparation of Mentok, the Navy shall cooperate. 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. After that, the 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 suppress 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 attack on enemy warships shall be charged to the Navy.
3. Covering of the convoy

(1) Under sail

- (a) Direct cover provided on day L - 1 by [both] the Army and the Navy fighter planes in conjunction shall be 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, its cover [will be started] roughly from 1700 onwards.

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.



Illustration No. 24 — The Points Mentioned in the Arrangement on the Air [Operation in] Operation L

- (2) At the anchorages for the Mentok and Palembang [operations], 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 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 be charged with 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.

The 38th Division's Operation Plan

As we have seen, the Sixteenth Army had received orders from the Southern Army to capture Southern Sumatra on 5 January, concluded a formal arrangement with the [Navy] Malaya Unit on 15 January, and had given its orders to the 38th Division on the 18th. The last had left Hong Kong on the 20th and reached Cam Ranh Bay on the 24th. Although the [original] schedule of its departure from Cam Ranh Bay had been set for 31 January, the departure had been postponed to 4 February as a result of the Manila Agreement (effective on the 28th).

We have also mentioned that [the Army Department of] IGHQ rated the military potential of the 38th Division very highly,⁽¹⁸⁾ but that at the same time it was deeply concerned about the loss the division might sustain during the [operation to] capture Hong Kong.⁽¹⁸⁾ Because of these concerns, IGHQ had never shown its intention of imposing a double duty on the division until after the capture of Hong Kong, even though it had already decided to impose the double duty on the 38th Division for both the capture of Hong Kong and the invasion of Java [as early as in] the summer of 1941 and ever since had strongly adhered to this fixed course of action.⁽¹⁸⁾ After the opening of hostilities, when the 38th Division had been about to cross over to Hong Kong Island on 17 December, after clearing away the strongholds on the Kowloon Peninsula, Staff Officer Takayama Shinobu had suggested at IGHQ that "the 38th Division should be given instructions about training for the next duty,"⁽⁹⁾ but without giving any instructions, IGHQ had [only] closely watched the 38th Division's progress in its capture of Hong Kong.⁽¹⁸⁾ The division had taken control of Hong Kong on 25 December, grandly made a triumphal entry into Hong Kong on the 28th, and after that taken up the task of guarding, when suddenly on the 30th, the division had received orders to organize and dispatch the Eastern Detachment, which was followed by orders to have the Shōji Detachment join the Java operation and the main force of the division the Sumatra operation.⁽⁶⁶⁾ By contrast, the 48th Division, which was another powerful division with a long history and brilliant military achievements, consisting of the 1st and 2d Taiwan Infantry Regiment, and the 47th Infantry Regiments (originally stationed in Ōita, Kyūshū), had been notified in the summer of 1941 that the division was scheduled to be "charged with [the duty to] invade Java, subsequent to the invasion of the Philippines."⁽⁸⁰⁾ The different treatment of these divisions, i.e. whether they were informally notified or not, after all originated from the different expectations [which IGHQ had] of the capture of the Hong Kong stronghold and the field operations in the Philippines.⁽¹⁸⁾

The loss sustained by the 38th Division in the operation to capture Hong Kong was unexpectedly small; four hundred men were killed (among whom were thirty-five officers), and eight hundred men were wounded (among whom were fifty officers).⁽²⁴⁾ The proportion of officers among the casualties was high; nevertheless, morale had risen even more. The ranks were replenished with men from the 104th Division [stationed] in the Guangdong sector.⁽²⁴⁾

Having handed over the Eastern Detachment and the Shōji Detachment, a total of five infantry battalions as the core, that is, the 38th Infantry Group headquarters, the 228th Infantry Regiment, the 230th Infantry Regiment (minus the 3d Battalion), one battalion and one company of the 38th Mountain Artillery Regiment, one company of the 38th Engineer Regiment, one company of the 38th Transport Regiment, one-third of the medical unit, and one element of one field hospital, the force kept by Division Commander Sano consisted of four battalions as the core.⁽⁶⁶⁾ [Additionally,] one independent motor transport battalion, one shipping engineer regiment, one anchorage headquarters, one sea transport unit, one oil-drilling unit, one railway unit platoon and one shore duty company were brought under the control of the division.⁽⁶⁶⁾

Regarding the allied forces in Sumatra, the following intelligence had been acquired: "It appears that about ten thousand troops of the Dutch East Indies Army have been deployed in Sumatra and stationed by about one battalion in each vital location. It also appears that elements of British and Australian forces have entered the island;" "Ground forces in southern Sumatra are estimated at about three thousand men;" "In Palembang and its vicinity, there seems to be the Palembang-Jambi territorial headquarters (commanded by a colonel), [one] infantry battalion (commanded by a lieutenant colonel and made up of two to three companies), machine gun(s), some infantry artillery, four to five light tanks, antiaircraft artillery and some aircraft."^(23, 24)

As for maps and charts, a map on a scale of 1 to 1,000,000, a map of southern Sumatra on a scale of 1 to 500,000, a map of Palembang and its vicinity on a scale of 1 to 50,000, a hydrographical chart of the Musi River, aerial photographs of Palembang and others had been distributed.⁽⁶⁶⁾ Regarding the topography, the 38th Division possessed more or less the following information:⁽⁶⁶⁾

There are many swamps and woods in the vicinity of Palembang, which in general makes off-road passing not easy. Railways have been laid between Palembang and Telukbetung, and between Palembang and Lubuklinggau, but their capacity is unknown. There is a railroad workshop in Lahat.

A motorway runs alongside the railroad from Palembang to Martapura and Tanjungkarang, and another runs between Palembang, Lahat and Lubuklinggau. Other motorways than the above are unknown.

The Musi River allows 5,000 to 6,000-ton-class ships to navigate up to the vicinity of Palembang. However, it is difficult unless around high tide as there are shoals around its estuary. The current is slow. The Saleh River is navigable for landing boats up to [the point] near Martapura, and the Telang River up to [the point where] it joins the Musi River.

There are motor vehicles and boats available in Palembang and its vicinity, but their numbers are unclear. Oil sources are located in Jambi, Sekayu, Tebatagung, and Lahat, and oil is conveyed to Palembang through iron pipes.

The main facilities of Palembang include barracks (northwest of the city of Palembang), the Sun-gaigerong oil refinery (about five kilometers east of the city), the Plaju oil refinery (about five kilometers east of the city) [editor's note: the Japanese text has an unidentifiable place name, which is probably a misreading for "Plaju"], the north Palembang airfield (about ten kilometers

northwest of the city) and the new Palembang airfield (somewhere in the middle between the city and the north airfield, but its exact location is unknown).

The 38th Division's Tough Job

As previously explained, it is no exaggeration to say that the Greater East Asian War was launched for the oil in Palembang. It was one of the main missions of the Southern Army to occupy Palembang at an early stage before [the facilities] were destroyed by the allied forces. However, as the Palembang airfield was a superior airfield, the Palembang [operation] also became inextricably linked to [wider] strategic factors, which chiefly concerned the advancement of the Java operation. [As a result, the Palembang operation] became entwined in a tangle of desiderata:⁽²⁸⁾ (1) the wish to safely get hold of the oil resources at an early stage, for which purpose the location should be securely seized in a surprise attack prior to the capture of Singapore; (2) the wish to carry out the landing operation of Operation L safely and soundly by seizing the Palembang airfield in a surprise attack beforehand; (3) the wish to facilitate [the operation to] capture Singapore as well as to cut off the allied forces' retreat from the city by seizing the Palembang airfield before the capture of Singapore and isolating the latter, and at the same time, the wish to quickly launch air operations against Java by seizing this airfield. However, the following matters also greatly affected [the planning]:⁽²⁸⁾ (1) as there was a limit to the capacity of the [Paratroop] Raiding Group, the unit could not be left isolated in enemy territory for a long time; (2) and yet, early departure of the convoy of the 38th Division would give a clue to the plan beforehand; (3) and still more, beyond reason or logic, there was the wish to make Singapore fall by Empire Day, i.e. 11 February. The Southern Army had painstakingly drawn up the following plan:⁽²⁸⁾

- 4 February Departure of the advance party of the 38th Division from Cam Ranh Bay.
- 5 February
- 6 February Departure of the main force of the 38th Division from Cam Ranh Bay.
- 7 February The Twenty-fifth Army's ([consisting of] the Imperial Guard Division, the 5th, and the 18th Divisions) crossing at night of the Johor Strait and landing [on Singapore Island].
- 8 February Day 1 of the attack on the Singapore stronghold.
- 9 February Day 2 of the attack on the Singapore stronghold; drop of the 1st [Paratroop] Raiding Group on Palembang.
- 10 February Arrival of the advance party of the 38th Division in Palembang at night; day 3 of the attack on the Singapore stronghold; surrender of the British Forces.
- 11 February Empire Day; arrival of the main force of the 38th Division in Palembang.

As of 30 January, the Southern Army was worrying about the issue of how it should divide the limited strength of the 1st [Paratroop] Raiding Group between the oil resources of Palembang and the airfield.⁽²⁸⁾ Commander in Chief [of the Southern Army] Terauchi also expressed his feelings that "the paratroop unit must not be made to fight until death."⁽³⁰⁾

Whereas the Southern Army was having a hard time with strategic issues, the 38th Division, the unit to implement the [operation], had tactical issues to rack its brain over. Since before the opening of hostilities, the Dutch East Indies authorities had boasted: "We have

500,000 tons of oil in storage in Palembang. If the Japanese forces should come up the river, we will release 10,000 ton of oil per day into the river, and burn up the convoy coming up the river."⁽³⁶⁾ [However,] there was no other way conceivable [to get to Palembang] than to ascend the river. Even if fire should not be set to released oil, it would still be easy [for the enemy] to position artillery and transfix the limited rivers leading to Palembang, or to install obstacles and blockade the waterway. Together with the Shipping Transport Command and others, the 38th Division conducted studies on the allied forces' [possible use of] illumination, ground fire, underwater obstacles, setting fire to released oil and attacks by small warships or torpedo boats, [and also on] treacherous tidal currents, changes of water depth due to the tides, waves and whirlpools, reefs, shoals, narrowing waterways, branching waterways, mazes and all other kinds of inhibitory factors, and prepared countermeasures.⁽²⁷⁾ It was decided to first send forward the advance party, which operated more lightly, so that the exposure to the allied forces of the convoy sailing from Cam Ranh Bay was minimized.⁽⁶⁶⁾ [Also,] in order not to leave the Paratroop Raiding Group, which was to seize the refineries and the airfield in Palembang before they were destroyed and burned by the allied forces, isolated too long in enemy territory, [the 38th Division] wanted to plan the operation in such a way that [the division] could conduct it lightly and swiftly by seizing Mentok, the eye of the estuary, in a sudden attack, and keep the ascent to Palembang concealed as long as possible. Consequently, assuming that the paratroop unit would parachute down in Palembang at 1130 on day L – 1, a plan was drawn up in which the convoy of the advance party would enter the anchorage off Mentok and off the estuary on that night, and that before dawn on the following day (day L) an element would go ashore in Mentok by making a surprise attack, while by about the same time, the main force would reach the mouths of all (three) usable rivers, start navigating up these three rivers by motorized boats at daybreak, reach Palembang by the evening of the same day and support the paratroop unit.⁽⁶⁶⁾

The 38th Division planned the operation in outline as follows:⁽⁹⁶⁾ (*See Illustrations No. 29 and No. 30*)

1. Disposition of forces

Advance party (in 8 transport ships)

Commander: Col. Tanaka Ryōsaburō, 229th Infantry Regiment commander.

Mentok Landing Unit

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

Musi River Ascending Unit

Commander: Col. Tanaka Ryōsaburō, 229th Infantry Regiment commander, [consisting of] one infantry battalion and one battery as its core.

Saleh River Ascending Unit

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

Telang River Ascending Unit

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

Main force of the 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 shall carry out a surprise landing on the shore south of the Mentok airfield at around 0300 on day L. It shall first seize the airfield and make it ready for use, after which it shall seize strategic points on Bangka Island.
- (2) Units to go upstream to Palembang (the Musi, the Saleh and the Telang Ascending Units)
After transferring to boats at the Mentok anchorage, the main force of the advance party shall start going upstream around 0700 on day L, [divided into] the Musi, the Saleh and the Telang Ascending Units. In cooperation with the [Paratroop] Raiding Group, they shall first seize resources and important facilities in Palembang and its vicinity.
(The Navy shall be charged with clearing the waterway of the Musi River up to three [nau- tical] miles upstream of the Palembang railway wharf, using one large-sized motorized [landing] craft and ten small-sized motorized [landing] craft. When the waterway is cleared, six transport ships shall ascend the Musi River to Palembang.)
After that, the Martapura and the Tanjungkarang airfields as well as the oil producing re- gions around [Talang] Abab and Limau shall be swiftly seized, and also preparation for [the operations] to mop up enemy naval bases in Lampung and Semangka Bays shall be made. The seizure of Martapura and Tanjungkarang are scheduled for day L + 6 and day L + 9 re- spectively.
- (3) The main force of the division shall reach the mouth of the Musi River on day L + 2, ascend the Musi River in its [transport] ships as they are, go ashore in Palembang and vicinity and extend the military gains of the advance party.
- 3. The airfield units and aviation matériel that will accompany the 38th Division shall be as shown in Separate Sheet No. 1.
- 4. The sailing route plan of the 38th Division is as shown in Separate Sheet No. 2. (Omitted by the author.)

Separate Sheet No. 1: The deployment plan of air ground support units for Operation L

Units	Mentok	Palembang
7th Airfield Company (heavy bombers)		entire force
33d Air[field] Company (fighter planes)	about two-thirds	about one-third
Elements of the 25th Air Signal Unit	one squad	one squad
Elements of the 2d Field Meteorological Company	one meteorological observation detail	one aerology detail
Remarks	1. In case it is difficult to use the Mentok airfield, a part or the greater part of the force may be transferred to Palembang. 2. Aside from [units indicated in] this table, about 1,800 coolies will be trans- ported, of which 1,000 will be posted in Mentok and 2,000 in Palembang (note by the author: the numbers, which do not tally, are true to the orig- inal document).	

The [Southern Army's] Decision to Employ the [Paratroop] Raiding Group Mainly for [the Seizure of] the [Palembang] Airfield; the 38th Division's Arrangements with the [Navy] Malaya Unit

On 31 January, the Southern Army Staff Officers Arao Okikatsu (lieutenant colonel, chief of operations) and Matsumae Misoo (lieutenant colonel, aviation staff), and the Sixteenth Army Staff Officers Itoda Osamu (lieutenant colonel, chief of aviation) and Saiki Ikuzō (lieutenant colonel, chief of signal communications) went from Saigon to Cam Ranh Bay, where in the morning, on board the flagship of the First Southern Expeditionary Fleet, the *Chōkai*, they concluded arrangements on the air [operations] for Operation L, and also in the afternoon on the same ship attended the [conclusion of] the arrangement between the 38th Division and the First Southern Expeditionary Fleet.⁽³⁴⁾

In the arrangements for the air [operations] made in the morning, the deployment of the 1st [Paratroop] Raiding Group was decided upon. As mentioned earlier, the Southern Army had been thinking hard about the problem of where it should mainly use the 1st [Paratroop] Raiding Group, as the latter's strength and capacity were limited: for the seizure of the airfield or for the seizure of the oil refineries. Staff Officer Arao, in line with the thinking of Commander in Chief Terauchi, stressed that the group should mainly be employed for the seizure of the airfield.⁽²⁸⁾ That night the Southern Army gave orders to the Third Air Force and the 1st [Paratroop] Raiding Group, by which it brought the 1st [Paratroop] Raiding Group (which had formerly been under the direct command of the Southern Army) under the command of the Third Air Force commander, and ordered the Third Air Force commander to carry out the parachute drop operation on Palembang, giving priority to the seizure of the airfield. Staff Officer Arao recorded it in his journal as follows:⁽²⁴⁾

Attended the preliminary arrangement between the First Southern Expeditionary Fleet and the 38th Division in Cam Ranh.

1. I stressed that the seizure of the airfield was the primary operational objective, and that the seizure of the Palembang oil field came next (as the landings will [probably] overrun their schedule).
2. Advance Party: Two battalions of the 229th Infantry [Regiment]. The Orita Battalion ([consisting of] two companies) [will be assigned] to occupy Mentok. The main force will depart at 0330 on day L in large- and small-sized motorized [landing] craft. In ascending the Musi River, [the unit] shall be divided in three groups [to go up different routes] and advance to Palembang at day-break on day L + 1. [This operations will be conducted in] twelve extra-large-sized motorized [landing] craft, twenty-five large-sized motorized [landing] craft, eighteen small-sized motorized [landing] craft, and for use by the Navy two large- and thirteen small-sized motorized [landing] craft. In total: twelve extra-large-sized motorized [landing] craft, twenty-seven large-sized motorized [landing] craft, and thirty-one small-sized motorized [landing] craft.
3. Main force: in eight extra-large-sized motorized [landing] craft
4. Five small cargo ships: [shall] assemble at Cap Saint Jacques at noon on 1 February, and arrive at the Mentok [anchorage] around 1200 on day L via the Anambas.
5. Sixty to seventy fishing boats [shall] leave Cap Saint Jacques on 5 February, and arrive on 15 February. Ship captains need to be given training to ascend rivers. The 38th Division has [already] considered which unit will handle the emergency when the waterway is blocked. Success is imperative. We have to expect [some] loss of transport ships.
6. [The Southern Army] shall clearly state in its Operation Order A, No. 47 that in the use of the [Paratroop] Raiding Group priority should be given to the seizure of the airfield.

The order, which the Southern Army issued on this day, specifying the seizure of the airfield as the priority for the [Paratroop] Raiding Group, read as follows:⁽⁹⁶⁾

Southern Army Operation Order A, No. 48

Southern Army Order

Saigon, 31 January

1. Hereafter the 1st [Paratroop] Raiding Group shall be put under the command of the Third Air Force commander.
2. The Third Air Force commander shall employ the 1st [Paratroop] Raiding Group for the purpose of Operation L in the following way:
 - (1) The 1st [Paratroop] Raiding Group shall seize the Palembang airfield in order to facilitate Operations L and H, and if possible, it shall [further] seize and secure the oil refineries in Palembang before the enemy destroys them.
 - (2) Time of execution of the first drop and/or landing shall be the morning of day L – 1. If weather conditions do not allow this, execution shall be aborted.
 - (3) The parachute unit and/or landing unit shall be put under the command of the Sixteenth Army commander on the arrival of the main force of the 38th Division in Palembang.
 - (4) When Operation L is completed, the 1st [Paratroop] Raiding Group (with the exception of the parachute and/or landing unit) shall be returned to the unit to which it originally belongs without separate orders.

It is no exaggeration to say that the Greater East Asia War broke out with oil as the main cause. In order to seize Palembang, the biggest oil resources in the Dutch East Indies, the Army had [specifically] started to prepare the employment of the 1st [Paratroop] Raiding Group, which was the only one of its kind. And, in order to make the surprise parachute drop a success, the announcement of the Navy's earlier employment of its paratroop unit in Menado (11 January) had been suppressed. Why then did it give the order to "seize the airfield first, and the oil refineries [only] if possible"? The [main] reasons were the following:⁽²⁸⁾

1. Due to circumstances that will be explained later, the Southern Army considered the seizure of the Palembang airfield absolutely imperative for strategic and tactical reasons. Furthermore, following the wishes of IGHQ, the army had also decided that it definitely had to seize the oil refineries in Palembang as well. However, due to the timing [of the operation], the air power and the military capacity of the [paratroop] raiding group had their limits. This led to the decision to carry out paradrops on both the airfield and the oil refineries, but with priority on the airfield.
2. The Palembang airfield was large to the extent that one could say that no other airfield in central or southern Sumatra could match it in size, and thus the Southern Army approached the seizure of this airfield with grim determination.



Chief of the Army General Staff Sugiyama disembarking at the Palembang airfield

The words recorded in the aforementioned journal of [Staff Officer] Arao that "We have to expect [some] loss of transport ships," reflect how keenly the Southern Army at that time actually felt about [the operation to seize] the Palembang airfield.

In the study that the Southern Army had conducted on the southern operation with the Second Fleet in early November of the previous year, it had realized that "whereas brazen transports in large convoys and bold landings may be possible in the surprise (sudden) attack operations in the Philippines and northern Malaya in the early stages after the opening of hostilities, around the time of the Bangka and Palembang operations, the allied forces will probably have recovered themselves and launch a counteroffensive with superior power. At that time, advancing in convoys may be impossible, and it is imaginable that [attack operations] will have to be made in large- and small-sized motorized [landing] craft."

Now, the Southern Army felt that it faced a situation similar to the one described above, and about which it had been worried [since] before the opening of hostilities. As mentioned previously, the Southern Army judged that about five-hundred aircraft were currently [deployed] in the Dutch East Indies, among which were dozens of B-17s and B-24s. On top of that, also one hundred and some dozen British aircraft were present. It goes without saying that it worried about the fact that the allied forces still had many aircraft, but the Southern Army was especially deeply concerned about the B-17s and B-24s, for it had learned that in the Celebes theater the [Navy] Type-0 fighter planes had been powerless against the B-17 and B-24 flying fortresses.

On 17 January three B-24s and two B-17s had flown in for an attack over Menado (the northern tip of Celebes), which [Japan] had seized on 11 January. Seven [Navy] Type-0 fighter planes had intercepted them but failed to bring them down. The Eleventh Air Fleet reported the following points as lessons [learned in] combat:^(134, 141)

- (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. ammunition loaded on each aircraft.
- (2) It is conceivable that from now on the allied forces will fly these models to Australia to reinforce their strength. It is necessary to intensify our operations to intercept them.
- (3) Judging from the circumstances when the Type-0 fighter planes pursued [the enemy aircraft] for two hundred nautical miles, we consider that the allied forces are using [bases in] Java, Timor and other areas.
- (4) In order not to be attacked out of range (i.e. from [bases] whose distances exceed our flying range) it is necessary for us to have large attack planes ready.

The Southern Army was deeply concerned that allied aircraft, including the dozens of "fortresses of the sky," against which the Japanese fighter planes had been powerless, would conduct furious attacks from Palembang. Moreover, [if seized and used,] the Palembang airfield would enable [the Army] to forestall the retreat of the allied forces in the Singapore area as well as to conduct attacks on Java. From a strategic and tactical [viewpoint], the Southern Army regarded it as absolutely necessary to make a surprise attack and seize this airfield.

As for the oil refineries, in view of the earlier examples of Tarakan, Balikpapan and others, the Southern Army expected a certain degree of destruction [of facilities] by the allied forces. However, the Army [also] knew that it was impossible [for the allied forces] to completely destroy [these oil facilities].

Taking these characteristics of the airfield and the oil refineries, and the capacity of the [Paratroop] Raiding Group into account, the Southern Army issued the aforementioned order.

3. Another reason was the fact that the [Japanese] air units and the [paratroop] raiding group had limits to their capacity due to the factor of timing.

Although the Southern Army had the Third and the Fifth Air Forces under its command, the army had to simultaneously carry out Operation L, the Singapore operations and the operations in the Burma area. In particular, it was difficult to carry out Operation L and the capture of the Singapore stronghold at the same time. The state of [progress of preparation of the seized] airfields was [delayed] as Staff Officer Saitō had described in his above-mentioned telegram. And also for the [Navy] Malaya Unit, the state of the airfields in Kuching and Ledo was [deplorable] as has been explained before. If Japan had had enough aircraft and airfields available, and if it had been an operation to be conducted after the Palembang [airfield] was rendered powerless, it could have focused on [the operation to seize] the oil refineries. However, that was not the case.

The 1st Raiding Group was also in a difficult situation. The shipwreck of the 1st Raiding Regiment and its subsequent state was as described before, and it turned out to be impossible to use [the regiment for the operation] after all. The decision was made to employ the 2d [Paratroop] Raiding Regiment [instead]. However, as mentioned above, the regiment had just arrived, and its level of training was insufficient. [So,] Colonel Kume, commander of [the 1st Paratroop] Raiding Group and Sixteenth Army Staff Officer Lieutenant Colonel Itoda resolved to accompany the 2d [Paratroop] Raiding Regiment, and perform a belly-landing [with their aircraft] at the time of the parachute drop of the regiment (neither officer had parachute experience). Because of these limits to the capacity of the [Paratroop] Raiding Group, the Southern Army had made the decision that the oil refineries should be "seized and secured, [only] if possible."

4. The factor which fundamentally affected the employment of the [Paratroop] Raiding Group this time was the timing [of the operation].

The prime factor in the timing [of the operation] was the Southern Army's firm determination to "resolutely carry out [the operations] according to the schedule set in the Manila Agreement." At the root of this determination of the Southern Army were its sense of duty that "the schedule set in the Manila Agreement should be accomplished by all means because the schedule had been reported to IGHQ;" its judgment of the situation that "Java should be taken in strategic pursuit, while taking advantage of the state of the war;" its philosophy regarding the Army and the Navy's joint operations that "these should be carried through with unshakeable faith;" and its faith as supreme commander in the units under its command.

The second factor was the [timing of the operation] in relation to the Singapore [operation], that is, the parachute drop had to be carried out right before the fall of Singapore, and the 38th Division had to be put ashore in connection with the drop. These aims and their relation to the schedule have already been explained.

The Southern Army approached the [Navy] Malaya Unit and the Sixteenth Army with the unshakeable faith that the operations demanded such timing.

[On the other hand,] the Malaya Unit looked at it in a way quite different from the Southern Army. That is, whereas the Southern Army's point of view was that "the timing must not be delayed, and for that, we will move on as soon as the airfields are ready for use," the [Navy] Malaya Unit's point of view was "to [first] beat the enemy before moving on." As described earlier, on 31 January the arrangements on the air [operations in] Operation L as well as "the arrangements for Operation L between the 38th Division and the [Navy] Malaya Unit" were concluded. On the same day, the Southern Army gave order(s) concerning the [Paratroop] Raiding operation. However, the Classified [Navy] Malaya Unit Operation Order No. 17 (note: the order to execute the Bangka and Palembang operations), which Malaya Unit Commander Vice Admiral Ozawa passed down on the next day (1 February) read as follows:

This operation shall be swiftly launched the moment the enemy air power in the Malaya area, eastern Sumatra, western Borneo and western Java has generally been brought under control.⁽¹³⁰⁾

Earlier (just before the opening of hostilities), when the issue had arisen whether the landing of an element of the Twenty-fifth Army in Kota Bharu should be carried out simultaneously with the landings in Singora and other points in Thai territory, and the Navy Department of IGHQ and the Combined Fleet had shown disapproval because of the risks involved, Commander in Chief Ozawa had nevertheless, once it became his decision to make, resolutely and clearly supported the plan and thereby deeply impressed the Twenty-fifth Army, the Southern Army and the Army Department of IGHQ. Even though this very man, this very Commander in Chief Ozawa, [now] showed a [more cautious] way of thinking, as seen in the above-mentioned order, the Southern Army would not hear of any delay at all in the timing [of the operation].

Also, [Sixteenth] Army Commander Imamura, who was widely known for his bravery as a commander with a resolute and indomitable fighting spirit, and who was particularly famous for the great authority he had shown on the battlefield in Nanning, southern China, as commander of the 5th Division, [had shown his concern] when he had a proposal submitted to the Southern Army staff to reinforce the escort strength. But the Southern Army staff [had dismissed the proposal even from such a man] by simply saying that he should trust the strength of the escort of the Navy, as we have seen.

All this was based on the Southern Army's belief that "No postponement of the timing [of the operation], nor [too much] cautiousness should be allowed."

5. In short, in relation to the timing of the attack on Singapore, [factors such as] the current superiority of the allied air forces, in particular the threat of the "Fortresses in the Sky," progress in the reinforcement of the allied forces in the Sunda Islands, and the current progress in the preparations for the attack on Singapore made [the Southern Army] think that it was imperative to seize the Palembang airfield without delay in a sudden attack. On the other hand, in view of the specific character of the southern operation and of the intentions of IGHQ, [also] the Palembang oil refineries were targets, which had to be seized in a paratroop operation. Because of the demands of the timing [of the operation], the Japanese air operations had to make do with insufficient operational forces and in-

sufficient preliminary attacks, and they also had to be conducted with insufficient paratrooper strength. It was highly risky to let the convoy of the 38th Division proceed under insufficient air support, and although resigned "to expect [some] loss of transport ships," this [again] made [the Southern Army] attach all the more importance to the necessity of seizing the Palembang airfield in a paradrop raid. The judgment regarding the oil refineries was as previously explained. All this resulted in the decision to drop the [Paratroop] Raiding Group on both the Palembang airfield and the oil refineries on day L – 1, with the airfield as the primary objective.

Note: The convoy of the 38th Division consisted of eight ships for the advance party and fourteen ships for the main force, a total of twenty-two ships. Further, anticipating the difficulties of sailing upstream and landing, seventy motorized [landing] craft as well as sixty to seventy fishing boats or small cargo ships were made ready. In order to have the convoy safely reach [the waters of] southern Sumatra and [successfully] carry out the upriver sailing, the landing, and the disembarkation while removing underwater obstacles, it was a matter of course to deny the allied forces the use of the Palembang airfield, but it was also necessary to swiftly have Japanese air units advance to the airfield.

The Arrangements Between the 38th Division and the [Navy] Malaya Unit

Following the arrangements on the air operations between the Southern Army and the [Navy] Malaya Unit (the First Southern Expeditionary Fleet) on the morning of the 31st, in the afternoon, arrangements were made between the 38th Division and the Malaya Unit, which were roughly as follows.^(96, 118)

1. Forces

(1) The Army: 38th Division

- (a) Advance party: two infantry battalions and two batteries as the core, [in] eight ships.
Mentok landing unit: one-half infantry battalion as the core.
River-ascending Unit [toward] Palembang: one-and-one-half infantry battalion and two batteries as the core.
- (b) Main force: two infantry battalions and one artillery battalion as the core, [in] fourteen ships

(2) The Navy

- (a) Forces to escort the advance party: the 3d Destroyer Squadron ([consisting of] one light cruiser (the *Sendai*) and four destroyers), a few minesweepers and submarine chasers.
 - (b) Forces to escort the main force: the *Yura* (light cruiser), the *Shimushu* (coastal defense vessel), four destroyers of the 3d Destroyer Squadron and other small warships.
 - (c) Supporting surface forces: the main force of the surface unit of the Malaya Unit ([consisting of] five heavy cruisers (its flagship, the *Chōkai*, and [the cruisers] *Kumano*, *Suzuya*, *Mikuma* and *Mogami* of the 7th Cruiser Division), one aircraft carrier (the *Ryūjō*), two auxiliary seaplane tenders (the *Kamikawa-maru* and the *Sagara-maru*), six destroyers and others).
 - (d) Air force: the whole force of the 22d Air Flotilla.
 - (e) River-ascending Unit [toward] Palembang: the main force of the 9th Base Force ([consisting of] auxiliary minesweeper(s), guard ship(s), fishing boat(s) and others).
2. Schedule for the departure of the transport ships from the assembly point and the start of the landing (going upstream)
- Advance party:

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

River-ascending Unit [toward] Palembang ([in] six ships): shall depart from the assembly point in the evening of day L – 6, arrive at the Mentok [anchorage] before daybreak and, after changing 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 in 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 take about ten days for the Mentok landing unit, and about two weeks for the River-ascending Unit [toward] 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) A small Navy vessel shall lead the way when the 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 such as escort at sea, entry into the anchorage, guarding at the anchorage and the waterway shall be arranged between the 38th Division commander and the 3d Destroyer Squadron commander / 9th Base Force commander.

The [Navy] Malaya Unit's Orders; the Arrangements Made Between the 38th Division and the Navy Escort Force / Navy River-ascending Unit

In conformity with the arrangements made on the 31st, Malaya Unit Commander Vice Admiral Ozawa released the Plan for Operation L by means of [Malaya Unit] Operation Order No. 17 on the next day, 1 February, and ordered its execution.^(115, 118) In this operation plan, Items 1 and 2 read:

1. Operational objective:

Consists in assisting the 38th Division to swiftly land in Bangka and Palembang and their vicinities, and seizing the key locations in these areas.

2. Mission:

(1) The operation shall be started swiftly when the enemy air power in the Malaya area, eastern Sumatra, western Borneo and western Java has largely been brought under control.

(2) The transport convoy shall be on standby in Cam Ranh Bay and at the right opportunity depart under the escort of the Escort Unit.

The distribution of forces, outlines of the tasks of each unit, signal communications, replenishment and the arrangements between the Navy and the Army were specified in Item 3 and below.^(115, 118)

The outline of the disposition of forces was as follows:^(115, 118)

Main Unit, under the direct command of the First Southern Expeditionary Fleet commander in chief: the *Chōkai* (heavy cruiser), the 7th Cruiser Division (four heavy cruisers), and five de-

stroyers of the 3d Destroyer Squadron, [shall be charged with] support for the entire operation.

Escort Unit, led by the 3d Destroyer Squadron commander:

1st Escort Unit: [consisting of] the 3d Destroyer Squadron under the direct command of the 3d Destroyer Squadron commander (minus eight destroyers) as the core, [shall be charged with] the direct escort of the advance party.

2d Escort Unit, led by the captain of the *Yura*: [consisting of] the *Yura* (light cruiser), two destroyers of the 3d Destroyer Squadron, the *Shimushu* (coast defense vessel) as the core, [shall be charged with] the direct escort of the transport convoy of the main force.

1st Air Unit, led by the 22d Air Flotilla commander: [consisting of] the 22d Air Flotilla, and the Kanoya Air Group (minus half of its strength) as the core, [shall be charged with] (1) destroying enemy warships, (2) destroying the enemy air power in the area east of Bangka and Palembang in Sumatra, western Borneo and suppressing the [enemy] air power in western Java, (3) escorting the transport convoy(s), (4) conducting the guarding over sea, and (5) preparing air base(s) in Malaya for use.

2d Air Unit, led by the captain of the *Kamikawa-maru*: [consisting of] the auxiliary seaplane tenders *Kamikawa-maru* and *Sagara-maru* as the core, [shall be charged with] (1) escort of the transport convoy(s), (2) conducting the guarding at the anchorages [for] the Bangka and Palembang [operations] and support for the operation to ascend the rivers [to] Palembang.

3d Air Unit, led by the 4th Carrier Division commander: [consisting of] the 4th Carrier Division (the aircraft carrier *Ryūjō*), and one destroyer, [shall be charged with] attacking enemy warships.

River-ascending Unit [toward] Palembang, led by the 9th Base Force commander: [consisting of] the *Hatsutaka*, the *Eikō-maru*, the 91st Guard Unit, element of the 91st Signal Unit, the Special Minesweeping Unit ([made up of] the *Rumoi-maru*, the *Otowa-maru*, eight auxiliary guard ships, and four fishing boats), the *Shimushu* (after completion of its task in the 2d Escort Unit), [shall be charged with] (1) the operation to ascend the rivers up to Palembang, (2) minesweeping and guarding at anchorages [off] Bangka and at the mouth of the Musi River, depending on the circumstances.

(The rest omitted by the author)

Arrangements Between the 38th Division, the Escort Unit and the Navy River-ascending Unit

On 1 February, the 38th Division commander made arrangements on the details [of the operation] at Cam Ranh Bay with R. Adm. Hashimoto Shintarō, commander of the Escort Unit ([and also] 3d Destroyer Squadron commander), and R. Adm. Hiraoka Kumeichi, commander of the [Navy] River-ascending Unit ([and also] 9th Base Force commander). The outline was as follows:⁽¹¹⁸⁾

1. Distribution of the transport convoy and the commanders whereabouts

Advance Party:

1st Section: (1)(2) the *Tajima-maru* (with 38th Engineer Regiment Commander Iwabuchi on board), (2)(3) the *Tacoma-maru*, (3)(4) the *Mansei-maru*, and (4)(5) the *Ōyō-maru* (with Battalion Commander Miyazawa on board).

2d Section: (5)(?) the *An'yō-maru* (with Battalion Commander Orita on board), (6)(?) the *Alaska-maru*, (7)(1) the *Kinugawa-maru* (with 229th Infantry Regiment Commander Tanaka on board), and (8)(6) the *Sado-maru* (air defense ship).

1st Escort Unit Commander Rear Admiral Hashimoto will be on board of the *Sendai*, and [Navy] River-ascending Unit Commander Rear Admiral Hiraoka on the *Hatsutaka*.

Main Force:

3d Section: (9)(1) the *Argun-maru*, (10)(2) the *Singapore-maru*, (11)(3) the *Shinkyō-maru*, (12)(4) the *Rakuyō-maru*, (13)(5) the *Lima-maru*, (14)(6) the *Gin'yō-maru* (with Division Commander Sano on board), and (15)(7) the *Tsushima-maru*.

4th Section: (16)(8) the *Meigen-maru*, (17)(9) the *Taketsu-maru* [*Buyō-maru?*], (18)(10) the *Ken-zui-maru*, (19)(11) the *Makassar-maru*, (20)(12) the *Shinsei-maru* No. 1, (21)(13) the *Fusō-maru* (hospital ship), and (22)(14) the *Hirokawa-maru* (air defense ship).

2d Escort Unit Commander [Navy] Captain Miyoshi will be on board the *Yura*.

Note: The first parentheses () represent the ship's number, and the second parentheses () the order of ships in ascending the Musi River.

2. Disposition of forces of the Landing Units

Advance Party (Commander: Colonel Tanaka)

Mentok Landing Unit: [consisting of] one half of infantry battalion, led by Captain Orita (on board the *An'yō-maru*).

Musi River Ascending Unit: [consisting of] one infantry battalion and one battery, led by Colonel Tanaka (on board the *Kinugawa-maru*).

Saleh River Ascending Unit: [consisting of] one infantry company, one battery, and one engineer company, led by Lieutenant Colonel Iwabuchi (on board the *Tajima-maru*).

Telang River Ascending Unit: one-half infantry battalion, and one artillery section, led by Major Miyazawa (on board the *Ōyō-maru*).

Debarcation Operation Unit: [consisting of] twenty-seven large-sized motorized [landing] craft, thirty small-sized motorized [landing] craft, and four extra-large motorized [landing] craft, led by Lieutenant Colonel Morimoto.

Main Force (Commander: the 38th Division commander)

[Consisting of] two infantry battalions, one artillery battalion, and one engineer company

3. Date of the transport convoy's departure from the assembly point, date and time to start landing (going upstream) and the landing schedule

Advance Party

Mentok Landing Unit ([in] two ships): [shall] depart from Cam Ranh Bay at 1900 on day L – 6, arrive at the Mentok [anchorage] at 0000 on day L, and start landing around 0200 on day L. The landing shall be complete in about ten days.

River-ascending Unit [toward] Palembang ([in] six ships): The same as the above for the time of departure from Cam Ranh Bay and arrival at the Mentok [anchorage]. After arriving at the Mentok [anchorage], the units shall reach the mouths of the Musi, the Telang and the Saleh Rivers around 0700 on day L by maneuvering [landing] craft, and each start ascending the rivers. The transport ships shall change their anchorages to the mouth of the Musi River at an appropriate time and sail upstream to Palembang, as soon as the waterway of that river is cleared. The landing shall be completed in about two weeks.

Main Force ([in] fourteen ships)

[Shall] depart from Cam Ranh Bay at 1800 on day L – 4, and arrive at the mouth of the Musi River about day L + 2. The landing shall be completed in about two weeks.

4. Reconnaissance of the landing points and the rivers to ascend

No reconnaissance shall be undertaken other than covert aerial photo-reconnaissance by Army and Navy aircraft.

5. Escort at sea

(1) Forces to be employed for escort

(a) Forces to be employed for direct escort

1st Escort Unit: the 3d Destroyer Squadron ([made up of] the *Sendai*, the 11th Destroyer Division, and the *Asagiri*), 1st Minesweeper Division, 11th Subchaser Division (minus

Subchaser No. 9). [Editor's note: The text says "Minesweeper No. 9," which is a mistake. See also under 2d Escort Unit below.]

2d Escort Unit: the *Yura*, the *Shimushu*, the 20th Destroyer Division (minus the *Asagiri*), the *Shōnan-maru* No. 7, the *Shōnan-maru* No. 12, and the Subchaser No. 9.

(b) Forces to be employed for indirect escort: the *Hatsutaka* and the *Eikō-maru*

(2) Navigation

(a) Navigation route: as shown on the separate drawing (omitted by the author).

(b) Navigation speed: eight knots normal speed.

(c) Navigation formation: as shown on the separate drawing (omitted by the author).

(3) Outline of escort

6. Entry into the anchorage

(1) Anchorages and the formation at the anchorage: as shown in the separate drawing (omitted by the author).

(2) Outline of entry into the anchorages

(a) Formation to enter the anchorage: as shown in the separate drawing (omitted by the author).

(b) The command to "get into formation to enter the anchorage" shall be given two hours before anchoring, and the minesweepers shall start clearing the route ahead as soon as they are ready. When sailing at a very low speed, the transport ships shall navigate while steering clear of mines.

7. Landing under combat conditions and cover

(1) The landing attack in Mentok [shall be made] as a surprise landing in principle. However, it will be carried out by assault while eliminating attacks of enemy army, naval and air forces, if the situation should require it.

(2) Landing cover: No naval bombardment shall be conducted.

(3) Support for debarkation operations

(a) The Navy

At [the anchorages of] Mentok and at the mouth of the Musi River, subchasers and auxiliary minesweepers shall provide guarding and relief in the waters in and around the transport convoy anchorage.

At the Mentok [anchorage] on the early morning of day L, the transport ships will change anchoring spots, and minesweeping shall be conducted.

When the river-ascending unit [toward] Palembang of the advance party maneuvers its [landing] craft towards the Musi, the Telang and Saleh Rivers from the Mentok [anchorage], two small warships shall lead the way up to the mouths of the rivers above.

Assembly points for the [landing] craft units shall be [the side of] the *Kinugawa-maru* for the craft heading for the mouths of the Musi and the Telang Rivers, and [the side of] the *Tajima-maru* for those heading for the mouth of the Saleh River.

The expected time of departure from the assembly points (along the ships' side) shall be about 0300.

(b) The Army

The Army shall assist the debarkation of seaplane base equipment from the *Eikō-maru* at Mentok.

8. Coordination between the Army and the Navy in the Musi River waterway

(1) After anchoring at the Mentok [anchorage], the *Eikō-maru* shall promptly dispatch crew for nine small-sized motorized [landing] craft to the *Kinugawa-maru*, and those for one large- and one small-sized motorized [landing] craft to the *Ōyō-maru*, to receive [a total of] one large-sized motorized [landing] craft (including engine operators) and ten small-sized motorized [landing] craft from the Army. These landing craft will be returned to the Army near the station pier of Palembang once the clearing of the waterway is completed.

- (2) Zone to be cleared: The naval river-ascending unit shall clear the waterway from the mouth of the Musi River to three nautical miles upstream of the Palembang railway wharf.
 - (3) Waterway guidance: Although no waterway guidance for the transport ships will be provided in the mouth of the Musi River in principle, the Navy shall provide guidance in dangerous areas as the occasion may demand.
 - (4) The naval river-ascending unit shall report the progress of [its operation to] clear the waterway to the *Kinugawa-maru*.
9. Signal communications (the rest omitted by the author.)

The 38th Division's Order

On 1 February, 38th Division Commander Sano concluded the above detailed arrangements, and on the next day, the 2d, he issued the following divisional order concerning Operation L.⁽⁶⁹⁾

NUMA [38th Division] Operation Order A, No. 101

38th Division Order

Gin'yō-maru, Cam Ranh, 1800, 2 February

1. The [Sixteenth] Army shall destroy the enemy in the Dutch East Indies, seize its bases, and also secure key military locations and vital resource areas.
2. The division, in conjunction with the First Southern Expeditionary Fleet, shall capture southern Sumatra to secure oil resources. Further, it shall swiftly seize air bases in Bangka Island, Palembang, Martapura, and Tanjungkarang and their vicinities, make them ready for use, and also destroy enemy naval bases in Lampung Bay and Semangka Bay, to facilitate the army's subsequent operations.

The Third Air Force will closely cooperate with the division in executing the operation.

The memorandum of arrangements with the [Navy] 9th Base Force and the 3d Destroyer Squadron are as shown in the separate volume.

Five small cargo ships and about seventy fishing boats are expected to be newly allocated [to the division].

3. The advance party shall depart from Cam Ranh Bay on a date to be given in a separate order, and arrive [on the waters] south of Mentok on Bangka Island around 0000 on day L. About two infantry companies, led by the battalion commander, shall land on the island, first seize the Mentok airfield and make it ready for use, and seize Pangkalpinang and other strategic points on Bangka as well. The main force [of the advance party] shall switch to [landing] craft on or around the waters [off Mentok], and go up the Telang, Musi and Saleh River roughly in the disposition detailed below, to seize Palembang. In cooperation with the airborne [paratroop] raiding unit, which is scheduled to have already arrived there, it shall first seize the Palembang airfield and make it ready for use. Also, it shall secure the oil refineries, the power station, and other vital facilities of the city as well as the oil fields in and around [Telang] Abab and Limau. Further, it shall prepare to seize the air bases in Martapura and Tanjungkarang as well as to destroy the enemy naval bases in Lampung and Semangka Bay.

The 3d Destroyer Squadron and the 9th Base Force of the First Southern Expeditionary Fleet shall assist [the advance party] in its landing attack on Bangka Island as well as in its ascent of the rivers to Palembang.

[The details of the disposition]

- (1) Telang River ascending unit

About two infantry companies, and about one artillery section as the core, led by the battalion commander.

- (2) Musi River ascending unit
About three infantry companies, and about one battery as the core, led by the advance party commander.
- (3) Saleh River ascending unit
About one infantry company, and about one battery as the core, led by the engineer regiment commander.
4. Staff Officer Hosokawa shall accompany the advance party and direct the operations.
5. The Ordnance Department director shall have the main force of the Ordnance Department accompany the advance party, together with one element of the Ordnance Service Unit, to facilitate the operation [of the advance party].
6. The Intendance Department director shall have the main force of the Intendance Department accompany the advance party, to facilitate the operations [of the latter].
7. The Medical Department director shall have one element of the Medical Department accompany the advance party, to facilitate the medical needs [of the latter].
8. The commander of the disembarkation working unit shall have one element assist the advance party in the landing attacks at Bangka Island, and have the main force cooperate [with the river-ascending units] in going up the Telang, Musi and Saleh Rivers. Also, [the commander] shall put [his unit] in charge of the disembarkation operations of the advance party as well as the main force of the division in or near Mentok and Palembang. In addition, one powerful element shall seize shipping matériel in and around Mentok and Palembang, and secure loading/unloading facilities. Five small cargo ships and about seventy fishing boats shall be allocated in or near the Mentok [anchorage].
9. Having been put at the disposal of the advance party commander, the 7th Airfield Company commander shall cooperate in seizing the Palembang airfield and making it ready for use, and in making preparations for seizing the Martapura and Tanjungkarang airfields and others. About six hundred coolies will be allocated for the construction of the airfields.
10. Having been put at the disposal of the advance party commander, the 33d Airfield Company commander shall first cooperate in seizing the Mentok airfield and making it ready for use. Following the advance party's seizure of Palembang, he shall cooperate [with the party] in securing the airfield and making it ready for use, as well as in making preparations for seizing the Martapura and Tanjungkarang airfields and others. About nine hundred coolies will be allocated for the construction of the airfields.
11. Having been put at the disposal of the advance party commander, one element each of the 25th Air Signal Unit and of the 2d Field Meteorological Company shall respectively have a part of them stationed in Mentok and their main force in Palembang, in order to provide assistance in securing the airfields and making them ready, and to make preparations for seizing the airfields mentioned in Items 9 and 10.
12. The 2d Company of the Shipping Signal Regiment shall have its main force accompany the advance party and one element the main force [of the 38th Division]. It shall be charged with the signal communications within the convoy during sailing, and with those between the landing units of the convoy and the disembarkation working unit at the time of the advance party's landing attack, and the disembarkation of the advance party and the main force.
13. The oil-drilling unit shall have its main force accompany the advance party, take charge of taking possession of the oil resources, and also make preparations so that [the unit] can start operating [the oil production facilities] as soon as possible.
14. The units which shall constitute the main force shall depart from Cam Ranh Bay on a date to be given in a separate order, arrive at the mouth of the Musi River before daybreak on day L + 2, and go up the river toward Palembang.
15. The 3d Battalion of the 229th Infantry Regiment shall be prepared to promptly come under the command of the advance party commander upon its arrival in Palembang.

16. The Mitsuoka Unit of the 4th Tank Regiment shall be prepared to promptly come under the command of the advance party commander upon its arrival in Palembang.
17. The 23d Antiaircraft Artillery Regiment (minus two batteries and the Antiaircraft Searchlight Company) shall be charged with the air defense during sailing and when entering the anchorage.
18. The 45th Independent Motor Transport Battalion (minus two companies) shall be prepared to promptly come under the command of the advance party commander upon its arrival in Palembang.
19. The director of the Military Administration Department shall put part [of the department] at the disposal of the advance party commander and have it prepare for introducing a military administration, while having the main force [of the department] still continue its current duties as before.
20. The head of the Propaganda Group shall put part [of the group] at the disposal of the advance party commander, and assign it propaganda activities in the division's areas of operation, while having the main force [of the group] still continue its current duties as before.
21. From the time of departure from Cam Ranh Bay until entry into the anchorage, all radio [contact] between the advance party and the main force shall be strictly sealed off other than the Mark-7 radio of the Shipping Signal Unit.
22. In particular, each unit shall do everything possible to enhance the reputation of the Imperial Army at home and abroad by acting in the great founding spirit of our nation.
23. I shall be on board the *Gin'yō-maru*, and shall on day L + 2 leave Cam Ranh Bay along with the main force to head for Palembang.

Division Commander Sano Tadayoshi

The Oil-drilling Unit

I will add some explanations about the oil-drilling unit mentioned in the above order.

In September 1941, the oil-drilling group was formed on site within the 21st Field Ordnance Depot in Saigon. First, Maj. Ōkubo Tōru, accompanied by two personnel drafted from Nippon Oil Corporation, arrived by air in Saigon to prepare the formation.⁽⁴⁹⁾ Then in October, the main force of the oil-drilling group ([consisting of] about eight commissioned officers including the group commander Lt. Col. Nagahata Yoshinobu, about ten noncommissioned officers, and about 150 drafted oil engineers) arrived in Saigon by sea to complete the formation. In November, in order to restore the oil fields in the Miri and Seria sectors in British northern Borneo, the oil-drilling group was first put under the control of the Kawaguchi Detachment, and the group assembled at Cam Ranh Bay. On 13 December, it departed from Cam Ranh Bay along with the Kawaguchi Detachment, and went ashore in the Miri and Seria sector on the 16th, where it worked on the restoration of the oil fields when the latter were seized.⁽⁴⁹⁾ This time [however], the 38th Division was to seize the oil fields in southern Sumatra, but the Twenty-fifth Army also was to seize the oil fields in northern Sumatra, following the capture of Singapore. Therefore, arrangements were made to have the Miri oil-drilling group operate in the following way.⁽⁴⁹⁾

The main force, directly led by Group Commander Lieutenant Colonel Nagahata, was brought under the control of the 38th Division, which would seize the oil fields in southern Sumatra (Palembang [in particular]), and was transferred from the Miri and Seria sector.

The oil-drilling unit led by Maj. Katō Shunji, who was attached to the group, was brought under the control of the Twenty-fifth Army, which would seize the oil fields in northern Sumatra, and was transferred from the Miri and Seria sector.

The Borneo oil-drilling unit led by Maj. Ōkubo Tōru, who was [also] attached to the group, remained in the Miri and Seria sector.

The Operational Preparations of the 1st [Paratroop] Raiding Group

As described earlier, around 22 January the Southern Army had abandoned the idea of using the 1st [Paratroop] Raiding Group in [the operation against] Palembang. However, by the 25th it had changed this [policy], and on the 31st, gave the order [to employ the group in the Palembang operation]. Col. Kume Seiichi, commander of the 1st [Paratroop] Raiding Group, along with the main force of the [Paratroop] Raiding Air Unit ([consisting of] eighteen aircraft), had reached Guangdong in southern China on 15 January, left there on the 18th and arrived in Sanya, Hainan [on the same day], from where they departed on the 19th, to arrive in Phnom Penh in French Indochina.⁽²³⁾ On 22 January, the Southern Army had shown him the [new] policy on the use of the [Paratroop] Raiding Group,⁽²⁴⁾ and on 26 January at Phnom Penh he had passed down Operation Order A, No. 22,⁽⁹⁶⁾ and had his units make preparations according to the following plan. Although the Southern Army had already changed its mind by that day, it had not yet notified Colonel Kume [about it]. As we have seen, the 1st [Paratroop] Raiding Group consisted of the 1st [Paratroop] Raiding Regiment ([which had been] shipwrecked), the 2d [Paratroop] Raiding Regiment ([which had] left the port of Moji on 15 January) and the [Paratroop] Raiding Air Group. The [Paratroop] Raiding Regiments were made up of four companies with 160 men each, and the [Paratroop] Raiding Air Group was made up of four squadrons (of nine aircraft) and one airfield company.⁽⁹³⁾

Outline of the Operation Plan of the [Paratroop] Raiding Group⁽⁹⁶⁾

First [Operation] (in early February)

Pekanbaru (note: central Sumatra) [paradrop] raiding operation: The objective is to seize the airfield and suppress enemy aircraft activity. Forces to be employed are 180 men led by a company commander of the 2d [Paratroop] Raiding Regiment. The operation shall be launched from the Taiping base.

Jambi (note: central Sumatra) [paradrop] raiding operation: The objective is to seize the airfield in order to advance Japanese Type-97 fighter plane unit(s), and at the same time, to try to carry out a sudden attack on Palembang by using seized motor vehicles. Forces to be employed are 270 men led by the 2d [Paratroop] Raiding Regiment commander. The operation shall be launched from the Kluang base.

Second [Operation] (in late February)

Sabang (note: an island northwest of Sumatra) [paradrop] raiding operation: The objective is to seize and secure this important island, which is a maritime strategic point. Forces to be employed are 270 men, led by a [paratroop] raiding regiment commander. The operation shall be launched from the Ayer Tawar base.

The Andamans (note: an archipelago west of the Malay peninsula) [paradrop] raiding operation: The objective is to seize and secure the archipelago, a major maritime strategic point. Forces to be employed are 180 men, led by a [paratroop] raiding regiment commander. The operation shall be launched from the Tavoy base.

Third [Operation] (in early March)

Yenangyaung (note: Burma) [paradrop] raiding operation: The objective is to seize and secure a large oil field area. Forces to be employed are three companies, led by a [paratroop] raiding regiment commander. The operation shall be launched from the Lampang base.

As the above plan shows, there was no outlook yet for when it would be possible to use the shipwrecked 1st [Paratroop] Raiding Regiment.

As explained earlier, because of the postponement of Operations L and H, decided at the Manila Conference, and the opinions expressed by the people concerned, the Southern Army had from about the 24th strengthened its resolution to use [the Paratroop Raiding Group] against Palembang, and on the 31st it passed down the order for the drop on the Palembang airfield (the chief aim), and on the oil refineries (a part of them).⁽⁹⁶⁾ Based on this Southern Army order of the 31st, the Third Air Force Commander Lt. Gen. Sugawara Michiō on the same day gave the following order:⁽⁹⁶⁾

Third Air Force Operation Order A, No. 244

Third Air Force Order

Sungai Petani, 2000, 31 January

1. The 1st [Paratroop] Raiding Group shall be newly brought under my command.
2. A part of the [Third] Air Force shall make preparations for the [Paradrop] Raiding Operation [in Operation] L. The outline of preparatory training for the [Paradrop] Raiding Operation [in Operation] L is as shown in the separate volume (omitted by the author).
3. The 7th Air Division commander [Maj. Gen. Yamamoto Kenji] shall temporarily put the 98th Air Group commander under my direct command.
4. In preparation for the [Paradrop] Raiding Operation [in Operation] L, the 98th Air Group commander shall, based on the outline in the separate volume, have the required force engage in joint training with the 1st [Paratroop] Raiding Group in Phnom Penh, Sungai Petani and Ketil and their vicinities. The commander shall also give assistance to the 1st [Paratroop] Raiding Group with its shift of position to Malaya. He shall arrange the particulars with the 1st [Paratroop] Raiding Group commander. The Southern Army is expected to take care of the ground duties, quartering and supplies in Phnom Penh.
5. The 1st [Paratroop] Raiding Group commander shall conduct joint training with the 98th Air Group according to the outline in the separate volume. Further, he shall rapidly advance the personnel and matériel for the first and the second [Paradrop] Raiding Operation [in Operation] L to Sungai Petani and have [the unit(s)] make preparations for the subsequent operations. When rapidly advancing personnel and matériel to Sungai Petani, the commander shall have the assistance of the 98th Air Group.
6. The 18th Air Ground Support commander shall be charged with the ground duties as well as quartering and supplies for the units mentioned in the previous item(s).
7. I am in Sungai Petani, and shall advance toward [Kluang] or its vicinity when the Kluang airfield is ready for use.

In accordance with the above order, 1st [Paratroop] Raiding Group Commander Colonel Kume on the same day (the 31st) at Phnom Penh issued Operation Order A, No. 25, released the following outline of the operational preparation plan and prepared for the operation.⁽⁹⁶⁾

1. (Assisted by twenty-seven aircraft of the [Paratroop] Raiding Air Unit, and about nineteen heavy bombers of the 98th Air Group), 260 men led by the 2d [Paratroop] Raiding Regiment Commander Maj. Kōmura Takeo, shall carry out a sudden attack on the Palembang airfield and seize it, after which they will seize and secure [the city of] Palembang. [In the meantime,] 130 men led by a company commander of the regiment (assisted by thirteen aircraft of the [Paratroop] Raiding Air Unit, and about eight heavy bombers of the 98th Air Group), shall carry out a sudden attack on the Palembang oil refineries and seize them.

Note: One [Paratroop] Raiding Air Unit aircraft was able to carry ten paratroopers. The reason that the number of the aircraft and that of the paratroopers [allocated for the attack] on the Palembang airfield did not match is due to the fact that one aircraft was

to carry out a belly-landing, and twenty-six aircraft were to be employed for the para-troopers.

2. Schedule of Preparations for the Operation

- 2 till 4 February [inclusive]: Joint training with heavy bombers at Phnom Penh
- 5 till 6 February [inclusive]: Rapid advance to Sungai Petani
- 7 February: Preparation for the operation at Sungai Petani
- 8 February: Rapid advance to the Kluang or the Kahang airfield
- 9 February: Execution of [paradrop] raiding [operation]

On 4 February (the day when the advance party of the 38th Division was scheduled to leave Cam Ranh Bay), Third Air Force Commander Lieutenant General Sugawara passed down the following order concerning the execution of Operation L.⁽⁹⁶⁾

Third Air Force Operation Order A, No. 257

Third Air Force Order

Sungai Petani, 0800, 4 February

1. Information on Palembang and its vicinity is as shown in Information Record No. 67 in the separate volume (note by the author: original document missing).
2. The [Third] Air Force shall continue to cooperate with the Twenty-fifth Army and at the same time execute Operation L in cooperation with the Sixteenth Army and the Navy. The start of [the operation to] capture Singapore has been scheduled for the night of 7 February, and day L for 10 February; for both separate orders shall be issued. The outline of the cooperation with the Twenty-fifth Army in the operation to capture Singapore is shown in separate volume No. 1 (omitted by the author); the outline of the air operations [in Operation] L in separate volume No. 2 (note by the author: described earlier); the memorandum of the arrangement on air [operations] between the Army and the Navy regarding Operation L in separate volume No. 3 (note of author: described earlier); and the outline of the [Paradrop] Raiding Operation [in Operation] L in separate volume No. 4.
3. The 7th Air Division commander shall in conformity with separate volume No. 1 mainly cooperate in the Twenty-fifth Army's operation to capture Singapore. He may use the Kluang airfield as an advance base for an element of his force except on day L – 1. Further, from 2400 on 5 February onwards, he shall temporarily put the 64th Air Group under the command of the 3d Air Division commander at Kahang.
4. The 3d Air Division commander shall discharge the duties stated below:
 - (1) Continue his cooperation with the Twenty-fifth Army in its operation.
 - (2) Search for enemy aircraft in Palembang and its vicinity and destroy them, mainly with his fighter plane unit(s) between day L – 4 and day L – 2.
 - (3) Carry out the [paradrop] raiding operation against Palembang and its vicinity in conformity with separate volume No. 4.
 - (4) Provide cover for the convoy of the 38th Division under sail, with an element of his fighter plane unit(s) from 1700 of day L – 1 until about the evening [of the same day].
 - (5) Make preparations to advance an element of his force to the Palembang airfield when it is seized and ready for use in order to cooperate with the Sixteenth Army.
[Also,] he shall temporarily put the 64th Air Group under his command at Kahang at 2400 on 5 February.
5. The 12th Air Division commander shall discharge the duties stated below:
 - (1) Continue the tasks stated in Item 5 of Third Air Force Operation Order A, No. 230, particularly the cooperation with the 3d and the 7th Air Divisions in their combat in the air above the Singapore sector between day L – 4 and day L – 2.

- (2) Keep watch on the Pekanbaru airfield during Operation L and seize the opportunity to search for enemy aircraft appearing at the airfield and destroy them.
- (3) Make preparations to advance an element to the Palembang airfield on day L and onwards, so that it can take charge of the air defense of the place and its vicinity.
The 1st Squadron of the 11th Air Group shall be returned to its original command after providing cover for the [Paratroop] Raiding Air Unit during its rapid advance to the Kluang and the Kahang airfields.
6. The 1st Raiding Group commander shall, in conformity with separate volume No. 4, carry out a paratroop raid on or around the Palembang airfield and the oil refineries at 1130 on day L – 1, seize and secure these surroundings, while facilitating the attacks of the [Third] Air Force and the 38th Division.
[The commander] shall temporarily put the 12th Transport Squadron under his command and have the 3d Air Division, the 81st and the 98th Air Group cooperate in the execution of the [paradrop] raiding [operation] until the completion of Raiding Operation L. However, he shall give instructions to the 98th Air Group commander regarding the details of the raiding operation.
The parachuting and landing units shall come under the command of the Sixteenth Army commander from the moment of the landing of the 38th Division at Palembang. After completion of Operation L, the other units under [the command of] the group shall, without separate orders, be returned to their original command.
7. The 81st and the 98th Air Groups, in conformity with separate volume No. 4, shall be charged with the raiding operation, along with the units mentioned in the previous item. The 98th Air Group commander shall receive instructions from the 1st [Paratroop] Raiding Group commander regarding the details of the raiding operation.
8. The 1st Squadron of the 11th Air Group shall return to its original command on day L – 2, after [covering] the rapid advance of the [Paratroop] Raiding Air Unit to the Kluang and the Kahang airfields.
9. I shall be in Kluang.

Note by the author: Outline of the Third Air Force's disposition of forces at that time

[Units] under the direct control of the [Third] Air Force: the 81st (command reconnaissance), and the 98th (heavy bombers) Air Groups, 1st [Paratroop] Raiding Group
3d Air Division: the 27th (light bombers), the 75th (light bombers), the 90th (light bombers), and the 59th (fighter planes) Air Groups, and the 50th Independent Squadron (command reconnaissance)
7th Air Division: the 64th (fighter planes), the 12th (heavy bombers), and the 60th (heavy bombers) Air Groups, and the 51st Independent Squadron (command reconnaissance)
12th Air Division: the 1st (fighter planes), and the 11th (fighter planes) Air Groups, and the 47th Independent Squadron (fighter planes)

Separate volume No. 4

Outline of [Paradrop] Raiding Operation [in Operation] L

1. Mission

[We shall] seize the Palembang airfield to facilitate Operations L and H, and [also] seize and secure the oil refineries in Palembang before the enemy destroys them.

2. Outline of the Operations

- (1) Prior to day L – 1, the 3d Air Division (including the units [temporarily] attached) shall destroy the enemy air power in Palembang.
- (2) The first (paradrop) raid shall be set at 1130 on day L – 1.

However, the execution shall be aborted by separate order(s) if inevitable due to weather or other conditions.

- (3) By the evening of day L – 2, the first echelon shall be deployed to Kahang, the second echelon and one air group of light bombers of the 3d Air Division to Kluang, to be ready for the launch of the raiding [operation].
 - (4) The first and the second echelons shall operate separately. The first echelon shall execute the parachuting [operation] on the Palembang airfield and its vicinity, and the second echelon on the Palembang oil refineries and their vicinity. Each shall mop up the enemy in the surroundings, seize and secure the objectives of their respective operations until the arrival of the 38th Division. The paratrooper unit of the first echelon shall [also] attack Palembang barracks, circumstances permitting.
 - (5) The air groups of light bombers of the 3d Air Division shall in general accompany the first or the second echelon, and attack the barracks in Palembang city right before the parachuting [operation].
 - (6) [Some aircraft of] the reconnaissance unit(s) under the direct control of the [Third] Air Force shall fly ahead of the echelons while others shall accompany them, to conduct surveillance of the battle site.
 - (7) After the execution of the paradrop [operation], the first and the second echelon as well as the air groups of light bombers shall assemble and return as quickly as possible. The air groups of heavy bombers shall return to their bases, while the [Paratroop] Raiding ([paratrooper] transport) Air Unit shall return to its after refueling at the Kluang or the Kahang airfield. However, units that can directly return to their bases shall not conduct the above-mentioned refueling.
 - (8) After providing the cover for the execution of the first [paradrop] raiding operation, one element of the fighter plane units of the 3d Air Division shall provide air cover [also] for the convoy roughly from 1700 onwards. Further, if required, it shall support the ground battle, while making sure of the progress of the Japanese troops.
 - (9) The 3d Air Division will timely have its command reconnaissance unit conduct surveillance of the combat site of the paratroopers unit.
 - (10) The second [paradrop] raid shall be prepared, set for 1500 on the day after that of the first raid. The forces to be employed in [the second] paradrop (and landing) [raid] shall be about two squadrons of the air transport unit as the standard, and its drop zone shall be set at the Palembang airfield.
3. The disposition of the forces to be employed and the operation schedule are as shown on Separate Sheet No. 1.
 4. The 1st [Paratroop] Raiding Group commander shall decide on the details of the basic standard for the joint operations, the drop zones of the echelons, and the dispositions during the flight.

Separate Sheet No. 1

Rough overview of disposition of forces to be employed and the schedule of Palembang [paradrop] raiding operation			
Date	Disposition of forces	Operation objectives (tasks)	Outline of actions
Day L – 4 through Day L – 1	Fighter planes of the 3d Air Division (including units brought under the command of the division)	To destroy enemy aircraft on the Palembang airfield.	Attacks shall be made at a good opportunity. The launching bases will be the Kluang and Kahang airfields.
	Required forces of the 12th Air Division	To take command of the air over the Singapore sector; to watch on the Pekanbaru airfield; and to destroy enemy aircraft on this airfield, if required.	Attacks shall be made at a good opportunity. The launching base will be Batu Pahat.
Day L – 2	The first raiding unit of the [Paratroop] Raiding Group, the 98th, the 59th, the 64th Air Group, three aircraft of the 81st Air Group, one air group of light bombers of the 3d Air Division	For the first [paradrop] raid, each echelon will assemble by the evening at the Kluang or the Kahang [airfield], to prepare for departing on day L – 1.	1. The first raiding unit of the [Paratroop] Raiding Group will depart from Sungai Petani and advance to the Kluang or the Kahang [airfield]. 2. The 98th Air Group shall depart from the Ketil [airfield], assemble two squadrons at the Kahang [airfield], and another at the Kluang [airfield].
Day L – 1	1st Echelon: One element of the 2d [Paratroop] Raiding Regiment [transported by] about two squadrons of the [Paratroop] Raiding Air Unit. About two squadrons of the 98th Air Group, the 64th Air Group, one aircraft of the 81st Air Group (accompanying). 2d Echelon: One element of the 2d [Paratroop] Raiding Regiment [transported by] about two squadrons of the [Air] Transport [Unit]. One squadron of the 98th Air Group, the 59th Air Group, one aircraft of the 81st Air Group (accompanying). Another aircraft of the 81st Air Group (to go in advance).	1. 1st Echelon: To execute the [paradrop] raid at the Palembang airfield and its vicinity, secure the airfield, and quickly make it ready for use by Type-97 fighter planes. 2. 2d Echelon: To execute the [paradrop] raid at the oil refineries in Palembang and their vicinity, seize and secure these refineries before destruction by the enemy. 3. The 98th Air Group shall transport the weaponry and matériel respectively for each transport squadron of both echelons, and [also] provide cover fire against antiaircraft fire at the rear of the transport squadrons. 4. The air groups of fighter planes shall provide the direct cover for each echelon respectively. 5. The command reconnaissance planes shall conduct reconnaissance just before and during the time of the operation, and provide guidance.	1. Execution of the [paradrop] raid shall be at 1130. 2. The 1st echelon will depart from the Kahang, and the 2d from the Kluang base. 3. [All units] shall return to their advance base(s). However, units that have sufficient flight range shall directly return to their original base. 4. If it is impossible to operate in this [way] due to the situation of the transport aircraft, the number of units shall not be reduced even if a reduction in the number of men should be necessary.

Day L – 1 [cont.]	One element of the light bomber unit(s) of the 3d Air Division	Attacks against the barracks in the city of Palembang.	1. [The operation] shall be conducted right before the execution of the first [paradrop] raid. [The element] shall operate along with one of the echelons as long as it can. 2. [It] shall depart from the Kluang base.
	One element of the fighter plane unit(s) of the 3d Air Division (including units brought under the control of the division)	Air cover for the convoy of the 38th Division	1. After returning from [the task] to cover the first [paradrop] raid, it shall swiftly go to the air above the convoy, to provide cover from roughly 1700 onwards. 2. This [operation] shall be suspended so that [the unit] can return and land at dusk.
Day L	3d Echelon: One element of the 2d [Paratroop] Raiding Regiment [transported by] about two squadrons of [Air] Transport [Unit]. About 1 squadron of the 98th Air Group, about one-half of fighter plane unit(s) of the 3d Air Division (including the units brought under the control of the division), one aircraft of the 81st Air Group	1. To execute the [paradrop] raid at the Palembang airfield and its vicinity, to reinforce [the first raiding unit]. 2. The tasks for the air units to cooperate [in the above operation] shall be the same as on the previous day.	1. The Kluang airfield shall be used as the base to launch [the operations]. 2. Execution of the [paradrop] raid is scheduled at 1500. The launching [of the operation] shall be given in separate order(s).
	Elements of the 3d and the 7th Air Division	To support the ground combat in Palembang and its vicinity, if required.	
	An Element of the 12th Air Division	To prepare to advance to the Palembang airfield and undertake the task of the air defense of Palembang and vicinity, as soon as the airfield has been provisionally made ready.	
Day L – 1 Day L	Command Reconnaissance Unit of the 3d Air Division	To conduct surveillance of the battle site at the appropriate moments after the drop of the [paratroop] raiding group.	
Comments	1. The advancement of forces on day L onwards shall be announced by separate order(s). 2. This table shall in part be subject to change depending on the situation.		

(2) Postponement of [Operation] L and H

Second Postponement of [Operation] L (Two Days)

As we have seen, on 1 February the [Navy] Malaya Unit (First Southern Expeditionary Fleet), the naval escort unit and the naval river-ascending unit had already passed down orders regarding the execution of Operation L; the 38th Division had done so on 2 February, and the Third Air Force on 4 February. And the time of departure [of the advance party] from Cam Ranh Bay had been set at 1900 on 4 February.

However, just before the time of departure (on the evening of the 4th), Colonel Takashima and Colonel Kitamura, senior staff officers of Section 1 and Section 2 of the Sixteenth Army, Chief of Operations of the Sixteenth Army Lieutenant Colonel Oda, and [Navy] Commander Wakatsuki, staff officer of the Third Fleet seconded to the Sixteenth Army, came to the staff office of the Southern Army, where Staff Officer Wakatsuki requested Colonel Ishii, senior staff of Section 1 of the Southern Army, "to postpone the execution of Operation L for just two days, because not much progress has been made in making the Ledo airfield ready for use."⁽²³⁾

In fact, this was exactly what the Southern Army had been wary of, because [for one thing,] such an atmosphere [of favoring postponement] had [indeed] been detected on the 31st during the previously described visit of the [Southern Army] Staff Officers Arao and Matsumae to Cam Ranh Bay, [and for another,] because [the Southern Army] knew that the [Navy] Malaya Unit had sent a telegram on the 2d to the Sixteenth Army headquarters in Gaoxiong about its wish to postpone the operation,⁽³³⁾ and that on this very day (the 4th) Sixteenth Army Commander Imamura and his party were visiting Cam Ranh Bay to have talks with the Malaya Unit about it.⁽³⁴⁾ Thus, on the early morning of the 4th, the Southern Army had let Sixteenth Army Staff Officer Saiki, who stayed in Saigon, send a military classified telegram (note: which was sent with priority) [to the Sixteenth Army commander at] Cam Ranh Bay, to notify them that "the Southern Army would definitely not agree to a change of schedule of day L."⁽³⁴⁾

The Southern Army staff office was disgusted that the Sixteenth Army staff officers had joined the Navy staff officer en bloc, and that the Navy again requested another postponement just as at the time of the Kuantan, Endau and Mersing operations, or at the Manila Conference.⁽²³⁾ Colonel Ishii mainly argued with [Navy] Commander Wakatsuki and insisted: "It has been mutually agreed at the Manila [Conference] that in the event the Ledo airfields were unusable, because [at that time] the seizure of the Ledo airfields was still uncertain, [other] airfields in the Malaya area would be used [instead] for conducting the air campaign; as the arrangements have been settled that way, the fact that the Ledo airfields cannot be used does at this late date not constitute a reason for a postponement."⁽²³⁾ Navy Commander Wakatsuki explained: "The 22d Air Flotilla has started moving its forces to the Ledo area, judging that it could use the airfields, even though it wondered whether it was the right thing to do because the situation in Ledo was still unclear; subsequently, the Flotilla learned that it would take longer than expected to make the airfields ready for use, but that it is now too late to redirect the forces to the Malaya area."⁽²³⁾ The staff officers of the Sixteenth Army made comments implying that they rather supported Commander Wakatsuki of the Navy, as they had done at the Manila Conference,^(23, 40) and the discussion went on for about one hour.⁽²³⁾ Navy Commander Wakatsuki repeated time and again that "this is the last time to request a postponement and there will be no such requests again from now on."⁽²³⁾ Colonel Ishii did not

yield, but when breaking up [the meeting], he felt that “a two-day postponement would probably be inevitable.”⁽²³⁾ After receiving approval, Staff Officer Ishii sent the following telegram to the Southern Task Force (i.e. the Second Fleet).⁽²³⁾

1. At the talks, which the OSAMU-SHÜDAN (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 to this telegram, the Southern Task Force (the Second Fleet) wired back as follows:⁽²³⁾

[We] would like a one- or two-day postponement be [decided] in talks between the Sixteenth Army and the First Southern Expeditionary Fleet.

The date to launch [Operation] L, which had been set on “roughly day $x + 60$ ” at the suggestion of the Southern Army ([in the] Cam Ranh Agreement) on 1 January and postponed to “day $x + 64$ ” on 28 January ([in the] Manila Agreement), now had to be postponed once again to “day $x + 66$.” Having received the reply from the [Navy] Southern Task Force, the Southern Army, while sending the following telegram to seek the approval of the Army Department of IGHQ on the same day (the 5th), issued an order to postpone [Operation] L by two days, setting it on 12 February.⁽²³⁾

From: Chief of Staff, Southern Army, sent on 5 February

To: Vice Chief, Army General Staff

1. On the 4th, a request for a two-day postponement of [Operation] L came from the First Southern Expeditionary Fleet to the OSAMU-SHÜDAN.
2. The reason for this was a delay in providing the Ledo airfields with fuel and ammunition. Despite the arrangement that the airfields in Malaya should be used if there was no prospect for using the Ledo airfield for [Operation] L, the Navy had focused itself on the Ledo airfield, which it said resulted in another delay in providing other airfields in Malaya with fuel and ammunition.
3. As for the Army, the Twenty-fifth Army has seized Kluang on 25 January, as agreed with the Navy. The Third Air Force and the OSAMU-SHÜDAN have both completed their preparations.

At 1022 on the 4th, the [Navy] Malaya Unit, under the name of the senior staff officer, notified its subordinate units that “Day L is expected to be postponed by two days; the decision will be made after consultation with the Sixteenth Army commander around noon today.” It was followed by a telegram sent at 1530 on the same day under the name of the chief of staff [of the unit], which read: “For the present moment the date [of Operation] L is expected to be postponed by two days.”⁽¹³⁰⁾

The Situation at Ledo Until Then

The Kawaguchi Detachment had seized the Ledo airfield on 27 January and from the 28th until the end of the month provisionally repaired a 50-meter wide and 1,000-meter long runway. However, for the deployment of the Navy land-based medium-sized attack planes, the runway had to be extended to a length of 1,300 meters. The detachment was working at full stretch day and night in an area right below the equator on the rebuilding of the roads and the airfield, allowing its officers and men only a few hours of sleep per day.⁽²³⁾ Moreover, Ledo was located far into the interior, and the roads leading to the area from the coast had in places been destroyed, and also more than a dozen bridges had been demolished. On 3 February, an element of the [Navy] land-based medium-sized attack planes took the risk and performed a landing (note by the author: although the number of planes is unknown, it was apparently a trial landing performed by just a few aircraft). However, even on 4 February, the fuel accumulated in Ledo was just a mere total of two hundred drums. The matter was that the supplies were [first] transported upriver for about forty-five kilometers by motorized [landing] craft from Pemangkat on the west coast to Sambas, taking as much as sixteen hours, and then with great difficulty from Sambas to Ledo for about eighty kilometers along a destroyed road.⁽²³⁾

Previously, the Ledo situation has been described up to the point that on 19 January the Kawaguchi Detachment reported to the Southern Army its plan (1) to have the 1st unit led by Regimental Commander Oka ([consisting of] five infantry companies as the core) seize Ledo by way of the Kuching – Ledo road, and (2) to have the 2d unit under the direct command of Detachment Commander Kawaguchi ([consisting of] three companies led by a battalion commander as the core) depart from Kuching by sea on the night of the 22d until noon on the 23d in three echelons and land on the shore west of Ledo; and I have described that (3) on the 20th the bombshell motion of a two-week postponement of [Operation] L tabled at Cam Ranh Bay had led to heated arguments between Staff Officer Ishii and Malaya Unit Staff Officer Tomari, which had made [Kawaguchi Detachment] Staff Officer Shiraishi so acutely aware of the significance of Ledo that he had immediately sent a telegram to Detachment Commander Kawaguchi. Since then, the following developments had occurred in Ledo.

The Seizure of Ledo

On 23 January, Detachment Commander Kawaguchi had wired to the Southern Army from Kuching about the situation at the Kuching airfield: “At the Kuching airfield, it is easy to take off and land when the weather is fine, but in rainy weather, even experienced pilots will need extra caution when flying small aircraft. Although [the runway of] the airfield runs 1,000 meters from north to south, the northernmost 100 meters are not usable at present, because the ground level is being raised.” However on the same day, having received the previously mentioned telegram sent by Staff Officer Shiraishi from Saigon (“that [the Army Department] of IGHQ and others pin their hopes on the ongoing operation”), Commander Kawaguchi sent the following telegram to the Southern Army:⁽²³⁾

Kawaguchi Detachment Telegram No. 73 (sent on 23 January)

1. The weekly precipitation in Kuching until yesterday the 21st amounted to about forty inches, which is one-fourth of the annual precipitation; it was a heavy rainfall rarely seen in recent years.

2. The Siluas River and streams in its vicinity have flooded and turned the whole place into a sea. Nevertheless, it is impossible to cross the water because not a single dugout canoe was found around the place, and making a raft will not do because neither the bamboo nor the wood is buoyant.
3. There are three-meter high plunging breakers at sea, and even during daytime there is a risk that boats will capsize. As enemy flying boats frequently come flying over Kuching and its vicinity, our intentions will be discovered if we do not sail at night in the dark. Consequently, we must wait until the day that sailing by night becomes possible.
4. As the situation on land and at sea is as such, we cannot do anything no matter how impatient we are, and thus we request your understanding.

On the following day, the 24th, Detachment Commander Kawaguchi (at Kuching) again sent the Southern Army the following telegram.⁽²³⁾ The [Navy] Malaya Unit, meanwhile, had launched [the operation to provide] cover for the disembarkation operations at Endau as well as the Anambas landing operations with this day (the 24th) as day 1 (both the debarkation and the landing operations were executed on the 26th).^(118, 126)

Kawaguchi Detachment Telegram No. 80 (sent on 24 January)

1. Even though the waves are finally subsiding, they are still two and a half meters high, and it is [still] difficult to sail in boats. Consequently, I have decided to postpone [the operation] for another day.
2. According to a telegram sent to the [naval] landing force, the Navy's fighter planes and the *Kamikawa-maru* (an auxiliary seaplane tender) should arrive in Kuching around the 27th.
3. If it were possible to have the Navy aircraft arrive tomorrow on the 25th, they would be able to assist in the actions of our unit from the 25th onwards.

On the following day, the 25th, Detachment Commander Kawaguchi wired the Southern Army: "As the waves have subsided to two meters high, the first echelon ([consisting of] large- and small-sized motorized [landing] craft and fishing boats) shall leave Kuching this evening, the second and the third echelons ([consisting of] seized small steamships) on the morning of tomorrow the 26th, and all of them are expected to land in and around Pemangkat around daybreak on the 27th."⁽²³⁾ Then on the same day, the detachment commander wired the following by means of Kawaguchi Detachment Field Telegram No. 88:⁽²³⁾ "(1) On the 23d and the 24th the weather has improved, and the weather is fine today too. The airfield was bombed yesterday, the 24th, but nevertheless it was made ready; (2) According to a report from the 1st unit, it expects to seize the Ledo [airfield] on the 29th; (3) I express my sincere gratitude for the concern you have shown to Staff Officer Shiraishi while he was in Saigon." Simultaneously, Sixteenth Army Staff Officer Murakami, who was attached to the detachment, also wired the following to the Southern Army by means of Kawaguchi Detachment Field Telegram No. 89:⁽²³⁾

The departure of the 2d unit of the Kawaguchi Detachment was delayed due to high waves, but its first echelon is scheduled to depart on the evening of the 25th. Although the detachment commander persistently insists on sailing without support, [I am of] the opinion that it is better if the detachment be provided with air cover while moving southward on the afternoon of the 26th if possible.

The 1st unit, led by Col. Oka Akinosuke, had started its operations on 24 January, driven away forty to fifty enemy soldiers in Siluas and its vicinity on the morning of the same day, after which the unit had defeated about one thousand enemy troops at Sanggau [Sanggan], and seized the Ledo airfield at 1000 on the 27th.^(23, 91)

The 2d Unit, under the direct command of Maj. Gen. Kawaguchi Kiyotake, had departed from Kuching between 1930 on the 25th and 1100 on the 26th in three echelons (with Detachment Commander Kawaguchi accompanying the third echelon). The unit successfully made a surprise landing in Pemangkat at 0700 on the 27th. After sending a telegram to Commander in Chief Terauchi [of the Southern Army]: "Although it is the august virtue of His Majesty the Emperor that enabled us to accomplish without cover the above important task (note by the author: maneuvering the boats at sea along the coast and landing at Pemangkat), we owe it [also] to your constant guidance for which we are deeply grateful" (Kawaguchi Detachment Field Telegram No. 96 sent on the 27th), the unit continued to closely pursue the allied forces, which were taking flight both by land and by sea, and on the same day successfully seized Sambas at 1500, followed by Singkawang at 2100.⁽²³⁾ Detachment Commander Kawaguchi reported to the Southern Army by telegram: "We will continue our operation to first mop up the main forces of the enemy in the Pontianak area, [then] turn around and charge toward the Ledo area; while advancing northward to the Siluas area, we shall swiftly seize the airfields and make them ready for use." However, the Southern Army had already learned from a report by 1st unit Commander Oka that the 1st unit had [already] seized the Ledo airfield. Having received a telegram from the Southern Army which told him to "report the actual situation of the Ledo airfields by return," the detachment commander wired on the morning of the 28th the following Detachment Telegram No. 101:⁽²³⁾

1. While overcoming repeated stiff resistance and dealing with blown up bridges, an element of the detachment has reached Singkawang at 2100 on the 27th. However, in pursuing [the enemy], the detachment has no other means but to do it mainly on bicycles and on foot.
2. Gathering from the talk of the natives, it appears that the Ledo airfields have been destroyed to a considerable degree.
3. Recognizing that repair of the airfields is the most urgent matter in view of the overall operations of the Southern Army, the detachment shall change its plan. On the early morning of the 28th it shall leave Singkawang; while having one element undertake the above-mentioned seizure and preparation [of the airfields], it shall engage with the main force in hot pursuit of the enemy in Pontianak to mop them up.

Then, on the 28th, Detachment Commander Kawaguchi wired by means of Detachment Field Telegram No. 104 from Singkawang to the Southern Army that "measured with the eye, the [main] Ledo airfield is 300 meters wide and 1,000 meters long, and has been blasted in fourteen or fifteen places."⁽²³⁾ Meanwhile on the evening of the same day, 1st unit Commander Oka wired by means of Detachment Telegram No. 399 to the Southern Army from Ledo that "[repair] work at the [main] Ledo airfield has finally started since the afternoon of the 28th, and with the [available] strength, the repair of the 50-meter wide and 1,000-meter long runway will be done in a couple of days."⁽²³⁾

In the meantime, the Navy Malaya Unit had been providing support for the Southern Army's disembarkation operation at Endau (carried out in two transport ships), and had also been conducting the operation to occupy the [enemy] base on the Anambas Islands.^(118, 126) The

forces had in outline been deployed as follows: the 3d Destroyer Squadron (minus the 12th and the 19th Destroyer Divisions) had provided the direct escort for the two Army transport ships which left Singora on the 24th and entered the anchorage and engaged in the debarkation [operation] at Endau on the 26th; the 9th Base Force had left Puolo Condore on the 24th and occupied Anambas Islands on the 26th; the 7th Cruiser Division (with the 19th Destroyer Division attached), the 4th Carrier Division ([with] the aircraft carrier *Ryūjō*), the 12th Seaplane Tender Division ([with the] auxiliary seaplane tenders *Kamikawa-maru* and *Sagara-maru*) and the 22d Air Flotilla ([consisting of] land-based planes) had provided support for the above, while the main unit (the *Chōkai* and the 12th Destroyer Division) had provided overall support.^(115, 118) The units had operated as scheduled. The disembarkation operation at Endau was completed on the 28th.⁽¹¹⁸⁾ Although two allied destroyers came to attack [the transport ships] at Endau on the 27th, one was sunk and the other was put to flight.⁽¹¹⁸⁾

As previously described, when on the 20th Malaya Unit Staff Officer Tomari had presented his bombshell motion of a two-week postponement of [Operation] L at Cam Ranh Bay, Staff Officer Ishii had insisted that "if the Ledo [airfield] were unusable, [the Navy] should use base(s) in Malaya," and he again maintained this argument in the Manila Conference held from the 21st through the 23d. While acceding to this idea and considering that it might have to use the base(s) in Malaya if the Ledo [airfield] was not ready in time, the Malaya Unit put all efforts into making Ledo ready, and had its Ledo contingent of the 4th Construction Squad leave Kuching on the 22d and follow the Oka Unit toward Ledo.⁽¹⁴⁵⁾ Having been informed about the arrival of the Endau disembarkation unit and the Anambas occupation unit at their respective destinations on the 26th, as well as the Oka Unit's seizure of Ledo on the 27th, [the Malaya Unit] had ordered the 4th Submarine Squadron commander by Telegraphic Operation Order No. 103 on that day (the 27th) to escort the *Fujikawa-maru* (carrying personnel and base matériel for the Genzan Air Group), and the *Tatsumiya-maru* (carrying the Kanoya Air Group's advance personnel and matériel for the Ledo Base).⁽¹²²⁾

Little Progress in the Preparation and Repair of the Ledo Base

As previously mentioned, on the next day, the 28th, the staff officers of the First Southern Expeditionary Fleet, the Sixteenth Army and the Third Air Force had held a conference at Cam Ranh Bay, where they made arrangements on the air [operations] in Operation L.⁽³⁴⁾ The Navy had agreed to deploy two land-based attack plane units, about thirty fighter planes and six land-based reconnaissance planes to Ledo and Kuching, about thirty land-based attack planes to Kuantan, and about ten planes to Sungai Petani, provided that Ledo was fit for use. It was also decided upon in the arrangements that if Ledo and Kuching were not fit for use, the [Navy] aircraft would be deployed to [airfields] in Kuantan, Kahang, Sungai Petani and Kota Bharu.⁽⁹⁶⁾

After participating in the above-mentioned Anambas operation, three aircraft of the auxiliary seaplane tender *Kamikawa-maru* had advanced to Kuching on the 27th, and reported the following result of their reconnaissance of Ledo:⁽¹³⁰⁾

Telegram sent on 28 January

1. Spotted a small number of Japanese ground troops in the town of Ledo.
2. The [main] Ledo airfield has been seriously destroyed by landmines. No human figure was spotted [on the airfield]. The airfield appears unpaved, and [the surface] seems to be red clay.

3. The bridges on the road from Pemangkat to Singkawang and Ledo have largely been destroyed. No Japanese troops were spotted on the road.

Telegram sent on 29 January

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 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.

So, on this day (the 29th), First Southern Expeditionary Fleet Staff Officer Terasaki Takaji immediately visited the Southern Army headquarters to request "the cooperation of engineers, as the road to the Ledo airfields is destroyed."⁽²³⁾ The Southern Army readily consented and dispatched Staff Officer Watanabe Tarō together with Second Lieutenant Inagaki (engineer) to assist in making the Ledo airfield ready for use, in repairing the transportation roads, and for the operational communications. At the same time, [the Southern Army] also arranged to dispatch [to Ledo] the Engineer Company of the 4th Independent Mixed Regiment, which was in northern French Indochina.⁽²³⁾ Further, the army sent on the same day (the 29th) a telegram to Detachment Commander Kawaguchi, in which it requested a report on the situation of the roads and transportation facilities to be used by the Navy for the transport of fuel and ammunition to the Ledo airfield, and also suggested that the working party companies in Miri and Seria be transferred to the Ledo area to be temporarily used as engineers.⁽²³⁾

However, despite the instructions given to Staff Officer Shiraishi on the 19th and the 20th, and the telegrams sent to the Kawaguchi Detachment on the 27th and the 29th, Detachment Commander Kawaguchi had thought in quite an opposite way and took different actions. That is to say, on the 28th, he advanced to Singkawang from Pemangkat, and ordered the 2d unit to closely pursue with one element the allied units to Bengkayang and with its main force to Pontianak. The main force of the 2d unit (accompanied by Commander Kawaguchi) went southward on thoroughly destroyed roads, seized Mempawah at 2000 on the 28th, and the equatorial city of Pontianak, at 2000 on the 29th, from where on the 30th the detachment commander sent the following telegram to Commander in Chief Terauchi:⁽²³⁾

Kawaguchi Detachment Field Telegram No. 122 (30 January)

1. The detachment is ready to join Operations L and H any time, having made its boats ready as well, so that the main force of about two battalions will be able to assemble in Pontianak and vicinity by 1 February [at the latest]. The morale of officers and men is high. I would like your consideration of the above in the employment of the detachment hereafter.
2. The remaining forces will be sufficient for the present to keep public order in British Borneo.
3. I humbly offer the above as my opinion.

Note: The order the Southern Army had given to Detachment Commander Kawaguchi was Southern Army Operation Order A, No. 34 of 6 January, which read, "Detachment Commander Kawaguchi shall promptly seize, mainly by land, the airfields near Bengkayang and ports in Dutch Borneo which lead to these [airfields]." Since then, no exact orders had been given, only staff[-level] communications had been wired, and those moreover in the form of suggestions.

On receiving the telegram from Detachment Commander Kawaguchi, the Southern Army staff felt that he had totally ignored the situation. In reply, the Southern Army returned the following telegram:⁽²³⁾

From: Chief of Staff, [Southern Army,] sent on 30 January

To: Detachment Commander Kawaguchi

We received your telegram No. 122.

We are deeply impressed by the fact that you have fully achieved the objectives of the operation despite the difficult conditions, and that further you are determined to request a new task now. Nevertheless, all we expect from your detachment at present is to make the airfields in Ledo and vicinity ready for use and to complete the accumulation of Navy aviation fuel and ammunition. Therefore, we earnestly hope that first of all you do everything in your power with all your forces and boats to achieve this objective.

Note: The battalion left in British Borneo at that time had made efforts to achieve stability and introduce a military administration over a vast area. One element of the force had sailed a great distance by boat and seized Tawau (which had many Japanese residents) on the northeast coast of Borneo on 1 February.

[The Southern Army was impatient because] in five days, the 38th Division would depart from Cam Ranh Bay and head to Palembang. On that day (the 30th), Southern Army Staff Officer Watanabe had flown from Saigon to Kuching, and Sixteenth Army Staff Officer Murakami from Kuching to Pontianak by seaplane, while the *Fujikawa-maru* and the *Tatsumiyamaru*, which carried part of the base personnel (advance party) and matériel of the 22d Air Flotilla, had left Cap Saint Jacques ([in] French Indochina) at 2000.^(119, 130)

On the following day, the 31st, Southern Army Staff Officer Watanabe had flown from Kuching to Pontianak via Pemangkat by seaplane. Both units of the Kawaguchi Detachment had begun reconnaissance and repair work, with the 2d unit from the west coast and the 1st unit from Ledo.

Staff Officers Murakami and Watanabe, along with the officers of the Navy, carried out a broad and thorough reconnaissance of the transportation routes, from the air (seaplane) as well as on the ground, and from the 30th onward, every day frequently reported to the Southern Army, the [Navy] Malaya Unit and others by telegram.⁽¹³⁰⁾ The bridges on the main roads had been blown up very thoroughly and it was extremely difficult to repair the other roads so that automobiles could use them for the transport of aviation fuel and ammunition. The main routes to Ledo were (1) the Pemangkat – Sambas – Ledo Route, (2) the Singkawang – Monterado – Bengkayang – Ledo Route, (3) the Mempawah – Monterado – Bengkayang Route, (4) the Mempawah – Sungai Penuh – Tunang – Bengkayang Route, (5) the Pontianak – Sungai Penuh – Tunang – Bengkayang Route, and (6) the Sambas River (by water up to Sanggau [Sanggan]) – Ledo Route. In the end, route (2) was being repaired, and route (6)

was being reconstructed. As for route (2), i.e. the Singkawang – Ledo Route, more than a dozen bridges had been destroyed, and on 2 February, Staff Officer Watanabe reported that it was expected to take fifteen days to repair them, while concerning route (6), i.e. the Sambas River – Sanggau [Sanggan] – Ledo Route, the Kawaguchi Detachment reported on 1 February that “it is expected to take one week to repair [the road] between Sanggau [Sanggan] and Ledo.”^(23, 122, 130)

For reasons that this route was good, or that one was better, the *Fujikawa-maru* and the *Tatsumiya-maru* (both of which had left Cap Saint Jacques in French Indochina on the 30th) were sent around from one destination to another. When the *Fujikawa-maru* arrived in Kuching on 1 February, following the order on the 31st of the [Navy] Malaya Unit to “head for Kuching,” she was on the same afternoon again ordered to “sail to Pemangkat.”^(122, 130) As for the *Tatsumiya-maru*, when she arrived in Pemangkat at 0845 on 2 February following the order of the Malaya Unit to “go to Pemangkat,” her destination was changed to Pontianak. Accordingly, she left Pemangkat at 2333 on the same day for Pontianak, where on 4 February her destination was once again changed to Pemangkat. She left Pontianak at 1200 on the very day (the 4th) and finally arrived in Pemangkat at 1845.^(122, 130) On that day, the warship *Kashii* with the above-mentioned Engineer Company of the 4th Independent Mixed Regiment on board departed from Cap Saint Jacques in French Indochina for Pemangkat. This was also the day the 38th Division’s Convoy was to set out from Cam Ranh Bay.^(122, 130) These were the circumstances when on the same day Staff Officer Watanabe sent the headquarters [of the Southern Army] a telegram in which he reported that “the Kawaguchi Detachment is [fully] engaged in the road repair work, putting everything available into it, allowing the officers and men merely a few hour sleep a day.”⁽²³⁾ While putting its best efforts into repairing the roads, the Kawaguchi Detachment was [also] cooperating in transporting [matériel] by sailing upriver from Pemangkat to Sanggau [Sanggan] with the steamer and motorized sailing boats it had brought from Kuching to Pemangkat, and with all of its large- and small-sized motorized [landing] craft.⁽²³⁾ Although on 3 February some Navy medium-sized attack planes had advanced to Ledo (which was apparently a trial landing; see the previous description), the amount of fuel they had been able to accumulate in Ledo by 4 February was only two hundred drums, as mentioned earlier. It was on the evening of that day (the 4th) that the three staff officers of the Sixteenth Army and [Navy] Staff Officer Wakatsuki went to the Southern Army headquarters to request a two-day postponement of [Operation] L. Staff Officer Wakatsuki was a [Navy] staff officer of the Third Fleet (i.e. the Dutch East Indies Unit) seconded to the Sixteenth Army and not a staff officer of the First Southern Expeditionary Fleet (i.e. the Malaya Unit). In other words, the staff officers of the Sixteenth Army and the Third Fleet sympathized with the First Southern Expeditionary Fleet.

Third Postponement of [Operation] L (Four Days)

Just when the Southern Army had unwillingly ordered a two-day postponement of [Operation] L because of the request of Staff Officer Wakatsuki and his party on 4 February and the telegram of the [Navy] Southern Task Force of the following day, the 5th, a telegram arrived from the Malaya Unit, 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.” Even though the Southern Army Staff assumed that “[the Navy] could

not possibly request another postponement on top of [the two-day postponement],” it inwardly feared that this would be the case.⁽²³⁾

On the afternoon of the following day, the 6th, the Malaya Unit's Chief of Staff Sawada and Senior Staff Officer Tomari visited the [Southern Army] headquarters.⁽²³⁾ When asked about the purpose of their visit, they made a request: “Yesterday on the 5th when [land-based] medium-sized 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, is surrounded by a tall forest, and the trees in an area 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 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.” Showing deep regret, Chief of Staff Sawada said, “I am very sorry to make such a request now at [such a late] moment, but I would like you to somehow understand the situation.” He was so polite that it made the staff officers of the Southern Army feel sorry.⁽²³⁾ After letting Chief of Staff Sawada withdraw, Colonel Ishii, Colonel Tanikawa, Lieutenant Colonel Arao and others of the Southern Army discussed matters with Captain Tomari and 22d Air Flotilla Staff Officer Commander Kōma Masayoshi. Colonel Takashima, senior staff officer of Section 1 of the Sixteenth Army was [also] present. It was a serious discussion, which continued until about 2200. The Southern Army mainly accused the Navy of insufficient preparation.⁽²³⁾ It frankly pointed out: “When you manage to clear only forty [*sic*; above it says “twenty”] meters of forest in two days, and you have 260 meters to go, how can you finish it within a postponement of four days?” “When you have arrangements in which the Navy is to advance to both the Kuantan and the Kahang airfields for Operation L if the Kuching and the Ledo airfields are not fit for use, why have you been neglecting to make [the required] preparations?” “[Don't you remember] that in the Memorandum of the Arrangements between the commander in chief of the First Southern Expeditionary Fleet, the commander of the Sixteenth Army, and the commander of the Third Air Force of January 28, it was agreed that:

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 part 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 [paratroop] raiding unit should use the airfield, [the Navy planes shall use the airfield] only until and including day L – 3 or on day L + 1 and onwards.

[Editor's note: L + 1 is a mistake. The arrangement quoted on p. 265 has L + 7, as does Vol. 34, p. 470.]

Sungai Petani: about 10 land-based attack planes.

Kota Bharu: about 40 land-based attack planes.”

"Having concluded this arrangement, the Navy should in any case have conducted sufficient research on the Kuantan and the Kahang airfields, yet how dare you say now that trees are obstructing their use?" "If you had told us earlier that the trees would be a hindrance, wouldn't we have dispatched engineers or other troops?" "As a matter of fact, when we received your request concerning Ledo, didn't we immediately give orders to dispatch an engineer company of the 4th Independent Mixed Regiment?" Then [the army] proposed: "As a way to deal with the situation, since there is fuel at the [Kahang] airfield, how about having the land-based attack planes take off only with bombs, refuel at the Kahang [airfield] and then head south?" But when the reply was: "We have not inspected the Kahang [airfield] yet," the talks sure enough turned ugly. When Colonel Tanikawa reproached Colonel Takashima, senior staff officer of Section 1 of the Sixteenth Army, the latter retorted, "It's all because Ledo was supposed to be ready for use" [editor's note: the seizure and preparation of Ledo by the Kawaguchi Detachment was under the direct command of the Southern Army, not the Sixteenth Army], and the atmosphere instantly turned from bad to worse to such a degree that Colonel Ishii had to smooth things over.⁽²³⁾ Although in this way no agreement was reached after all, the Southern Army consented to a postponement for only one day ([to be precise,] delayed the departure of the convoy of the 38th Division scheduled for the evening of that day, the 6th, to the evening of the next day, the 7th), while it checked up on the situation at Ledo. Moreover, they agreed that in any case the clearing of the trees [at Kuantan] had to be accelerated as quickly as possible. Fortunately, they found a company of the 20th Independent Engineer Regiment, which was assembling at Kahang and vicinity after it had finished the disembarkation operation at Endau and been assigned to the Third Air Force. It was decided to have about fifty members, mainly consisting of the cadre of this company, transported by [Navy land-based] medium-sized attack planes to Kuantan on the following day the 7th, and have them assist in clearing the trees. Meanwhile, the Navy would arrange to immediately send approximately three tons of dynamite from Saigon to Kuantan. Thus, the meeting broke up at 2200, and immediately after that, the Southern Army sent the following telegram to the Army Department of IGHQ:⁽²³⁾

From: Chief of Staff, Southern Army, sent on 6 February

To: Vice Chief of Staff

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.
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.⁽²³⁾

The telegram that the Southern Army sent on this night to the Third Air Force, concerning its assistance in felling the trees around the Kuantan airfield with its engineers, read as follows:⁽²³⁾

Southern Army Staff Section 4 Telegram No. 817 (sent on 6 February from Chief of Staff)

In order to assist [the Navy] in clearing the forest (of about three hectares with many large trees) surrounding the Kuantan airfield, which the Navy air units have already been working on, we request you to urgently dispatch to Kuantan about fifty personnel, mainly [consisting of] commissioned and noncommissioned officers of the 20th Independent Engineer Regiment (with equipment to cut down trees and explosives as well). The above is [passed down] by order [of the commander in chief]. For the purpose of airlifting the personnel and the equipment, about ten [Navy land-based] medium-sized attack planes shall [be sent and] land at the Kahang airfield on the afternoon of tomorrow the 7th. We request your urgent preparations [for the dispatch].

In order to have the engineer company commander fully recognize the urgency of the situation as well as to survey the capacity of the Kahang airfield, Southern Army Section 4 Senior Staff Officer Colonel Tanikawa left Saigon on the early morning of the following day, the 7th, and headed for Kluang. In Kluang, he went to the Third Air Force headquarters, where he was surprised to find that they had received only the [last] part from "The above is [passed down] by order [of the commander in chief]" onwards of the above-mentioned telegram, which was sent the previous evening. Consequently, not knowing what to do at all, the Third Air Force had made no preparations. Colonel Tanikawa immediately explained the situation and gave instructions as to the preparations to be made. However, in the meantime, the majority of the Navy medium-sized attack planes, which had come from Kuantan to pick up the engineer company at Kahang, just went back as there was no sign that the engineer company would appear. [In the end], about fifteen personnel were transported on the last five aircraft, and the remainder were transported on the following day, the 8th.⁽²³⁾ On the 7th, Colonel Tanikawa wired the chief of staff [of the Southern Army] from Kluang as follows:⁽²³⁾

Third Air Force Staff Telegram No. 62 (Sent on the 7th by the Third Air Force commander)

From Colonel Tanikawa

1. I have dealt with the dispatch of engineers to Kuantan.
2. Kahang is perfectly fit for use as an advance base for [Navy land-based] medium-sized attack planes. Also the Navy officers dispatched [to the airfield] share this judgment.
3. Preparations have been made in advance so that refueling, use of the airfield and other various facilities at Kahang will be provided by the Army. Continuous advancement [of forces] will cause no problems.
4. Based on the above, I find no reason at all to delay the landing [operations] at L any further, and [consider] it appropriate to issue an order to immediately launch [the operation].
5. I will return on the afternoon of tomorrow, the 8th.

In the meantime, on the 6th, the Combined Fleet headquarters on Hashirajima in the Seto Inland Sea had learned that the Malaya Unit (First Southern Expeditionary Fleet) and the Southern Task Force (the Second Fleet) were of different opinions; whereas the former insisted that there was no option but to delay Operation L until around 18 February because of the delays in making the air bases in Kuantan, Kuching and Ledo ready for use, the latter demanded that the operation be executed for the sake of the whole operation, no matter what loss be sustained. The Combined Fleet headquarters had wired them: "After also contacting central command [the Navy Department of IGHQ], we are of the opinion that it would be better not to make so much haste."⁽¹⁰⁸⁾

On the 7th, the Southern Army received an official inquiry from the [Navy] Malaya Unit, which stated: "We would like to postpone Operation L for another four days. However, we would like to start as soon as preparations for the air operations are complete."⁽²³⁾ At that time, the situation of each corps was as follows:

1. The Twenty-fifth Army (the Imperial Guard Division, the 5th and the 18th Divisions) was about to go ashore in Singapore at 2400 on the following day, the 8th. (Note: due to the postponement of [Operation] L and the preparation of the Twenty-fifth Army, the date was postponed on the 6th from the 7th to the 8th.)
2. The [Navy] air unit (the Eleventh Air Fleet) had been carrying out attacks against eastern Java from Balikpapan and Kendari since 3 February.
3. A powerful element of the Sakaguchi Detachment had departed from Balikpapan on 30 January, and was closing in on Banjarmasin (which was occupied on the 10th [of February]).
4. The Makassar invasion unit of the eastern attack unit ([consisting of] the 1st Base Force as the core) had departed from Kendari on 6 February, and was approaching Makassar (the landing was conducted on the 9th).
5. The Eastern Detachment (which would be covered by the [Navy] eastern attack unit after the latter's capture of Makassar) was preparing for the landing at Timor scheduled for 20 February, leaving Ambon on 17 and 18 February.
6. The Kanemura Detachment, which was set to capture Bali, left Lingayen Gulf on 7 February. [Meanwhile,] the 48th Division was scheduled to depart from the Gulf on the 8th.
7. The convoy of the 2d Division and the Shōji Detachment had left Gaoxiong in four echelons on 1, 3, 5 and 6 February, and had begun to arrive in Cam Ranh Bay from the 6th onwards.
8. The 38th Division's scheduled departure date from Cam Ranh Bay had been changed from 31 January to 4 February, then to 6 February, and it was now again being postponed.

The Malaya Unit, [too,] had wired each unit covering the 38th Division at 1022 on 4 February that "Day L is expected to be postponed for two days. [The postponement] will be decided today around noon upon deliberation with the Sixteenth Army commander," which was followed by a telegram at 1530 on the same day (4 February), announcing that "Day L is expected to be postponed for two days," and again at 0800 on 6 February, that "Day L shall be postponed until specifically ordered otherwise."^(130, 133)

As the strength of the allied forces was gradually being increased, and it had been considered advantageous to conduct Operation L before the completion of the capture of Singapore, the Southern Army felt it extremely regrettable to postpone Day L now to 16 February (the departure from Cam Ranh would then be on 10 February). However, it wired back its approval, "trusting the sincerity of the Navy."⁽²⁴⁾ At 1925 on this day (the 7th), the Malaya Unit wired the following order:⁽¹¹⁵⁾

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.

Then on the following day, the 8th, the Southern Army received a telegram from the [Navy] Southern Task Force, requesting the following change of schedule:⁽²³⁾

- L: day $x + 70$
- H: day $x + 81$
- I: no later than day $x + 81$ (to be arranged between the Third Fleet and the Sixteenth Army)

Note: Before the opening of hostilities, the advance [to Java] along the east side of Borneo was believed to be faster than that along the west side of Borneo. After the two British battle-ships were sunk (on 10 December), the advance from the west came to be considered faster. But now, the advance from the east was again thought faster. The previously indicated factors may be considered as the causes for this latest change; however, we [also] need to give special attention to the following circumstances: While the [Navy] Dutch East Indies Unit was in charge of the attack along the east [side of Borneo] all the way to Java, the Malaya Unit was in charge of the attack along the west [side of Borneo] up to Sumatra, and would turn over [the attack on] western Java to the Dutch East Indies Unit. Whereas the main force of the Eleventh Air Fleet had consistently carried out the operations along the eastern route, with some reinforcements from the 2d Carrier Division (the carrier unit which had executed the surprise attack on Hawaii), only the units of the 22d Air Flotilla as the core had carried out the operations along the western route and, what is more, the forward push of its airfields had been limited. [Moreover,] since the end of January, the 22d Air Flotilla had focused on advancing [its units] to Kuching and Ledo, taking into account the coming operation (the Java operation) and the future command disposition (the flotilla was expected to return under the direct command of the Eleventh Air Fleet), and it had paid no heed at all to the airfields in Malaya.

The Southern Army had no other option but to accede to this request as well.⁽²³⁾

The [Navy] Malaya Unit made an earnest effort, which the Southern Army also sincerely supported. On the afternoon of the 9th, the prospects for the air operations were clear. Deciding to shorten the delay by one day, the Malaya Unit issued the following order at 1400 on the 9th, and that evening the units for Operation L departed from Cam Ranh Bay.⁽¹³⁰⁾

Malaya Unit Signal [?] Telegraphic Operation Order No. 18 (1400, 9 February)

1. The date of L is set for 15 February.
2. Each unit shall operate as planned.

As day L was advanced by one day, it must have been possible to likewise advance days H and I as well. Nevertheless, the Southern Task Force, which had already obtained the consent of the Southern Army and also understood the views of the Combined Fleet, that night issued the following order by telegram, in spite of this [possibility].⁽¹¹⁷⁾

Southern Task Force Telegraphic Order No. 96 (2040, 9 February)

The following amendments were made in the target dates for the invasions in the Dutch East Indies operation:

1. Western Java: day $x + 81$
2. Eastern Java: no later than day $x + 81$, depending on the arrangements between the commander in chief of the Third Fleet and the Sixteenth Army commander.

But how did this all affect the connection between [operations against] Singapore and [Operation] L? Colonel Tanikawa wrote in his journal at that time as follows:

9 February: Successfully crossed Johor Strait. The date of L was fixed: the landing was finally set for 15 February, and [the units] will depart tonight.

10 February: The capture of Singapore is making progress hour by hour. From the viewpoint of strategic exquisiteness, the delay of L was really regrettable.

14 February: Not yet reached the city of Singapore, because of persistent resistance in the area. With the landing of Operation L a day ahead, it has become the tensest moment of the southern operation. The [Paratroop] Raiding Group set out at 0900 today, and successfully parachuted down at 1126. When considered together with [Operation] L, it might be said that the delay in the capture of Singapore has rather created a strategic advantage.

On the 14th, the [Paratroop] Raiding Group parachuted down on the oil refineries and the airfield of Palembang. On the following day, the 15th, the advance party of the 38th Division arrived at Palembang. On the same day, the British forces in Singapore raised the flag of surrender.

The Subsequent [Situation of] the Airfields and the Land-based Air Units

In the end, the Kuantan airfield was quickly fixed and used, but it was impossible after all to make use of the Ledo airfield for Operation L, despite the enormous amount of labor and effort that had been put into it.

As of 17 February, when the 38th Division commander came ashore at Palembang following the landing of the advance party (on the 15th), the following effort had been spent on the Ledo airfield,⁽²³⁾ but during that time the airfield was only used by three heavily-shot aircraft, which had made emergency landings on 15 February.⁽¹⁰⁴⁾

Outline of the progress to ready the Ledo airfield:⁽²³⁾

1. The work force committed to the airfield work: a total of 8,091 men since 28 January.
2. The number of days they were deployed: 21 days from 28 January to 17 February.
3. The accumulation of fuel and ammunition (as of 1200, 17 February): 1,058 [drums] of 92-octane gasoline, 1,099 [drums] of 87-octane gasoline, 36 [drums] of mineral oil, 10 No. 25 [250kg] bombs, 680 No. 6 [60kg] bombs, and 30 units of oxygen ([in stock] at the airfield).
276 [drums] of 92-octane gasoline, 128 [drums] of 87-octane gasoline, 120 [drums] of mineral oil, 320 of No. 6 [60kg] bombs, and 144 units of oxygen ([in stock] at Momong).

The land-based air units of the Malaya Unit for Operation L consisted of (1) the Genzan Air Group (thirty-six land-based attack planes), (2) the Mihoro Air Group (thirty-six land-based attack planes), (3) the Yamada Unit (thirty fighter planes and six land-based reconnaissance planes), and (4) the Kanoya Air Group (twenty-seven land-based attack planes), led by the commander of the 22d Air Flotilla [R. Adm. Matsunaga Sadaichi], of which the Flotilla commander, the Genzan Air Group and the Yamada Unit launched operations from the Kuching airfield, the Mihoro Air Group from the Kuantan airfield and the Kanoya Air Group from the Thủ Dầu Một airfield in French Indochina.⁽¹⁰⁴⁾

On 12 February, the advance party of the 38th Division was heading south halfway between Cam Ranh Bay and Palembang. That night, Regimental Commander Oka [of the Kawaguchi Detachment] sent the Southern Army the following telegram from Sanggau [Sanggau]. It described that it would take another week to complete a runway with a length of 1,300 meters, which was necessary for a [Navy] land-based attack plane, and [also] about one week each for the work to [re-]build the bridge(s) over the Ledo River and those to the

south of Pemangkat, as well as the road from Ledo to Singkawang. It was on 6 February that the Engineer Company of the 4th Independent Mixed Regiment had arrived at Pemangkat in the warship *Kashii*.⁽¹²²⁾

1. As of today, the 12th, in addition to the two runways of 1,100 meters long, a taxiway of 30 meters wide and 500 meters long, which connects the runways ([and] which was constructed at the request of the staff of the 22d Air Flotilla) was completed on the airfield. We are extremely determined to extend one of the runways to 1,300 meters, to be completed in a week from tomorrow, the 13th, in order to make the airfield ready for the advance of the Kanoya Air Group. I understand that if this extension work is completed, [this airfield] would be [sufficient] enough to serve as a base for two units of medium-sized land-based attack planes and one Type-1 attack plane unit, [in total] about ninety aircraft.
2. The bridge building materials sent by the [Southern] Army in Saigon, to the amount of three trucks, have arrived in Pemangkat. I have arranged that they will be debarked at Sambas, and distributed in such a way that spikes, etc. will be used by the bridge construction units, and the engineering tools in the extension work of the airfield.⁽²³⁾
3. (The rest, concerning the current situation and the outlook for the repair of the roads and bridges, has been omitted by the author).

The Military Gains of the Kawaguchi Detachment

Despite the tremendous effort made by the Kawaguchi Detachment, the Ledo airfields were never put into use before the end of the Java invasion. The military achievements of the Kawaguchi Detachment during its operation in Dutch Borneo (up to 19 February) were as follows:⁽²³⁾

1. Operations:
 - 27 January: Seizure of Sanggau [Sanggan], the Ledo airfields, Pemangkat, and Sambas.
 - 28 January: Seizure of Singkawang.
 - 29 January: Seizure of Bengkayang and Pontianak.
 - 16 February: Seizure of Sintang.
2. Military gains: (1) 270 abandoned dead bodies; 182 prisoners of war; (2) Seized [weaponry and vehicles]: 4 tanks, 2 armored vehicles, 47 motor trucks, 133 passenger cars, 2 trench mortars, 7 heavy machine guns, 5 light machine guns, 12 (semi-)automatic rifles, 416 rifles, 35 pistols and others.
3. Losses: 19 killed in action; 2 died of wounds; 31 wounded in action.

(3) Air Operations and the Sailing of the Convoys

The Air Campaign of the 3d Air Division to Destroy the Enemy

I have already described the air campaign of the Third Air Force over Sumatra conducted until the 23d [inclusive] of January, and the Army-Navy arrangement on the air operations in [Operation] L (preliminarily arranged on 28 January, and concluded on the 30th), as well as the Third Air Force order ([issued on] 4 February).

As mentioned earlier, on 5 February, Operation L was postponed for two days. However, the Third Air Force decided to launch the air operations [for Operation] L from 6 February onwards in accordance with the plan for [Operation] L that had been passed down in the order of 4 February, and issued the following order on the 6th:⁽⁹⁶⁾

Third Air Force Operation Order A, No. 262

Third Air Force Order

Kluang, 1000, 6 February

1. Day x (note by the author: the date to start [the operation to] capture Singapore, previously [scheduled for] the 7th [of February]) set forth in Third Air Force Operation Order A, No. 257 (note by the author: [issued on] 4 February) and day L have been set respectively on 8 and 12 February. The actions of the Twenty-fifth Army, given in separate volume No. 1: The outline of the cooperation with the Twenty-fifth Army in the operation to capture Singapore will be changed as set forth in the separate sheet.
2. The commanders of all units involved shall arrange their actions in accordance with the above changes. However, the 3d Air Division commander shall spot and destroy enemy aircraft in Palembang and vicinity as soon as possible, regardless of Third Air Force Operation Order A, No. 257.

Separate Sheet

1. The launch of [the operation to] capture [Singapore] is set for 8 February (day x).
2. On the night of day x – 1, while continuing its diversionary action as before, the Imperial Guard Division shall have one element make a surprise attack on the western part of Ubin Island (in the eastern end of Johor Strait) and secure it.
3. On day x at 2300, the 5th and the 18th Division shall have their 1st landing units go ashore all at once.

Within the Third Air Force, the 3d Air Division was charged with the air operation of Operation L, which was to be executed simultaneously with the capture of Singapore. On 6 February, the division started its campaign to destroy the enemy air power in the Palembang sector based on the above two orders. During the period up to the 8th, the campaign was carried out three times, and [the division successfully] destroyed the major part of the allied air forces in this sector. The outline [of the attack] was as follows:⁽⁹⁶⁾

[February]

6th: The aircraft of the 59th, the 64th, the 75th and the 90th Air Groups, sixty-six in total, took off from the Kluang and the Kahang airfields, attacked the Palembang [airfield] with their main force, and the Mentok airfield with an element. After bringing down fifteen [enemy] aircraft and destroying eleven on the ground, all aircraft returned to their bases.

7th: The aircraft of the 59th, the 64th and the 90th Air Groups, thirty-seven in total, attacked the Palembang airfield, destroyed twenty [enemy] aircraft on the ground, and brought down most of the dozen or more which fought back. Two Japanese aircraft did not return to their base.

8th: The aircraft of the 59th, the 64th and the 90th Air Groups, forty-two in total, attacked the Palembang airfield, brought down two [enemy] aircraft and destroyed nine on the ground.

On 9 February, when the major part of the [enemy] air forces in the Palembang area was destroyed as detailed above, the date of L was changed to the 15th. Therefore, on the 10th, the Third Air Force commander passed down the following order:⁽⁹⁶⁾

Third Air Force Operation Order A, No. 268

Third Air Force Order

Kluang, 0930, 10 February

1. Day L was again changed, and set for 15 February. The outline of actions of the 38th Division as well as its scheduled sailing route is as shown in the separate volume. (Omitted by the author)
2. The commanders of all units involved shall arrange their actions in accordance with the date set in the previous item, regardless of Third Air Force Operation Order A, No. 262.
3. The 3d Air Division commander shall keep watch on the Palembang airfield and destroy enemy aircraft at a good opportunity. He shall bring the 64th Air Group under his command from 2000, 11 February onwards.
4. The 7th Air Division commander shall put the 64th Air Group under the command of the 3d Air Division commander from 2000, 11 February onwards.
5. The 1st [Paratroop] Raiding Group commander and the 98th Air Group commander shall use the Kahang and the Kluang airfields for the [Paratroop] Raiding Air Unit and the 98th Air Group respectively as the first takeoff base, regardless of Third Air Force Operation Order A, No. 257 separate volume No. 4.

Accordingly, on the 13th (one day prior to the drop of the paratroopers), the 3d Air Division ([consisting of] the 59th, the 64th, the 75th and the 90th Air Groups) attacked Palembang with thirty-five aircraft, brought down five [enemy] aircraft, and destroyed another four. On the Japanese side three aircraft did not return to their base.⁽⁹⁶⁾

The Air Operations of the [Navy] Malaya Unit

The air unit of the Malaya Unit (the First Southern Expeditionary Fleet) consisted of the 1st Air Unit (a land-based air unit, [consisting of] the 22d Air Flotilla as the core), the 2d Air Unit (the auxiliary seaplane tenders *Kamikawa-maru* and *Sagara-maru*, from 1 February onwards), and the 3d air unit (the aircraft carrier *Ryūjō*).⁽¹¹⁰⁾ In early February, the *Sagara-maru* took up position at the Anambas Islands, while the *Kamikawa-maru* and the *Ryūjō* were in Cam Ranh Bay, and [both] mainly carried out patrolling and guarding [duties] against submarines in the Anambas Islands and the Ledo areas.^(130, 133)

On concluding the already mentioned arrangement for the air operations [in Operation] L, on 31 January, the Malaya Unit had passed down the following order to the commander of the 1st Air Unit (the commander of the 22d Air Flotilla).⁽¹⁰⁴⁾

1. Advance the Genzan Air Group and the Yamada Unit to the Kuching [airfield] on 3 and 5 February respectively, and further advance them to the Ledo [airfield] when it is ready for use.

2. Advance the Mihoro Air Group to the Kuantan [airfield] on 6 February.
3. Swiftly advance the Kanoya Air Group to the Kuantan [airfield], and to the Ledo [airfield], as it is made ready for use.

The aforementioned *Fujikawa-maru* and the *Tatsumiya-maru* had left Cap Saint Jacques on 30 January, with the *Fujikawa-maru* arriving at Kuching on 1 February, and the *Tatsumiya-maru* at Pemangkat, the port finally decided as its destination, on the night of 4 February.⁽¹²²⁾ The Genzan Air Group and the Yamada Unit had advanced to the Kuching [airfield] as ordered, but they could not advance [further] from Kuching, because not much progress had been made in the preparation of the Ledo base.⁽¹⁰⁴⁾

The Mihoro Air Group had [also] advanced to the Kuantan [airfield] on 6 February as ordered. However, the trees surrounding [the airfield] had prevented aircraft with a full load of fuel and ammunition from taking off. [For this reason,] on the same day, First Southern Expeditionary Fleet Chief of Staff Sawada and Captain Tomari had hurriedly visited the Southern Army headquarters to request a four-day postponement of [Operation] L. When the Southern Army had suggested the idea of "How about [the Navy aircraft] using the Kahang [airfield], one of the airfields [mentioned] in the arrangement for the air operation [in Operation] L, as a relay base, and having them fill up [their fuel tanks] there," the 22d Air Flotilla staff officer had answered, "We have not inspected the Kahang [airfield] yet," which had infuriated the Southern Army, as previously described.⁽²³⁾ On the same day, the [Army] Third Air Force had launched its air campaign [in Operation] L to destroy the enemy air power.⁽⁹⁶⁾

Because of the state of affairs at the Ledo, Kuantan and Kahang airfields, the Kanoya Air Group had no opportunity to advance from its base in Thủ Dầu Một in French Indochina.⁽¹⁰⁴⁾

On 8 February, the previously mentioned reinforcements from the 20th Independent Engineer Regiment began their work of blowing up the dense forest surrounding the Kuantan [airfield].⁽¹⁰⁴⁾ Also on this day, the 22d Air Flotilla advanced its headquarters from Saigon to Kuching.⁽¹⁰⁴⁾

On 9 February, it became feasible to put into practice the idea of having aircraft take off light [i.e. without a full load of fuel] from the Kuantan [airfield], rushing to the Kahang [airfield] to fill up [their fuel tanks] and carrying out the attack, as the Southern Army had suggested. Consequently, the date for L was set for the 15th, and the convoy [of the advance party] departed from Cam Ranh Bay on the evening of the 9th. The Kuching unit [i.e. the air unit which used the Kuching airfield, also] began its attack operations [in Operation] L on the same day.

On 10 February, the Kuantan unit (the Mihoro Air Group) advanced to the Kahang [airfield] and started its attack operations on the 11th, taking off from there. However, as it became possible to take off with a full load of fuel from the Kuantan [airfield] from 12 February onwards, the unit conducted the attacks from Kuantan from then on.

[However,] as the Ledo airfields were eventually of no use at all for the whole period of Operation L, and the state of the Kuantan [airfield] was as previously described, the Genzan Air Group and the Yamada Unit ended up operating from Kuching, the Mihoro Air Group from Kuantan (except for the two days when it used Kahang as a relay base), and the Kanoya Air Group from Thủ Dầu Một from beginning to end.⁽¹⁰⁴⁾

Note: Even though it might be [correct to] say that the Kuching airfield was used, due to the difficulties in getting the airfield ready for use, the aircraft had throughout to limit the amount of fuel to half [a tank], when taking off from the airfield.

The attack targets were mainly enemy aircraft in western Java and enemy warships in the waters off Singapore, Sumatra and western Java.⁽¹⁰⁴⁾ An outline of the attacks was as follows:^(103, 104)

[February]

- 1st: Reconnaissance and attack with eleven aircraft; one [enemy] merchant ship sunk.
- 2d: Search and attack with sixteen aircraft.
- 3d: Search and attack with twenty-seven aircraft; three [enemy] merchant ships sunk.
- 4th: Search and attack with sixteen aircraft; one [enemy] merchant ship and one [enemy] small escort warship sunk.
- 5th: Search and attack with fourteen aircraft.
- 6th: The Army launched its air operation [in Operation] L, but the Navy not [yet].
- 7th: Same as above.
- 8th: Search and attack with seven aircraft; one [enemy] merchant ship sunk.
- 9th: Attack mainly on Batavia with twenty-four aircraft; twelve [enemy] aircraft brought down, eight aircraft destroyed on the ground.
- 10th:
- 11th: Attack with forty-three aircraft; one [enemy] light cruiser hit directly and two [enemy] merchant ships destroyed.
- 12th: Attack with approximately eighty to ninety aircraft; eight [enemy] aircraft in the Batavia area brought down, one [enemy] cruiser and one [enemy] auxiliary ship hit directly, and one [enemy] merchant ship heavily damaged.
- 13th: Attack with ninety-five aircraft; one [enemy] merchant ship sunk.

The above was the general situation until the day before the paratroop operation on Palembang.

The Judgment on the Enemy Movements, the Sailing of the Convoy and the Fleet, and a Naval Engagement

On February 9 at noon the Malaya Unit decided and issued the order "to start this evening." The judgment on the enemy movements made at that time was in summary as follows:⁽¹¹⁵⁾

1. The [sea] traffic of allied warships and transport ships between Singapore and Java was most frequent during the period after the capture of Johor Bahru ([on] 31 January) until about the 5th of February [inclusive]. Although it has gradually become less frequent since the 6th, the coming and going of transport ships escorted by light cruisers, destroyers and others still continues. As two warships, supposedly battleships, were spotted at Batavia on the 8th, there is a very high probability of encountering allied surface units in the Bangka area.
2. As the Twenty-fifth Army has landed on Singapore Island this morning, it is likely that we can capture units trying to flee from the island.
3. Counter offensives by the allied air forces are expected to be small.
4. It is highly necessary to be on guard against the allied submarines.
5. It is necessary to be on a strict alert against the underwater mines in the whole Bangka and Palembang area.
6. Whereas strong resistance is not expected [during the operation to] capture Bangka Island, it is expected that the operation to go upriver toward Palembang for dozens of nautical miles will meet with considerable resistance.

The 38th Division's Marching Order and Departure

After its arrival in Cam Ranh Bay on 24 January, the departure date of the 38th Division had been successively changed from 31 January to 4 February, then to the 6th and then again to the 10th, but it [finally received the order] to "depart on the evening of today, the 9th." Accordingly, the division issued the following order:⁽⁶⁹⁾

NUMA [38th Division] Operation Order A, No. 110

38th Division Order

Gin'yō-maru, at Cam Ranh, 1200, 9 February

1. The date for L, set forth in NUMA [38th Division] Operation Order A No. 101, is set for 15 February.
2. The advance party, based on the memorandum of arrangements with the First Southern Expeditionary Fleet and the 3d Destroyer Squadron, shall depart from Cam Ranh Bay at 1900 today, the 9th, and advance in convoy according to the distribution set forth in the separate sheet.
3. The main force of the division, based on the memorandum of arrangements with the First Southern Expeditionary Fleet and the 3d Destroyer Squadron, shall depart from Cam Ranh Bay at 1800 two days later on the day of celebration of the founding of the state, the 11th, and advance in convoy according to the distribution set forth in the separate sheet.
4. This is the time to demonstrate the ability of the division as well as the true form of the Imperial Army. All officers and men must make a great and determined effort.
5. I shall be on board the *Gin'yō-maru*. [I shall] depart from Cam Ranh Bay along with the main force in the evening of 11 February, and advance toward Palembang.

The advance party set off at 1900 on the 9th. The distribution of the convoy was as follows:⁽⁶⁹⁾

1st Section: the *Tajima-maru* (6,995 tons, Lieutenant Colonel Iwabuchi), the *Tacoma-maru* (5,772 tons, Lieutenant Colonel Nagahata), the *Mansei-maru* (7,770 tons, Lieutenant Colonel Satō), the *Oyō-maru* (5,458 tons, Major Miyazawa)

2d Section: the *An'yō-maru* (9,256 tons, Captain Orita), the *Alaska-maru* (7,378 tons, Captain Sumihara), the *Kinugawa-maru* (6,936 tons, Colonel Tanaka), the *Sado-maru* (7,180 tons, air defense ship, Lieutenant Colonel Fujimoto)

The main force of the division set off at 1800 on the 11th. The distribution of the convoy was as follows:⁽⁶⁹⁾

3d Section: the *Alpen-maru* [*Argun-maru*?] (6,661 tons, First Lieutenant Okada), the *Singapore-maru* (5,859 tons, Lieutenant Colonel Yabuta), the *Shinkyō-maru* (5,139 tons, Major Kemmotsu), the *Rakuyō-maru* (9,418 tons, Colonel Kanki), the *Lima-maru* (6,989 tons, Lieutenant Colonel Furushō), the *Gin'yō-maru* (8,613 tons, Lieutenant Colonel Endō), the *Tsushima-maru* (6,754 tons, Major Kashiwabara)

4th Section: the *Meigen-maru* (5,435 tons, First Lieutenant Hirano), the *Buyō-maru* (5,446 tons, Captain Koide), the *Kenzui-maru* (4,156 tons, First Lieutenant Narihira), the *Makassar-maru* (4,026 tons, Captain Kusakabe), the *Shinsei-maru* No. 1 (5,879 tons, Major Ōneda), the *Fusō-maru* (8,196 tons, hospital ship), the *Hirokawa-maru* (6,872 tons, air defense ship, Lieutenant Colonel Okuzaki)

Note: the officers whose names are given within parentheses were the transport commanders.

Departure of the Malaya Unit and its Engagements (See Illustration No. 25)

As we have seen, the outline of the disposition of the forces of the Malaya Unit for Operation L was the main unit ([consisting of] the *Chōkai*, the 7th Cruiser Division, five destroyers of the 3d Destroyer Squadron), the 1st escort unit ([consisting of] the 3d Destroyer Squadron (minus eight destroyers) as the core), the 2d escort unit ([consisting of] the *Yura*, the *Shimushu*, two destroyers of the 3d Destroyer Squadron as the core), the 1st Air Unit (land-based air [unit]), the 2d air unit ([consisting of] the auxiliary seaplane tenders *Kamikawa-maru* and *Sagara-maru*), the 3d air unit ([consisting of] the aircraft carrier *Ryūjō*, one destroyer of 3d Destroyer Squadron), the river-ascending unit [toward] Palembang (the 9th Base Force with the *Hatsutaka* as the core), and others.

On 9 February, the *Sendai* (light cruiser), the flagship of the 3d Destroyer Squadron ([led by] R. Adm. Hashimoto Shintarō), and four destroyers (the *Hatsuyuki*, the *Shirayuki*, the *Fubuki* and the *Asagiri*) departed from Cam Ranh Bay at 1900, escorting the advance party.⁽¹¹⁸⁾

On the following day, the 10th, Commander in Chief Ozawa sallied forth from Cam Ranh Bay with the main unit,⁽¹⁰²⁾ accompanied by the 3d Air Unit. In the main unit were the flagship *Chōkai* (heavy cruiser), the *Kumano*, the *Suzuya*, the *Mikuma* and the *Mogami* (all heavy cruisers) of the 7th Cruiser Division, the flagship of the 5th Submarine Squadron the *Yura* (light cruiser), and the *Ayanami*, the *Isonami* and the *Shirakumo* (all destroyers) of the 3d Destroyer Squadron. The destroyers the *Uranami* and the *Murakumo*, which on the 9th had discontinued their support for the transport to Ledo, were [also] to join [the main unit] near the Anambas Islands on the 12th. On the 8th, Commander in Chief Ozawa had decided to reassign the *Yura* (light cruiser) to the main unit [from the 2d escort unit] and the *Kashii* (training cruiser) of the Anambas base unit to the 2d escort unit instead, considering that there was a strong probability in this operation that [the main unit] would encounter a powerful allied fleet. The destroyer *Shikinami* of the 3d Destroyer Squadron was attached to the 4th Carrier Division (the *Ryūjō*) of the 3d air unit, and accompanied it.⁽¹⁰²⁾

At 1800 on the following day, the 11th, the *Kashii* (training cruiser), the *Shimushu* (coastal defense ship), and the *Yūgiri* and the *Amagiri* (both of which were destroyers of the 3d Destroyer Squadron) departed, escorting the main force of the 38th Division.⁽¹⁰²⁾

The 1st Air Unit (the 22d Air Flotilla) was conducting the [air] campaign from the Kuching, the Kuantan (the Kahang) and the Thủ Dầu Một [airfields], and the 2d Air Unit ([seaplanes of] the auxiliary seaplane tenders) was carrying out patrols with the *Kamikawa-maru* at Cam Ranh Bay and the *Sagara-maru* at the Anambas Islands.^(130, 133)

On the following day, the 12th, the convoy continued to advance southward, while the destroyers with a short cruising distance alternately refueled at the Anambas [base].⁽¹⁰²⁾ Having learned that allied warships were fleeing from Singapore, Commander in Chief Ozawa on that day at 1630 gave orders to catch and destroy them.⁽¹¹⁸⁾ On that day, the *Hatsutaka*, the flagship of the commander of the 9th Base Force, which had been reassigned from the Anambas base unit to the river-ascending unit [towards] Palembang, joined [the main unit] from Anambas and headed southward.⁽¹⁰²⁾

On the next day, the 13th, the main unit crossed the equator at 0600. Acting in concert with the aircraft, the units engaged in the campaign to catch and destroy the warships fleeing from Singapore in the sector east of Lingga Island.^(102, 115, 118) The 3d Destroyer Squadron sank one ship, which seemed to be an auxiliary cruiser, and also one minelayer and one commercial ship, etc., with its flagship the *Sendai*, and others.⁽¹¹⁸⁾ [Meanwhile,] the convoy of the ad-

vance party continued to advance southward under the escort of minesweepers and others.⁽¹¹⁸⁾ On the same day, one allied aircraft came close for scouting and five for an attack, but no loss was sustained on the Japanese side.⁽¹¹⁸⁾

On the following day, the 14th (the day of the first drop of the paratroopers), the 3d Destroyer Squadron headed southward while intensifying its direct escort. The squadron as well as the other units still successfully caught and destroyed the allied ships fleeing [from Singapore].⁽¹⁰²⁾ At 0830 the convoy of the advance party came under attack from three allied aircraft, but no loss was sustained. Japanese fighter planes provided air cover between about 1000 and 1545, during which period six allied aircraft came for an attack at approximately 1230, another four at approximately 1450, but they caused no loss on the Japanese side. At 2100 the convoy of the advance party began its entry into the Mentok anchorage.⁽¹¹⁸⁾

Between 0010 and 0100 on the next day, the 15th, the ships entered the Mentok anchorage and moved to prepare for the landing operation at Mentok and the river-ascending operation toward Palembang.⁽¹¹⁸⁾ However, at 0938, a reconnaissance seaplane of the *Chōkai* transmitted that "three enemy cruisers and five destroyers are heading northward through the Gaspar Strait," and then at 0950, "the enemy seems to have six destroyers as direct escort accompanying one battleship." At that time, the convoy of the main force of the 38th Division was sailing [the waters] northeast of Lingga Island, heading southward.⁽¹¹⁸⁾ At 1240, Commander in Chief Ozawa judged that "the main force of the enemy [must] consist of one battleship, three cruisers and eight destroyers."⁽¹⁰⁴⁾ At that point, the 1st Air Unit (the 22d Air Flotilla) was still based in Kuantan, Kuching and Thủ Dầu Một. As for the 2d Air Unit, the *Sagara-maru* was still at its base in Anambas Island, while the *Kamikawa-maru*, which had departed from Cam Ranh Bay on the 14th, was steaming southward.^(104, 130, 133) Commander in Chief Ozawa made up his mind to first direct a concentrated air attack, while having the convoy temporarily evacuate from the area, and then attack the allied fleet with all the warships he could employ. At 1035, he ordered the 1st Air Unit to prepare for an attack with the full force of its land-based attack planes. Then he successively gave the following orders: at 1045, he ordered: "(1) The main unit shall advance to the southeastern waters to destroy the enemy fleet; (2) the 1st and the 3d Air Units shall repeatedly attack the enemy with full force; and (3) the 2d Air Unit shall get close to the enemy fleet for scouting."⁽¹¹⁸⁾ Then at 1125: "The 2d escort unit ([and] the convoy of the main force of the 38th Division) shall temporarily evacuate to the north."⁽¹¹⁸⁾ Further at 1330: "The main unit shall try to engage the main force of the enemy in a decisive battle, after the attacks by the 1st and the 3d air units on the latter." And at 1330: "[1] The *Sendai*, the *Yura*, the 11th Destroyer Division (note by the author: the *Hatsuyuki*, the *Shirayuki* and the *Fubuki*) and the *Asagiri* shall join the main unit; (2) the main unit shall sail to the waters southeast of Cape Jang; (3) the remaining element of the 1st escort unit (note by the author: [the element and] the convoy of the advance party of the 38th Division) shall enter into the anchorage in the mouth of the Musi River."⁽¹¹⁸⁾ However, as the allied fleet reversed its course at 1417, the 2d escort unit (and the convoy of the main force of the 38th Division) [also] turned around at 1700, and headed for the mouth of the Musi River.⁽¹¹⁸⁾ At 1700 [the commander in chief] ordered the 1st escort unit that "the commander of the 1st escort unit shall return to his original mission when convenient." At 1710, Commander in Chief Ozawa reported to the Combined Fleet and the Southern Task Force: "Against one Malaya-type battleship, seven cruisers and five destroyers heading northward, I had the air units start their attack around 1330 and onwards, intending to conduct a decisive battle after

having the air units destroy the enemy main force. But around 1400 the allied fleet reversed its course."⁽¹¹⁸⁾ The engagement had ended with no enemy ships sunk by the air attacks and no [direct] encounters between the surface units.

The Sailing of the Advance Party

The conditions during the passage of the *An'yō-maru*, which was the head of the left file of the advance party ([sailing in] double file, with four ships each) were as follows:⁽⁶⁹⁾

[February]

9th: Departed from Cam Ranh at 1900. Everything all right.

10th: Clear. Spotted something that looked like an allied submarine on the port bow.

11th: Clear. Everything all right.

12th: Spotted something that looked like an allied submarine on the port bow at 0730. At 0915, strict alert against submarines. At 1000, (an) escort ship opens fire on the port bow.

13th: Clear. Everything all right.

14th: Clear. At 0845, one allied aircraft

approached, but was repelled. Next, some more approached, but were repelled. Then, strict alert against floating mines. At 1230, (an) escort ship destroyed mines ahead. At 1245, five allied aircraft approached, were intercepted by two Japanese aircraft, which brought down two of the allied aircraft at 1250. At 1330, three allied aircraft approached, [but] were repelled. At 1920, twelve allied aircraft approached, [but] were repelled. At 2330, entered the Mentok anchorage, dropped anchor at 2435, started transferring to landing craft at 2445, which was completed at 0200.

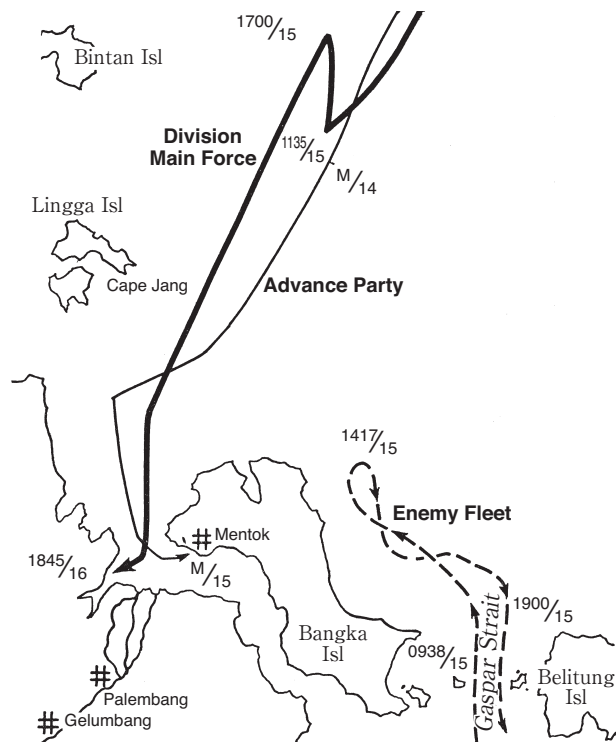


Illustration No. 25—Routes of Sailing and Entry into Anchorage of Operation L

Advance party: safely entered anchorage.

Main force of the division: entered anchorage after once having reversed its course at the approach of the enemy fleet coming for an attack.

(4) The Paratroop Drop

[Paratroop] Raiding Group Order

Having on 4 February received the aforementioned Third Air Force Order, Colonel Kume, the commander of the 1st [Paratroop] Raiding Group, drew up an attack plan as well as an outline of the raid, and on the 11th he passed down the following order:⁽⁹⁶⁾

1st [Paratroop] Raiding Group Operation Order A, No. 32

1st [Paratroop] Raiding Group Order

11 February

1. Details concerning the enemy movements and the situation of our own troops will be provided separately.
2. Based on the attack plan in the separate volume, at 1130 on day L – 1 as the set time and date, the 1st [Paratroop] Raiding Group shall execute a raid against the airfield and the oil refineries of Palembang and their vicinity, seize and secure them, while facilitating the operations of the Third Air Force and the 38th Division as well. The 12th Transport Squadron shall temporarily be put under my command until the completion of Raiding Operation L. The 3d Air Division and the 81st and the 98th Air Groups shall provide cooperation when the [paradrop] raid is carried out, of which the 98th Air Group shall follow my command with respect to the details of the raiding operation. The paratroop as well as the [crash-] landing units shall come under the command of the Sixteenth Army commander when the main force of the 38th Division arrives in Palembang. The remaining units under the command of the group shall return to their original command on completion of Operation L without separate orders.
3. The airfield raiding unit shall act as follows:
 - (1) The main force shall parachute down in a sector southeast of the airfield and one element in a sector west of the airfield, attack and seize the airfield. While having the necessary forces secure the airfield, the main force shall attack and seize [the city of] Palembang. Particular attention must be paid to keeping an eye on the main road to Jambi. After the drop and until the troops have collected and readied their equipment, [air] cover by means of ground attacks by [our] fighter planes shall be provided. In the attack on the airfield, it is necessary to stay in close contact with aircraft that performs an emergency or crash-landing.
 - (2) Upon seizing the airfield, [the unit] shall start to work on repairing the airfield, so that it will first of all be fit for use by fighter plane units, and secondly by large aircraft.
 - (3) Once Palembang is seized, [the unit] shall make efforts to get hold of facilities related to the oil refineries, and to seize as many means of transport as possible for the sake of the main force of the 38th Division.
 - (4) After the drop, [the unit] shall take the oil refineries raiding unit under its command.
 - (5) The advance party of the 38th Division, consisting of one and a half infantry battalions as the core and led by Colonel Tanaka, is scheduled to sail upriver to Palembang on day L.
4. The oil refineries raiding unit shall parachute down in the vicinity of the location, and first seize key parts of the refineries by means of a sudden attack. It shall try to frustrate the enemy's plan to destroy [the facilities] and secure the premises upon seizing them. [The unit] shall need to be particularly on guard against enemy maneuvers conducted from the west or from upriver. After the drop, the unit shall return under the command of the regimental commander, and therefore shall swiftly establish radio contact.
5. The 2d [Paratroop] Raiding Regiment commander shall secure the targets to be seized until the arrival of the main force of the 38th Division (scheduled for day L + 2).
6. The [Paratroop] Raiding Air Unit shall enplane the paratroop units, and raid Palembang and vicinity at 1130 on day L – 1 as the set time and date.

7. The cooperating heavy bomber group shall take on board important arms and matériel, and fly ahead to Palembang and vicinity while providing cover against antiaircraft fire for the [Paratroop] Raiding Air Unit. The outline of cooperation to be provided by the 81st, the 64th, the 59th and the 90th Air Groups shall be arranged separately.
8. The outline of the paratroop raid conducted by the [Paratroop] Raiding Air Unit and the cooperating air group of heavy bombers shall be given in separate order(s).
9. The ground units of the second raiding unit shall be in Sungai Petani and make preparations so that the [2d paratroop] raid can be executed on day L, which shall be separately ordered.
10. As for quartering, provisions and medical supplies after the drop, you must depend on what you can get from the enemy, [nevertheless] you must be fully determined to carry on. [Only] indispensable matériel may be supplied by air transport.
11. I shall be with the 2d [Paratroop] Raiding Regiment.

Separate volume: Palembang [Paratroop] Attack [Operation] Plan

4 February 1942, 1st [Paratroop] Raiding Group Headquarters

1. Mission

On day L – 1 (9 February), the first [paratroop] raid shall be executed. The paratroop shall be conducted at 1130 of the same day the main force shall make a sudden attack on the Palembang airfield, seize and secure it, after which [the force] shall attack and seize [the city of] Palembang. Simultaneously, an element shall parachute down in the vicinity of the oil refineries, make a sudden attack [on the facilities], seize and secure them.

On day L, a second [paratroop] raid shall be executed to reinforce our fighting power. By acting in close connection with the cooperating air units, we expect to carry out an integrated air and ground [attack] and maintain perfect security [to keep the enemy unaware].

2. Outline

(1) The cooperation in the operations and the raiding operation schedule of the air units (except that of the air groups that drop equipment) are as shown in Attachment 1.

(2) Deployment to the launching bases:

By the evening of day L – 2 (8 February), the airfield raiding unit and the cooperating air units shall be deployed to the Kahang [airfield], and the oil refineries raiding unit and its cooperating air units to the Kluang [airfield]. [Both] shall complete the preparations for the raid.

(3) Outline of the flight

(a) The departure from the launching bases shall be set at such a time that the paratroop can be executed at 1130 on day L – 1.

(b) The [Paratroop] Raiding Group commander shall decide the details of the flight formation, after consulting the commanders of the 2d [Paratroop] Raiding Regiment, the [Paratroop] Raiding Air Unit, and the 98th Air Group.

(c) If during the flight and before the execution of the drop it becomes by any means inevitable to change decisions due to the situation in the air, the [Paratroop] Raiding Group commander shall make that decision.

(4) Execution of the paratroop operation

(a) The [Paratroop] Raiding Group commander shall decide upon the direction of approach, the formation, the altitude of the paratroop and the mid-air assembling, after consulting the commanders of the [Paratroop] Raiding Air Unit, the 2d [Paratroop] Raiding Regiment and the 98th Air Group.

(b) Although the air units will signal the moment to conduct the paratroop, the paratroop units shall decide on the execution of the paratroop.

- (c) Even if the direction of the first approach or other factors should prevent the drops, the flight shall be resumed for the next attempt as long as circumstances permit.
- (5) Launching of the attack
 - (a) The paratroop unit [to be dropped near] the airfield shall have its main force parachute down on the sector east of the airfield, and one element on the sector west of the airfield. [The unit] shall carry out a sudden attack on the airfield and seize it, and while securing it with the necessary forces, have its main force attack and seize [the city of] Palembang. [Meanwhile, the unit] shall stay in close contact with aircraft that perform a forced landing. In particular it is necessary to keep an eye on the main road to Jambi. Once Palembang is seized, it shall try to seize as many means of transport as possible, and simultaneously it shall repair the airfield so that it will first of all be fit for use by fighter plane units, and secondly by large aircraft. The advance party of the 38th Division, consisting of one and a half infantry battalions as the core and led by Colonel Tanaka, is scheduled to sail upriver to Palembang on day L.
 - (b) The paratroop unit [to be dropped near] the oil refineries shall, [after] parachuting down in the vicinity of the location, first seize the key parts of the oil refineries by means of a sudden attack, try as much as possible to frustrate the enemy's plan to destroy [the facilities], and secure the premises upon seizing them.
 - (c) The two [paratroop] raiding units shall try to maintain contact with each other. After the drop, the oil refineries raiding unit shall come under the command of the regimental commander.
 - (d) Both units shall secure the targets to be seized until the arrival of the main force of the division. They shall be put under the command of the Sixteenth Army commander upon arrival of the main force of the 38th Division. The arrival of the main force of the 38th Division in Palembang is scheduled for day L + 2.
- (6) Actions of the air units after the execution of the paradrop

[They shall] assemble and return to their bases as soon as possible; the 98th Air Group shall [directly] head back to its base, and the [Paratroop] Raiding Air Units shall head back to their base after refueling at the Kluang or Kahang airfields.
- (7) Execution of the second [paradrop] raiding [operation]
 - (a) The second [paradrop] raiding operation shall be executed at 1500 on day L. The forces to parachute down shall be one hundred men led by a company commander. [The unit] shall depart from the Sungai Petani [airfield] and refuel at the Kluang or the Kahang airfield, after which it shall carry out the paradrop. It shall have the main force [of the unit] parachute down on the airfield and the sector along the Palembang Road, and about one platoon on the oil refineries and their vicinity. The units on the ground shall mark the drop zones.
 - (b) If the 12th Transport Squadron is available for employment, [only] the preparation for this [paradrop] operation shall be conducted, and the launching [of the operation] shall be ordered separately.
- 3. The disposition of the forces (the number of men given in parentheses applies in the event the 12th Transport Squadron is employed)
 - Ground units of the first raiding unit
 - Airfield raiding unit:
 - Commanding officer: 2d [Paratroop] Raiding Regiment Commander Maj. Kōmura Takeo
 - [Consisting of] 1 [paratroop] infantry company (minus 1 platoon and 1 element), 1 [paratroop] engineer company (minus 1 platoon and 1 element), 180 men in total
 - Oil refineries raiding unit:
 - Commanding officer: First Lieutenant Hirose

- [Consisting of] 1 [paratroop] infantry company (minus 1 platoon and 1 element), a small number of specialists, 1 element of a signal unit, 70 men in total
- Ground units of the second raiding unit
- Commanding officer: First Lieutenant Morisawa
- [Consisting of] 1 [paratroop] infantry company (minus 1 element), 100 men in total
- [Paratroop] Raiding Air Unit
- Commanding officer: [Paratroop] Raiding Air Unit Commander Maj. Niihara Sueto
- [Consisting of] the [Paratroop] Raiding Air Unit
- 98th Air Group (unit under command)
- Commanding officer: 98th Air Group Commander Lt. Col. Ōsaka Junji
- [Consisting of] the 98th Air Group
4. Signal communications
The rules for signal communications regarding the [paradrop] operation are as shown in separate volume. (Omitted by the author.)
 5. Supplies for the paratroop units
Supplies of weapons, ammunition and other matériel necessary after the drop shall be provided by air transport upon request.

Attachment 1

Rough overview of the scheduled actions of cooperating air units in the Palembang [paradrop] raiding operation			
Date	Outline of forces	Operational objectives (tasks)	Outline of actions
Day L – 4 through Day L – 2	Fighter planes of the 3d Air Division (including units brought under the command of the division)	To destroy enemy aircraft on the Palembang airfield.	Attacks shall be made at a good opportunity. The launching bases will be the Kluang and Kahang airfields.
	The necessary forces of the 12th Air Division	To take command of the air over the Singapore sector; to watch on the Pekanbaru airfield; and to destroy enemy aircraft on the airfields, if required.	Attacks shall be made at a good opportunity. The launching base will be Batu Pahat.
Day L – 2	The first operation unit of the [Paratroop] Raiding Group, the 98th, the 59th, the 64th Air Group Three aircraft of the 81st Air Group One air group of light bombers of the 3d Air Division	For the first [paradrop] raid, each echelon will assemble by evening at the Kluang or the Kahang [airfield], to prepare for departing on day L – 1.	1. The first raiding unit of the [Paratroop] Raiding Group will depart from Sungai Petani and advance to the Kluang and the Kahang [airfield]. 2. The 98th Air Group shall depart from the Ketil [airfield], assemble two squadrons at the Kahang [airfield], and another at the Kluang [airfield].

Day L – 1 (9 Feb.)	First raiding unit –Airfield raiding unit: 180 men (260 men) of the 2d [Paratroop] Raiding Regiment [transported by] about two squadrons of the [Paratroop] Raiding Air Unit (20 aircraft). About two squadrons of the 98th Air Group The 64th Air Group One aircraft of the 81st Air Group (accompanying). –Oil refineries raiding unit: 70 men (130 men) of the 2d [Paratroop] Raiding Regiment [transported by] about one squadron of the [Paratroop] Raiding Air Unit (7 aircraft). One squadron of the 98th Air Group The 59th Air Group One aircraft of the 81st Air Group (accompanying). Separately: Another aircraft of the 81st Air Group (to go in advance)	1. Airfield raiding Unit: To execute the [paradrop] raid at the Palembang airfield and its vicinity, secure the airfield, and quickly make it ready for use by Type-97 fighter planes; after that attack [the city of] Palembang. 2. Oil refineries raiding unit: To execute the [paradrop] raid at the oil refineries in Palembang and their vicinity, seize and secure these refineries before destruction by the enemy. 3. The 98th Air Group shall transport the weaponry and matériel respectively for each transport squadron of both raiding units, and [also] provide cover against anti-aircraft fire at the rear of the transport squadrons. 4. The air groups of fighter planes shall provide the direct cover for each, and also attack the airfield facilities while the Paratrooper units are [collecting and] putting on their equipment ([for] 5 to 10 minutes). 5. The command reconnaissance units shall conduct reconnaissance just before and during the time of operation, and provide guidance.	1. Execution of the [paradrop] raid shall be at 1130. 2. The airfield raiding unit will depart from the Kahang, and the oil refineries raiding unit from the Kluang base. 3. [All units] shall return to their advance base(s). However, units that have sufficient flight range shall directly return to their original base. 4. The transport aircraft are planned based on the assumption that the 12th Transport Squadron will not be employed.
	One element of the light bomber unit(s) of the 3d Air Division	Attacks against the barracks in the city of Palembang.	1. [The operation] shall be conducted right before the execution of the first [paradrop] raid. [The element] shall operate along with one of the raiding units as long as it can. 2. [It] shall depart from the Kluang base.
	One element of the fighter plane unit(s) of the 3d Air Division (including units brought under the control of the division)	Air cover for the convoy of the 38th Division.	After returning from [the task] to cover the first [paradrop] raid, it shall swiftly go to the air above the convoy, to provide cover from roughly 1700 onwards.

Day L	Second raiding unit 100 men of the 2d [Paratroop] Raiding Regiment [transported by] about one squadron of the [Paratroop] Raiding Air Unit. About one squadron of the 98th Air Group, half of the fighter plane units of the 3d Air Division (including those brought under the control of the division) One aircraft of the 81st Air Group	1. To execute the [paradrop] raid at the airfield and oil refineries of Palembang and their vicinities, to reinforce the first raiding unit. 2. The tasks for the air units to cooperate [in the above operation] shall be the same as on the previous day.	1. The Kluang airfield shall be used as the launching base. 2. Execution of the [paradrop] raid is scheduled at 1500. 3. If the 12th Transport Squadron is available for use, [only] the preparation for this [paradrop] operation shall be conducted, and the launching [of the operation] shall be given by separate order.
	Elements of the 3d and the 7th Air Division	Support the ground combat in Palembang and its vicinity, if required.	
	An Element of the 12th Air Division	Advance to the Palembang airfield as the airfield is [temporarily] made ready, and prepare to undertake [the tasks of] the air defense of Palembang and its vicinity.	Batu Pahat will be used as the launching base.
Day L – 1 Day L	Command Reconnaissance Unit of the 3d Air Division	To conduct surveillance of the battle site at appropriate moments after the drop of the [paratroop] raiding group	
Comments	The advancement of forces from day L onwards shall be announced by separate order(s).		

The Collaboration of the Different Air Units

At noon on 9 February, as we have seen, it was finally decided to “set day L for 15 February.” Having learned this on the night of the 9th, Third Air Force Commander Lieutenant General Sugawara, as previously told, issued at 0930 on the following day, the 10th, the order regarding the execution of Operation L by which he reassigned the 64th Air Group to the 3d Air Division from the 11th onwards. Meanwhile, the Twenty-fifth Army, which had landed on Singapore Island on the night of the 8th, was in the middle of a fierce battle, while the advance party of the 38th Division had departed from Cam Ranh Bay on the 9th, and its main force on the 11th. It is an old rule in war that when the enemy is having a hard time, we are as well. When the allied forces were desperately putting up resistance in Singapore, the Twenty-fifth Army was [also] having a hard time sustaining its attack. And then right in the middle of all this, Operation L was about to be executed. As complaints were heard from the Twenty-fifth Army, the Southern Army ([to be precise] the Third Air Force) for its part [knew it needed to] rack its brains to determine the distribution of forces. For this very reason, and prior to the execution of Operation L, Commander in Chief Terauchi had specifically dispatched Chief of Operations Arao to the Twenty-fifth Army.⁽²⁸⁾ In the end, the following distribution of [air] forces between Operation L and the Singapore operation was made.^(96, 103, 104)

Navy (about 180 aircraft)

Shall operate on and to the east of the line connecting Palembang and Mentok.

1st Air Unit (22d Air Flotilla)

[Shall operate from the airfields in] Kuantan (Kahang), Kuching and Thủ Dầu Một in French Indochina (as explained previously).

2d Air Unit (the *Kamikawa-maru*, and the *Sagara-maru*)

[Shall operate from] the Anambas Islands and Cam Ranh (as explained previously).

3d Air Unit (the *Ryūjō*)

Shall basically accompany the convoy(s).

Army (Third Air Force)

Units under the direct command of the Third Air Force

81st Air Group (command reconnaissance): shall cooperate in Operation L with one element (reconnoitering).

98th Air Group (heavy bombers): shall accompany the [Paratroop] Raiding Group and drop equipment.

1st [Paratroop] Raiding Group

Group headquarters, the 2d [Paratroop] Raiding Regiment and the [Paratroop] Raiding Air Unit shall participate in Operation L. (About three companies shall descend on day 1, and about one company on day 2.)

7th Air Division (a bomber division, consisting of the 12th and the 60th Air Groups and the 51st Independent Squadron): shall cooperate in the capture of Singapore.**12th Air Division** (a fighter plane division, consisting of the 1st and the 11th Air Groups and the 47th Independent Squadron): shall cooperate in the capture of Singapore. However, one squadron of the 11th Air Group shall escort the 1st [Paratroop] Raiding Group's advance from Sungai Petani to Kluang, and Kahang.**3d Air Division**: shall cooperate in Operation L with its main force, and in the capture of Singapore with one element.

So, the question arises how 3d Air Division Commander Major General Endō allocated his forces between Palembang and Singapore. Major General Endō allocated his forces in the following way (from the 11th onwards):⁽⁹⁶⁾

15th Independent Air Unit (headquarters and one reconnaissance squadron): shall mainly cooperate in Operation L from Kluang.

59th Air Group (fighter planes): shall participate in Operation L with its main force (two squadrons) from Kluang.

64th Air Group (fighter planes): shall participate in Operation L with its full force from Kahang.

75th Air Group (light bombers): [shall engage in] the Singapore operation.

90th Air Group (light bombers): shall participate in Operation L from Kluang.

27th Air Group (light bombers): [shall engage in] the Singapore operation.

Third Air Division Commander Endō cooperated in the fierce battles in Singapore to such an extent that the Twenty-fifth Army, which was fighting a hard battle, was deeply grateful.⁽⁹⁸⁾ In fact, as previously described, after having conducted an air campaign for [Operation] L from the 6th through the 8th of February, Major General Endō carried out air strikes for [Operation] L for only one day on the 13th, one day prior to the drop of paratroopers.



3d Air Division
Commander, Maj. Gen.
Endō Saburō

On the 1st day of the drop of the 1st [Paratroop] Raiding Group, the number of aircraft which took off with paratroopers or equipment on board was sixty-one [in total] ([consisting of] twenty-five transport aircraft of the [Paratroop] Raiding Air Unit, nine MC aircraft of the transport squadron, and twenty-seven heavy bombers of the 98th Air Group). They were supported by the aforementioned 3d Air Division's forces for Operation L, which made a total of more than one hundred aircraft when they took off.^(39, 96)

The 1st [Paratroop] Raiding Group, in accordance with the aforementioned Third Air Force order of the 10th of January [editor's note: probably the order of 10 February is meant (p. 309)], concluded the "Outline of raiding [operations] of the [Paratroop] Raiding Air Unit and cooperating air groups," and at 1700 on the 11th passed it down as a written instruction at Sungai Petani.⁽⁹⁶⁾ In summary the contents were as follows:⁽⁹⁶⁾

1. The [Paratroop] Raiding Air Unit shall advance from Sungai Petani to Kahang by 1900 of day L – 2. The 98th Air Group shall advance to Kluang.
2. Takeoff shall start at 0830 on day L – 1. At 0900, the [Paratroop] Raiding Air Unit and the 64th Air Group shall depart from Kahang and join the 58th [editor's note: misprint for 59th] and the 98th Air Groups in the skies over Kluang. At 0920, they shall put the formation in order over Batu Pahat, and fly ahead at an altitude of 3,000 meters.
3. The aircraft carrying paratroopers and those carrying their equipment (the [Paratroop] Raiding Air Unit and the 98th Air Group) shall fly in [the following] formations, with the number of aircraft [in each formation] from the front as nine – nine – nine – seven – nine – nine – nine (sixty-one aircraft in total).
4. Three plans shall be prepared, with an approach from the mouth of the Musi River and along [the river] as plan No. 1.
5. The drop will be set at 1130, and shall be executed as follows:
 [On a zone] between the airfield and the city of Palembang: the aircraft with the group commander on board shall make a belly landing.
 [On a zone] 1,200 meters southeast of the airfield: eighteen aircraft carrying paratroopers and fifteen aircraft carrying equipment.
 [On a zone] 200 meters southwest of the airfield: six aircraft carrying paratroopers and three aircraft carrying equipment.
 [On a zone] 700 meters south of the oil refineries: three aircraft carrying paratroopers and three aircraft carrying equipment.
 [On a zone] 500 meters southwest of the oil refineries: six aircraft carrying paratroopers and six aircraft carrying equipment.
6. The fighter plane unit (the 59th and the 64th Air Group) shall provide direct escort during the flight and while [the paratroop units] are descending and collecting their equipment. After that, one element shall continue providing direct escort for the units in the air.
7. The light bomber unit shall make bombing raids against ground fire from the airfield, the barracks and other [targets].
8. On day L – 1 the command reconnaissance unit (the 81st Air Group) shall conduct reconnaissance prior to the drop with one aircraft, and with another two aircraft provide guidance and reconnoiter the situation after the drop.

Takeoff, Drop and Occupation

The Units to be Dropped and their Strength

In the end, it was decided to employ the 2d [Paratroop] Raiding Regiment for the drop. The final deployment was set as follows:⁽⁹⁶⁾

First unit to be dropped and its strength ([execution] on the 14th)

Aircraft to make a belly landing (one aircraft): [Paratroop] Raiding Group Commander Kume, Sixteenth Army Staff Officer Itoda, Captain Ueda (signal communications), Group Adjutant Inagaki, interpreter Saitō, press corps member Araki, and one antitank gun.

Southeast side of the airfield: seventeen men of the 2d [Paratroop] Raiding Regiment headquarters (i.e. Regimental Commander Kōmura and his men), thirty men of the signal squad, ninety-seven men of the 4th Company (Company Commander First Lieutenant Mitani and his men), thirty-six men of the 3d Platoon of the 2d Company, a total of 180 men.

Southwest side of the airfield: sixty men of the 2d Company (Company Commander First Lieutenant Hirose and his men).

South side of the east oil refinery: Second Lieutenant Hasebe and his men, thirty-nine men [in total].

West side of the west oil refinery: sixty men of the 1st Company (Company Commander First Lieutenant Nakao and his men).

Second unit to be dropped and its strength ([execution] on the 15th): ninety men of the 3d Company (Company Commander First Lieutenant Morisawa and his men).



*Instructions Right Before the Launch of the Palembang Paratroop Operation
(at the Kluang Airfield)*

Takeoff

On the 13th at 1500, the first raiding unit completed its deployment to the Kahang and the Kluang airfields, and it stood ready for action in the following way. The second raiding unit stood by at Sungai Petani.

Kahang airfield: [Paratroop] Raiding Group headquarters, 330 men of the 2d [Paratroop] Raiding Regiment, two transport squadrons (thirty-four Lockheed-type aircraft), the 64th Air Group (three squadrons of Type-1 fighter planes).

Kluang airfield: 98th Air Group (aircraft to carry equipment; two squadrons of Model-II aircraft), the 90th Air Group (one squadron of light bombers), the 59th Air Group (two squadrons of fighter planes), the 15th Independent Air Unit (one squadron of reconnaissance planes), the 81st Air Group (three command reconnaissance planes).

At 1700, Third Air Force Commander Sugawara gave instructions, which were attended by the Southern Army Vice Chief of Staff Sakaguchi Yoshitarō and others. On that day, the 3d Air Division had attacked Palembang with its main force for the first time in five days, while cooperating with the Twenty-fifth Army in its attack on Singapore, as mentioned previously.

On the following day, the 14th in Malaya, it was clear or lightly clouded with a slight wind, a cloud ceiling of 1,000 meters, and visibility of 10 to 20 kilometers. The first raiding unit left the Kluang and the Kahang airfields at 0830, assembled above Batu Pahat, and flew straight toward the Musi River at an altitude of 3,000 meters, in the order of the first and the second echelons under the direct escort of the fighter plane unit. At that time, the advance party of the 38th Division, which had left Cam Ranh Bay in the evening of the 9th, was heading southward, aiming to reach the Mentok anchorage that night. The main force of the division, which had left [the bay] on the 11th, followed in its wake.^(96, 118)

One element of the reconnaissance unit had flown ahead of the raiding unit, and reconnoitered the weather, the atmospheric conditions and the enemy movements in Palembang and the vicinity. The command reconnaissance [element], which had flown ahead, reported the presence of ten large and thirty small aircraft on the Palembang airfield. In the Sumatra area, there were signs that the weather was gradually worsening; Palembang was covered with thick cloud with a ceiling of 200 meters. Further, due to the fires at Singapore, a sooty smoke was hanging over the mouth of the Musi River, and rendered the visibility extremely poor. These adverse weather conditions made the flight of the raiding unit difficult, but they [also] helped the unit to carry out a surprise attack.⁽⁹⁶⁾

The Drop (*See Illustration No. 26*)

Around 1120, the unit reached the sky over the mouth of the Musi River, where it divided [into echelons] to head toward their own drop zones; the first echelon approached the airspace above the airfield and the second echelon the airspace above the oil refineries. The allied forces opened fire simultaneously with antiaircraft guns, antiaircraft machine guns and other [arms]. However, the [paratroop] raiding units defied the fire and started parachuting down. The airfield raiding unit completed its drop at 1126, and the oil refineries raiding unit at 1130.⁽⁹⁶⁾

Without missing an opportunity, the 98th Air Group dropped weapons, ammunition and other equipment, while strafing [the sources of] the antiaircraft fire. Meanwhile, the 90th Air

Group (light bombers) bombed the [enemy] ground units, suppressed them, and so helped the paratroopers to collect their weapons and ammunition and, after that, fight the enemy. In this fight, one aircraft of the 90th Air Group crashed itself [editor's note: according to Vol. 34, p. 500, it was a plane of the 98th Air Group]. When providing cover for the paratroop units about 800 meters above the airfield, the 64th Air Group spotted five allied fighter planes which came to attack the air group of heavy bombers dropping equipment. It brought down one [allied] aircraft and drove back the others. Then, at 1205, when providing cover at an altitude of about 2,000 meters, the group spotted about ten allied fighter planes approaching from the direction of Palembang, intercepted them, brought down one, and drove back the others. It was 1217. The 59th Air Group [at first] had been charged with the cover for the paratroop unit above the refineries, but seeing no allied aircraft it [changed the plan and] strafed the anti-aircraft positions in the oil refineries, suppressed them, and provided support to the paratroop unit in its operation. From around 1210 onwards, and after confirming the situation of the paratroop units, these supporting air units started leaving the battle site one after another to head back to their bases.⁽⁹⁶⁾

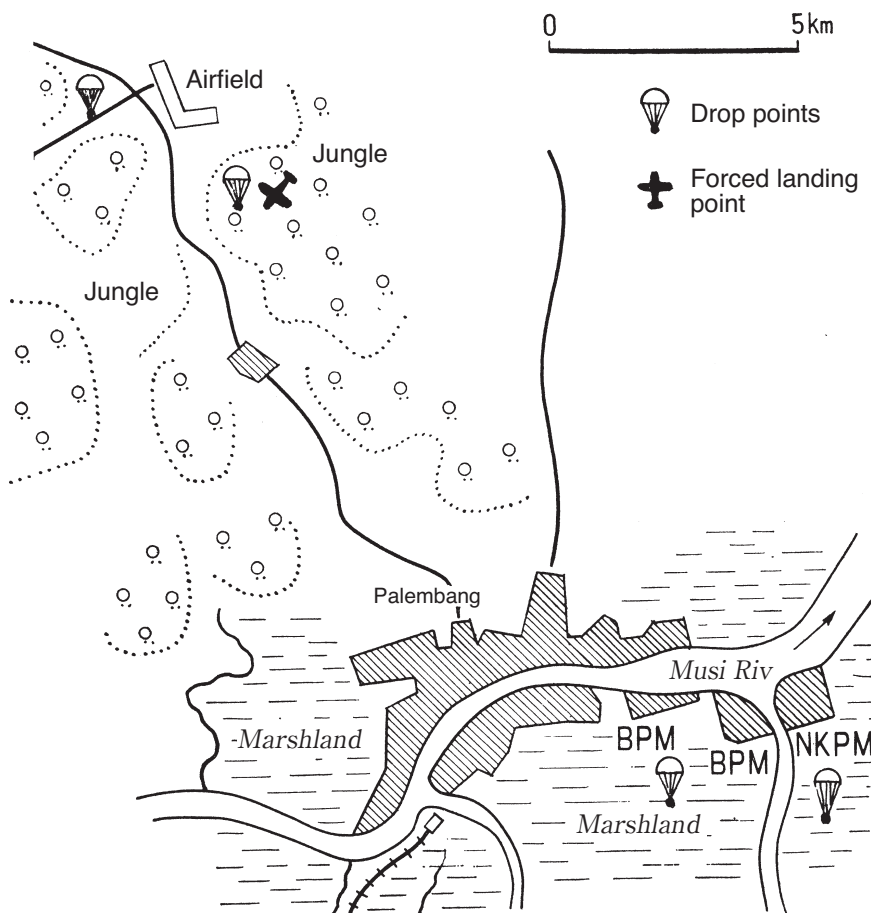
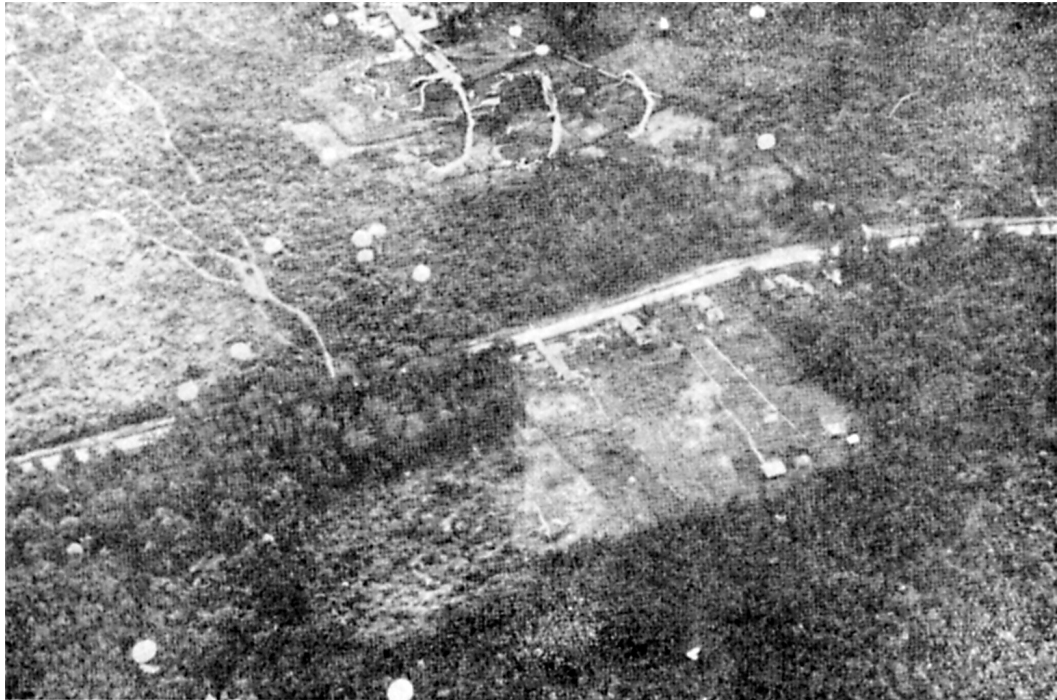


Illustration No. 26 — The Palembang Area



Actual Situation of the Palembang Paratroop Operation (Taken from a Hayabusa [Type-1 Fighter Plane])

Operations of the Unit Dropped near the Airfield (*See Illustration No. 27*)



2d [Paratroop] Raiding
Regiment Commander,
Maj. Kōmura Takeo

The airfield raiding unit carried out the drop as scheduled, with the main force ([consisting of] two platoons of the 2d Company and the 4th Company (minus one platoon) of the 2d [Paratroop] Raiding Regiment as the core (180 men, including and led by Regimental Commander Kōmura)) at 1126 [on a zone] some three kilometers southeast of the airfield, and with one element ([consisting of] the 2d Company (minus two platoons) as the core (sixty men including and led by Company Commander Hirose)) at 1130 on the southwestern side of the airfield. Striving to bring the unit back under command, the airfield raiding unit began its actions and advanced toward the airfield under cover of the supporting air units. After the drop, Regimental Commander Kōmura immediately headed toward the southeastern corner of the airfield. Around 1200, taking command of ten men of his [unit], he pushed his way through the dense jungle, to find around 1330, in a hollow about two kilometers southeast of the airfield, 4th Company Commander First Lieutenant Mitani and his men, twenty-four in total, who were reconnoitering the enemy, and brought them under his command. On this occasion he also learned about the actions of First Lieutenant Okumoto and his men (which will be described later). Fearing that allied reinforcements from Palembang city to the airfield might arrive quicker than expected, Regimental Commander Kōmura decided to swiftly advance to the Jambi Road and cut off the allied reinforcements. He put five of his men under the command of First Lieu-

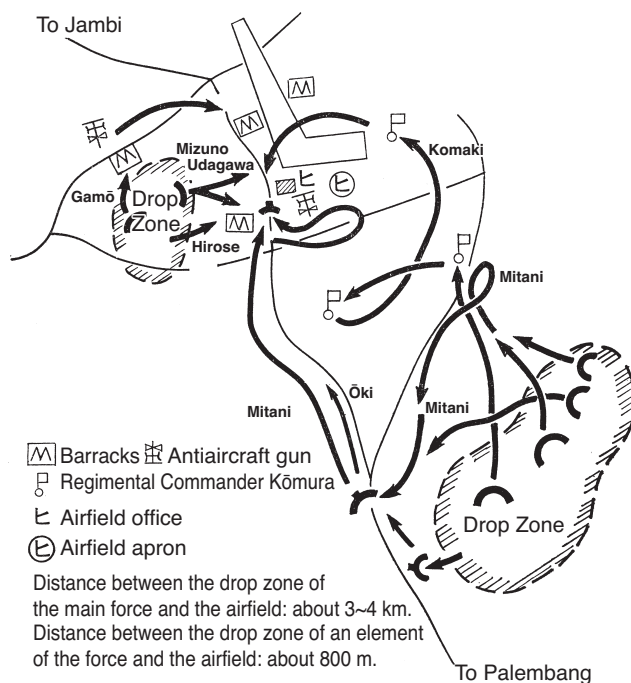


Illustration No. 27 — The Engagements at the Airfield

allied unit of about 100 men around 1400, [Kōmura and his men] reached the east side of the airfield at 1800. There, the regimental commander found and took command of a total of twenty-five men, including First Lieutenant Komaki. At 2100 they reached the airfield office, where [Commander Kōmura] took command of the units which had already assembled, as well as the officers and men, who were coming in one after another.⁽⁹³⁾

Prior to this, First Lieutenant Okumoto, platoon commander of the 4th Company, and four men, who had landed in the zone along the road connecting the airfield and Palembang city, had engaged around 1200 an allied unit of some two hundred men with two light-armored cars, seized one armored car and three trucks, and cut off reinforcements to the airfield.⁽⁹³⁾

In the meantime, First Lieutenant Hirose, commander of the 2d Company, who had landed in the zone west of the airfield, advanced with the two men he had brought under his command. Around 1400 he approached the front of the barracks on the west side of the airfield, where he discovered an allied unit of about 350 men. The first lieutenant withdrew for the moment, brought another man under his command, and at 1700 he stormed the barracks along with two of his men, and seized them. Earlier, First Lieutenant Gamō, platoon commander of the 2d Company, had brought sixteen men under his command right after the drop. However, [he and his men] were not able to collect their weapons and ammunition as they had expected, and what is more, they came under point-blank fire of anti-aircraft guns and machine guns of an anti-aircraft position near the barracks. Intending to suppress the enemy fire, they moved forward with [only] hand grenades and pistols, set fire to the bar-

tenant Mitani, and ordered them to go to the road connecting Palembang city and the airfield, attack and advance along the road toward the airfield office. First Lieutenant Mitani put an advance party of twenty men, led by Platoon Commander First Lieutenant Ōki, in the armored cars which First Lieutenant Okumoto had seized earlier, but while they advanced, they encountered an allied unit of some three hundred men approaching from the airfield. After a fierce battle they defeated the allied unit, and at 1820 occupied the airfield office. However, First Lieutenant Ōki was severely injured in this battle. [Meanwhile,] Regimental Commander Kōmura, leading five men, had set out after Company Commander Mitani, but due to the thick jungle, [Kōmura] finally lost contact with the company. After engaging in battle with an al-

racks and burned them down. However, [during the action] First Lieutenant Gamō was killed by a direct hit from an antiaircraft machine gun that had suddenly opened up. After this, Sergeant Major Yoshinaga took over the command of the platoon, and at 1820 [Sergeant Major Yoshinaga and his men] advanced to [the area at] the northwest end of the airfield.⁽⁹³⁾

Thus, the Kōmura Unit occupied the airfield, and with all the forces that had assembled by midnight kept a strict guard until morning. Despite hearing some intermittent rifle reports, there was no counterattack from allied units that night.⁽⁹³⁾

The Occupation of the Oil Refineries (*See Illustration No. 28*)

At 1130, the oil refineries raiding unit had its main force ([consisting of] the 1st Company of the 2d [Paratroop] Raiding Regiment as the core (sixty men including and led by First Lieutenant Nakao)) descend on the west side of the west oil refinery, and one element (thirty-nine men including and led by Second Lieutenant Hasebe) on the south side of the east oil refinery, as scheduled. Under cover of the air units, [both] strove to collect their weapons and ammunition, while trying to assemble the troops.⁽⁹³⁾

First Lieutenant Tokunaga, a platoon commander of the 1st Company, who had landed at the west side of the west oil refinery, launched an attack against a pillbox position at the southwest side of the refinery at 1140, leading the six men he had gathered. They daringly charged the pillbox position, seized it, and further headed north along the road lined by company houses, where they encountered an allied unit of some sixty men with two light machine guns and one heavy machine gun. [First Lieutenant Tokunaga and his men] immediately attacked them and, at the same time, he ordered the Ogawa and the Yoshioka Squads (each [made up of] six men including the commanders), both of whom had just then caught up [with Tokunaga], to pursue the defeated enemy and charge into the premises of the refinery to secure all distillation units. Both squads entered the premises, secured the central distillation unit, and flew the flag of the Rising Sun on its tower. It was 1330. In the meantime, with only a small number of men at his disposal, First Lieutenant Tokunaga had defeated the garrison that had put up a fierce resistance. On seeing the Rising Sun flag being raised on the central distillation tower at 1310, he immediately started moving toward the distillation unit. At that moment, Company Commander Nakao showed up and assumed command. While defeating an allied unit of some thirty men armed with two light machine guns on their way, they entered the central distillation unit at 1410. Bringing the Ogawa and the Yoshioka Squads back under his command, Commander Nakao and his men closed the pipe cocks in the oil refinery, and put out the fire in the boilers in order to prevent destruction of the facilities by fire. The allied units, taking advantage of the fact that the Japanese troops were few in number, launched a fierce counterattack and approached as close as forty to fifty meters. As the bullets of both sides flew all over the place, oil began to gush out of the tanks and pipes. Company Commander Nakao ordered the Tokunaga Platoon to make a counterattack, which drove back the enemy, and [the platoon] advanced to an area northeast of the company houses. [Meanwhile,] the allied unit opened fire with mortars; the pipes directly hit by the shells caught fire and black smoke filled the air. The company commander assembled the unit, and took shelter in an air-raid shelter fifty meters south of the distillation unit. When night fell, an allied unit of some two hundred men closed in [on the Japanese] from three sides, threw hand grenades, and persistently repeated their counterattacks all night. But every time, [Commander Nakao's] company beat them back.⁽⁹³⁾

In the meantime, the Hasebe Platoon, which had descended on the zone south of the east oil refinery, began its advance at 1230 towards the refinery, after collecting its weapons and ammunition. Two men, Corporal Ikeno and Private First Class Yamashita, who had dropped right in front of an outpost position and came under fierce fire from the allied troops, bravely fought back only with their hand grenades and pistols and defeated eight men. They further advanced in pursuit of the defeated enemy, but heavy fire from somewhere near the barracks injured Private Yamashita. Carrying the private on his back, Corporal Ikeno pulled back, joined the main force of the platoon, and reported the immediate situation of the enemy to Platoon Commander Hasebe. Learning that the only way through was the road leading through the barracks, the platoon commander began to move ahead along both sides of this road, while making it passable. Despite the fierce fire [from the enemy], at 1500 [he and his men] closed in to a point about one hundred meters from the enemy, where Second Lieutenant Hasebe was killed. Sergeant Major Niwa took his place and led the platoon. With the casualties gradually increasing and the advance getting difficult, at 1600 the sergeant major dispatched a scout in an effort to find an alternative route, but without success. He came to a decision to carry out a night attack, and made preparation for it, while fortifying his position. At 2300 the platoon executed a night attack on a pillbox position at the southeast of the barracks, [successfully] seized it, and continued its attack to occupy all the distillation units at 0100 on the 15th.⁽⁹³⁾

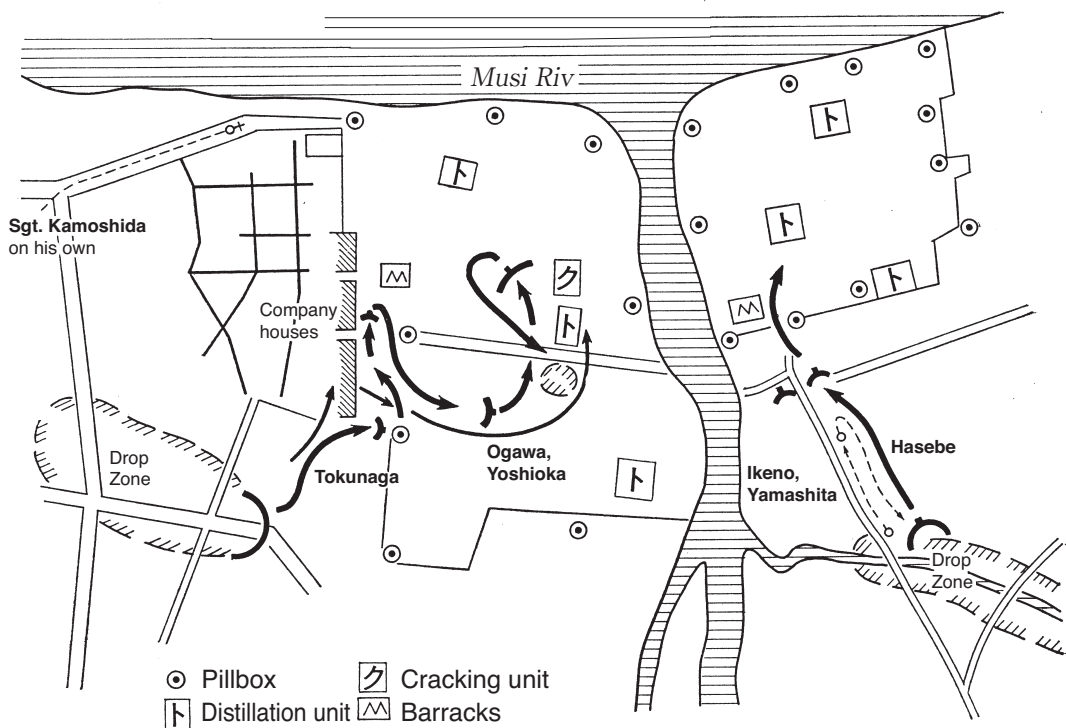


Illustration No. 28 — The Engagements at the Oil Refineries

The Situation from the 15th Onwards

The Airfield

As one aircraft of the reconnaissance unit (15th Independent Air Unit Commander Lt. Col. Nakahama Gosuke) had landed [at the airfield] at 1030 on the 15th, it communicated the situation including the fact that most of the dropped weapons and ammunition were yet to be collected. Third Air Force Commander Sugawara immediately dispatched by transport aircraft personnel, weapons and ammunition which belonged to the airfield battalion stationed at the Kahang airfield, and simultaneously had one element of a fighter plane unit rapidly advance to the Palembang airfield and charged it with the task of providing cover for the raiding unit. At 1130, [Paratroop] Raiding Group Commander Colonel Kume reached the airfield and assumed overall command from then on. The fact was that the colonel had executed a forced landing at 1130 on the 14th about ten kilometers south of the airfield and attempted to move toward the location of the 2d [Paratroop] Raiding Regiment headquarters, but he had been obstructed by the allied forces and the terrain, and been unable to advance as planned. At 1300, all men of the third echelon (the second raiding unit), that is, the 3d Company (ninety men including First Lieutenant Morisawa) descended safely on the airfield, reinforcing the [raiding unit's] fighting strength. At 1600, the raiding group commander ordered the Adachi Platoon of the Morisawa Company to scout the city of Palembang. At 1730, the platoon entered the barracks in the city of Palembang without meeting any resistance, spotted allied armored craft going down the Musi River, fired at them, and caused one of them to run aground. At 1930, learning the situation of the Adachi Platoon, the raiding group commander immediately advanced into the city of Palembang, and started mopping up [the enemy]. On the following day, the 16th, contact was established with the oil refineries raiding



The Aircraft of the [Paratroop] Raiding Group Commander After its Forced Landing (14 February)

unit. From around 2100 on the same day, in joint action with the Tanaka Advance Party of the 38th Division (which had started to arrive in Palembang one after another from 1900 onwards on the 15th), [the group] secured the airfield and the city of Palembang. On the 20th, guard duty [of the places] was taken over by a unit of the 38th Division.

After the battle it was found that the [enemy] unit which had defended the airfield had consisted of British, Dutch and Australian soldiers, some 530 men in total, led by a Dutch colonel, and that it had possessed a large number of trucks and light-armored cars. Further, it had set up a small number of pillbox positions around the airfield, where it had installed thirteen antiaircraft guns and five antiaircraft machine guns.^(93, 96)

The Operations at the Oil Refineries

As the counterattacks of the allied unit had gradually become sluggish toward daybreak on the 15th, the west oil refinery attack unit, after having returned to the drop zone and collected equipment, assembled at the company office in three trucks at 0830. Meanwhile, at the east oil refinery, [the attack unit] secured the distillation facilities all through the night, and mopped up [the enemy in] the neighborhood at dawn on the 15th. At 0600, there was a sudden explosion at the NKPM oil refinery with a deafening sound (which was [later] judged to be caused by a time bomb), and [the refinery] was instantly enveloped in flames, but no [further] damage was found to the distillation and the cracking facilities. Around noon of the 15th, the oil refinery raiding unit had completed mopping up [the enemy] and secured the premises. On the 20th, their guard duty was taken over by an element of the 38th Division.⁽⁹³⁾

After the battle it was found that the [enemy] unit that had defended the oil refineries had been some 550 men in total, led by a captain. It had set up a small number of pillbox positions, where it had installed ten antiaircraft guns and five antiaircraft machine guns.^(93, 96)

Results

As we have seen, the Army's first ever paratroop unit had occupied Palembang and seized 250,000 tons of oil, a small number of British and U.S. aircraft, and various types of weapons and matériel.⁽²³⁾

The number of casualties sustained on the 14th among the 329 men dropped was as follows:⁽²³⁾

Killed in action: two officers, seventeen noncommissioned officers and twenty soldiers, a total of thirty-nine men.

Wounded and hospitalized: three officers, eighteen noncommissioned officers and sixteen soldiers, a total of thirty-seven men.

Wounded but remaining in the unit: four noncommissioned officers and seven soldiers, in total eleven men.

Note: Also included in the number of those killed in action are two men whose parachute did not open.

Commander in Chief Terauchi conferred a citation of merit on the Kume Paratroop Unit and the units that had directly cooperated, which read: "As the vanguard of the Southern Army, you have skillfully taken advantage of the opportunity for battle, and divided the Dutch East

Indies and Malaya areas, as well as secured the key for the coming operations of the entire army."^(13, 93)

Third Air Force Commander Sugawara [also] conferred a citation of merit on five men: First Lieutenant Okumoto Minoru, Sergeant Kawahara Masao, Senior Private Katano Saburō, Senior Private Tsushima Shūsuke and Paymaster Sergeant Major Kikuchi Kiyoji. The citation of merit read as follows:^(13, 93) "Right after descending, you encountered a motor vehicle unit, which suddenly appeared, speeding ahead from the direction of the airfield, boldly attacked and disarmed it, during which you happened to spot an enemy unit of some 150 men in four trucks with a light-armored car in front, heading northward to reinforce the airfield from the city of Palembang in response to an emergency. [Immediately] shifting your position and without missing an opportunity, you attacked [these trucks] with pistols and hand grenades. Once [you saw] the enemy step out of the vehicles, you bravely rushed the enemy without fearing death or injury, and finally put the enemy to rout, leaving many weapons and dead bodies behind. [You] aggressively and steadfastly forestalled the enemy with a small number of men by cutting off the reinforcement to the airfield at the critical moment when the main force of our unit was not yet fully prepared, and frustrated the intention of the enemy, which brought about the success of this operation."

An outline of the organization of the [Paratroop] Raiding Regiment has already been given, but a more detailed description would run as follows.⁽⁹³⁾ Due to the limitation on the number of aircraft in this operation, however, not all [of the regiment] was able to participate.

The regiment consisted of the regimental headquarters and four companies.

The 1st, the 2d and the 3d Companies consisted of a command team, three platoons and one machine gun platoon. [Each] platoon consists of three rifle squads ([equipped] with one light machine gun for each) and one grenade squad ([equipped] with two to three grenade launchers). The machinegun platoon was equipped, in addition to two heavy machine guns, with either a 37-mm. antitank gun, a 20-mm. antitank rifle, or a Type11 infantry gun.

The 4th Company was organized in the same way as the 1st, the 2d and the 3d Companies, but the rifle platoons [also] possessed engineer skills, and were equipped with two flamethrowers. Each company consisted of some 160 men, and each platoon about 34 men.

(5) The 38th Division's Invasion of Southern Sumatra

The convoy of the advance party entered the Mentok anchorage on the night of 14 February. The main force of the advance party headed for the mouth of the Musi, the Telang and the Saleh Rivers in landing craft, while the Orita Battalion headed for Bangka Island. On the morning of the 15th, the battalion went ashore at Mentok, seized the airfield, and by the 18th it had occupied the entire island of Bangka. [Meanwhile,] on the morning of the 15th the advance party had set out to ascend the three rivers [mentioned], and on the evening of the same day, the center column unit reached Palembang. The left column unit seized the Maratapura airfield on the morning of the 19th. The main force of the division got to the mouth of the Musi River on the evening of the 16th, and reached Palembang on the evening of the 20th. The division commander had arrived in Palembang on the afternoon of the 17th ahead of [the main force], and sent the main force of the advance party, designated as the Tanaka Detachment, southward. This detachment seized Tanjungkarang on the 20th. Furthermore,

after assigning the Tanaka Detachment, he assigned the Kanki Detachment to rush westward. This detachment seized Lahat on the 22d and Bengkulu on the 24th. Having dealt with the dispatch of the Tanaka and the Kanki Detachments, he diverted the main force of the Orita Battalion from Bangka Island and sent it northward. This battalion and other units seized Jambi on 4 March, which completed [the operation to] occupy all key locations in southern Sumatra. In the meantime, the disembarkations at Mentok and at Palembang had been completed respectively on 21 February and on 28 February.

Although the main force of the [Paratroop] Raiding Group had parachuted down at mid-day on the 14th and one element on the morning of the 15th, it was not until the night of the 15th that they shook hands with the advance party of the 38th Division. On the afternoon of the 17th, the [Paratroop] Raiding Group came under the command of the 38th Division Commander. The air units of the Third Air Force advanced one after another to the Palembang airfield without missing an opportunity: the 2d Squadron of the 11th Air Group (fighter planes) of the 12th Air Division had advanced to the Palembang [airfield] on the morning of the 15th, the headquarters and the 1st Squadron of the air group and one squadron of fighter planes of the 3d Air Division in the afternoon, the 3d Squadron of the 11th Air Group on the 16th, the headquarters of the 3d Air Division, the 27th Air Group (the headquarters and the 1st Squadron), as well as the 2d Squadron of the 64th Air Group on the 17th. It was followed by the remaining units of the 3d Air Division, the headquarters of the 12th Air Division, and also the 3d Squadron of the 1st Air Group on the 19th. [These units] took charge of the air defense over Palembang and carried out air campaigns over Java, while cooperating with the 38th Division in its operation.⁽⁹⁶⁾

Judging on 18 February [according to p. 439, 16 February] that Operation L had for the most part been completed, [Navy] Malaya Unit Commander Ozawa started on his way back on the morning of the same day with his main unit. It was decided that the unit would transfer one of its elements to the Dutch East Indies Unit for the Java operation, while having another element take charge of the sweeping of the sea off Singapore and in the Strait of Malacca.⁽¹¹⁸⁾ The *Hatsutaka*, the flagship of the river-ascending unit commander (9th Base Force commander), started on the 18th for the Singapore area, while the *Sendai*, the flagship of the escort unit commander (3d Destroyer Squadron commander), left the Mentok anchorage on the 25th.^(118, 126)

The Capture of Mentok (See Illustration No. 29)

The advance party consisted of the 229th Infantry Regiment (minus the 3d Battalion), led by Regimental Commander Col. Tanaka Ryōsabrō, the divisional armored car company, the 2d Battalion (minus one battery) of the 38th Mountain Artillery Regiment, the 38th Engineer Regiment (minus one company and one platoon), one divisional radio platoon, and the main force of the divisional medical unit.⁽⁶⁸⁾ At 0100 on the 15th, the convoy ([consisting of] the previously-mentioned eight ships) completed its entry into the Mentok anchorage, after which the main force of the advance party and the Orita Unit started switching to their landing craft, respectively for going upriver and for going ashore at Mentok.⁽⁶⁹⁾ The Orita Unit included the 1st Battalion of the 229th Infantry Regiment ([with] the 1st and the 2d Companies of the regiment as its core), led by Battalion Commander Capt. Orita Masaru, one platoon each of the regimental artillery and engineers, one anti-aircraft battery, and the 33d

Airfield Company.⁽⁶⁹⁾ The operation plan of the unit (the Bangka invasion unit) made by the division was that⁽⁶⁶⁾ "The Bangka invasion unit shall have one platoon land near the Mentok pier around 0300 and simultaneously the main force shall go ashore two kilometers southeast of Mentok. After the landing, the main force shall immediately attack the Mentok airfield from the east, and one element from the direction of the city. [Once it is seized, the unit] shall mop up [the enemy] in the neighborhood, after which the battalion shall move on to Palembang, leaving one company behind. The company that stays behind shall swiftly seize Pangkalpinang."⁽⁶⁶⁾ At 0225, the [Orita] Unit reached the shore, with the main force in four large and one small-sized motorized [landing] craft and one element in two small-sized motorized [landing] craft. At 0730 the unit seized the lighthouse and at 0830 the city and the airfield of Mentok.⁽⁶⁹⁾ At the shore there were no obstacles nor were there any gun positions. Although there were some 2,500 people, officers and men of the allied forces as well as citizens of enemy countries, who had fled from Singapore, they were taken prisoner without resistance.⁽⁶⁹⁾ The battalion occupied Pangkalpinang on the 18th, and by the 19th it had completely cleaned up the entire island.⁽⁶⁶⁾ The landing of the Orita Battalion was followed by the disembarkation of the 33d Airfield Company, and airfield-related matériel from the ships that carried the [Orita] Unit. Of the two ships, the *An'yō-maru* finished disembarkation on the 20th, and the *Alaska-maru* on the 21st.⁽⁶⁹⁾ Then, in conformity with the division order, which will be mentioned later, Battalion Commander Orita left 1st Company Commander Takeuchi and his men behind on Bangka Island and successively departed with the rest of his unit from Mentok and headed for Palembang from 23 February onwards.⁽⁶⁹⁾

As for the Mentok airfield, on 19 February it was reported: "As of 1800 on the 18th, [the airfield is] 200 meters wide and 800 meters long. [With] the disembarkation of matériel completed, [the airfield will be] expanded to a width of 200 meters and a length of 1,020 meters by the 21st."⁽¹¹⁸⁾

The Landing at Palembang (See Illustration No. 29)

The ascent of the rivers by the main force of the advance party and its subsequent operations had been planned as follows:⁽⁶⁶⁾ "After switching to the landing craft at the Mentok anchorage, the party shall be divided into the right column unit (the Telang River ascending unit: [consisting of] one half infantry battalion as the core, led by Maj. Miyazawa Shigezō, commander of the 2d Battalion of the 229th Infantry Regiment), the center column unit (the Musi River ascending unit: [consisting of] three companies and one platoon as the core, led by 229th Infantry Regimental Commander Col. Tanaka Ryōsaburō), and the left column unit (the Saleh River ascending unit: [consisting of] the main force of the 38th Engineer Regiment and one infantry company as the core, led by Regimental Commander Lt. Col. Iwabuchi Tsuneo). Around 0300 they shall depart from the anchorage to go upriver. The right column unit shall ascend the Telang River and in cooperation with the main force (the center column unit) advance toward Palembang, where, in joint action with the [Paratroop] Raiding Unit, they shall capture the city. The left column unit shall move toward the rear of Palembang to facilitate the advance of the main force. If the city has already been captured [by then], the left column, without moving into Palembang, shall swiftly move on to Martapura to cut off the escape route of the allied forces. After the capture of Palembang, the advance party shall make preparation for heading south towards Tanjungkarang."

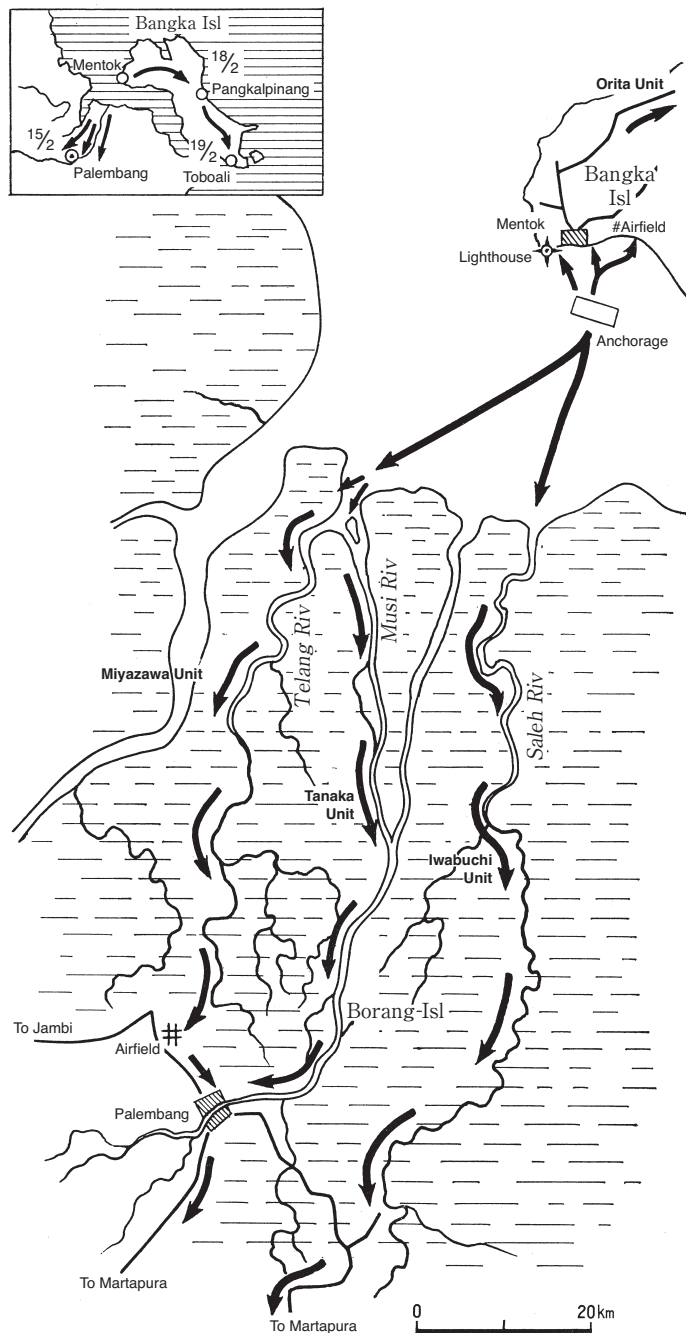


Illustration No. 29 — The Bangka and Palembang Operations of the Tanaka Advance Party

lished contact with the paratroop unit. On the early morning of the following day, the 16th, [the unit] left the neighborhood of the airfield to join the main force in the city of Palembang. It then crossed the Musi River to assemble in preparation to head southward.⁽⁶⁸⁾

Around 0300 (on the 15th), after confirming that the Orita unit had successfully landed on Mentok, advance party commander Colonel Tanaka ordered each ascending unit to set out.⁽⁶⁸⁾ Around 0600 (0640 for the left column unit), the river ascending units each reached the mouths of their [respective] rivers under the guidance of Navy warships.⁽⁶⁹⁾ Around 0800, each of the units left the mouths of their rivers, and started going upstream.⁽⁶⁸⁾ They dashed up the rivers which had yet to be cleared [of mines] by the Navy. Because on this day, as explained earlier, the Malaya Unit was focusing on its operation against the allied fleet and the Third Air Force was in the middle of the second paratroop operation on Palembang, no support by Japanese aircraft during their ascent could be given. However, despite suffering five successive attacks by allied aircraft during the ascent, the ascending units fortunately sustained only minor losses.⁽⁶⁸⁾

From the evening of the 15th onwards, the right column unit moved into the vicinity of the Palembang airfield and established contact with the paratroop unit.

On the early morning of the following day, the 16th, [the unit] left the neighborhood of the airfield to join the main force in the city of Palembang. It then crossed the Musi River to assemble in preparation to head southward.⁽⁶⁸⁾

The left column unit, without entering Palembang, headed for Martapura from midnight of the 15th onwards by landing craft and further by marching on foot.⁽⁶⁸⁾

[Meanwhile,] from 1900 on the 15th onwards, the center column unit had started disembarkation in the Palembang area ([to be precise,] the 4th Company at the western end of the urban area on the south bank of the Musi River, the 6th Company at the eastern end of the urban area on the south bank of the Musi River, and the main force ([consisting of] the 3d Company as the core) at the eastern part of the urban area on the north bank of the Musi River). Colonel Tanaka disembarked on the pier at 2000,⁽⁶⁸⁾ and was immediately able to contact [Paratroop] Raiding Group Commander Kume on the north bank (note: a unit of the [Paratroop] Raiding Group, which had advanced south from the airfield, had been entering the city from 1730 onwards).⁽⁹³⁾ However, he did not succeed in making contact with the paratroop units which had occupied the oil refineries on the south bank. It was only around 1100 on the following day, the 16th, that the 6th Company, which had landed on the south bank near the eastern end near the oil refinery, [finally] established contact with the paratroop units that had seized the oil refineries.⁽⁶⁸⁾



229th Infantry
Regiment Commander,
Col. Tanaka Ryōsaburō

As soon as he had established contact with the [Paratroop] Raiding Group, Colonel Tanaka secured Palembang without missing an opportunity and at the same time decided to make preparations for the advance southward. First, he had one infantry platoon on bicycles leave Palembang southward to reconnoiter, and next around 1700 he had the 4th Company (minus one platoon) [also] head southward in motor vehicles, which had been collected.⁽⁶⁸⁾

The Capture of Tanjungkarang (See Illustration No. 30)

The [38th] Division's Order

At precisely that time, the convoy of the main force of the division was entering the mouth of the Musi River.⁽¹¹⁸⁾ Prior to this, at 1320 on the previous day (the 15th), [Navy] Commander in Chief Ozawa, who had intended to fight a decisive battle with the allied fleet as mentioned earlier, had given the order that "the convoy of the advance party shall evacuate and anchor at the mouth of the Musi River." In conformity with the order, leaving three ships, i.e. the *Tajima-maru*, the *An'yō-maru* and the *Alaska-maru*, behind at the Mentok anchorage, the remaining five ships of the convoy [of the advance party] had weighed anchor at the Mentok anchorage at 1500 of the same day (the 15th), and entered the anchorage at the mouth of the Musi River at 1740, where they had waited for the Navy to finish the clearing of the river.⁽⁶⁹⁾ The convoy of the main force of the division entered the anchorage at the mouth of the Musi river at 1845 on the 16th.⁽¹¹⁸⁾ Right before that, Division Commander Sano had issued the following order:⁽⁶⁹⁾

38th Division Order

Gin'yō-maru on the waters east of Sumatra, 1600, 16 February

1. Yesterday, on the 15th at 0235, one element of the advance party successfully landed on Bangka Island and seized the Mentok airfield at 0640. The main force of the party had its left river ascending unit at 0640, and its right and center river ascending units ... advance to the mouth of

the Musi river, where each unit respectively started ascending the [designated] river. In the meantime, at 1126 of the day before yesterday, the airborne [Paratroop] Raiding Group completed its drop on the Palembang airfield, the oil refineries and their vicinities. Further, around 1300 yesterday, the 15th, one squadron of the fighter planes of the Third Air Force rapidly advanced to the Palembang airfield. It seems that the convoy of the advance party and the river ascending units came under repeated attacks from formations of enemy aircraft.

2. The plan of the division remains the same as it was. The 1st [Paratroop] Raiding Group shall be newly put under my command upon the arrival of the division in Palembang, and the 2d Sea Transport Supervisory Unit upon its arrival in Mentok.
3. The advance party shall henceforth become the Tanaka Detachment and, in cooperation with the 1st [Paratroop] Raiding Group, leave one element in the vicinities of Palembang, Limau and [Talang] Abab, and send the main force forward toward the south as swiftly as possible to seize the airbases of Martapura and Tanjungkarang and make them ready for use, while mopping up the enemy naval bases along Lampung Bay in order to facilitate the Java invasion of the army. In this operation, it is required to have an especially powerful unit ascend the river(s) between Palembang and Martapura by landing craft to quickly advance to the latter to capture the enemy. The following person(s) and units shall newly be put under the command of the detachment commander upon their arrival in Palembang (the rest omitted by the author).

Staff Officer Oyadamari

3d Battalion of the 229th Infantry Regiment

2d Squadron of the 4th Tank Regiment (with one-third of the regimental train attached)

45th Independent Motor Transport Battalion (minus two companies)

4. The Chief of Staff, Staff Officer Oyadamari, Adjutant Yamamoto and part of the division headquarters shall ascend the Musi River in extra-large motorized [landing] craft this evening, when the convoy of the main force arrives at the mouth of the river, ahead [of the rest of the force] to Palembang. The ascending [of the river] and the disembarkation [of this party] shall be assigned to the disembarkation working unit. (The rest [of this item] and items 5 to 8 are omitted by the author.)
9. The 1st [Paratroop] Raiding Group shall secure the airfield and the oil refineries of Palembang. The Tanaka Detachment shall cooperate with the group in these tasks.
10. The Orita Unit shall henceforth come under my direct command and still continue its present tasks (the rest omitted by author).
11. The 3d Battalion of the 229th Infantry Regiment (note by the author: with Maj. Kemmotsu Heishichi as battalion commander) shall come under the command of Detachment Commander Tanaka upon its arrival in Palembang. For this purpose, the battalion headquarters and about one company shall advance to Palembang in extra-large motorized [landing] craft on this evening when the convoy of the main force arrives at the mouth of the Musi River (the rest omitted by the author).
12. The 2d Squadron of the 4th Tank Regiment (with one-third of the regimental train attached) shall come under the command of Detachment Commander Tanaka upon its arrival in Palembang. For this purpose, about six light tanks shall advance to Palembang in extra-large motorized [landing] craft on this evening when the convoy of the main force arrives at the mouth of the Musi River.
13. The 45th Independent Motor Transport Battalion (minus two companies) shall, upon its arrival in Palembang, come under the command of the advance party commander.
14. The Disembarkation Working Unit shall still continue its present tasks, in such a way that the unit shall this evening take charge of the river ascending operation of most of the division headquarters, the Kemmotsu Battalion and one element of the tank squadron from the mouth of the Musi River to Palembang in the six extra-large motorized [landing] craft that accompanied the convoy of the main force. [The unit] shall [also] take charge of the disembarkation work at Palembang.

bang and, by means of the required number of large- and small-sized motorized [landing] craft, small cargo ships and fishing boats, simultaneously take charge of the river ascending operation of the necessary units in the convoy of the main force, which are to go upstream ahead [of the other units].

15. – 21. (Omitted by the author.)

22. I shall this evening leave the mouth of the Musi River and advance toward Palembang along with part of the division headquarters in extra-large motorized [landing] craft.

As previously mentioned, on the afternoon of the 16th, Commander Tanaka of the advance party had already sent the 4th Company southward. Following the aforementioned division order, he [then] assigned two companies to stay behind to guard Palembang, reassigned the main force of the remaining unit as the Tanaka Detachment and ordered it to charge toward Tanjungkarang. First, on the afternoon of the 17th, the Miyazawa Battalion (the former right column unit) departed from Palembang by collected vehicles (busses, trucks, and automobiles).⁽⁶⁸⁾ Sixteenth Army Staff Officer Itoda, and 38th Division Staff Officer Oyadomari accompanied the unit.^(68, 39) After having seized the Talang Jimar oil field [editor's note: the text has Talang Jur, which is a misreading], the Miyazawa Battalion had one element [stay and] keep a watch on the direction of Lahat, and advanced southward with its main force. When a non-commissioned officer and his underling (both with a railroad background and capable of operating locomotives), who were under the direct command of the detachment commander and accompanied the advance party, found a serviceable switch engine at the Talang Jimar station [editor's note: probably a station near Talang Jimar is meant], [the battalion commander] immediately put this to use, created a temporary armored train unit with one infantry platoon and one regimental gun, and had [the unit] pursue the enemy.⁽⁶⁸⁾ Detachment Commander Tanaka had been fretting about the fact that there were no motor vehicles available for the main force of the detachment, but at 1200 on the 18th, the motor vehicles of the 45th Independent Motor Transport Battalion were finally unloaded. Losing no time, the detachment instantly left Palembang and reached the Martapura airfield at 0500 on the 19th.⁽⁶⁸⁾ Earlier, the left column unit, which had headed to Martapura [partly] in landing craft, and [partly] on foot from midnight of the 15th [editor's note: apparently by way of the Komering River], had reached the Martapura airfield a little after 0400 on this morning (of the 19th), and had seized the airfield after a minor engagement. This was followed by the arrival of the Miyazawa Battalion in Martapura.⁽⁶⁸⁾ At 0600 (on the 19th) the Miyazawa Battalion left Martapura, which was followed by the main force of the detachment (including the former left column unit, and the armored car unit of the division, which had caught up [with the main force]). It left Martapura at 0200 the next day (the 20th). Both rushed ahead, crossing rivers at Kutoraja [editor's note: probably a misreading for Kotabumi] and Mandah by using improvised materials because the bridges there had been destroyed by the allied forces. By dawn on the 20th, [the battalion] reached Tanjungkarang (the main force at 1000), after which it further advanced to the coast. At 1200, while briskly shooting at the [Japanese] troops with two gunboats, the rear guard of the allied unit left the jetty of Telukbetung. As the artillery had not yet caught up with the detachment, it had to vainly let [the enemy] escape. The total distance the detachment had covered in these two days and nights was some 500 kilometers.^(67, 68)

On the following day, the 21st, with considerable effort, Sixteenth Army Staff Officer Itoda found the Tanjungkarang airfield.⁽³⁹⁾ Against all expectations, the airfield was far from complete, with [a runway of] a mere 700 meters. The Tanaka Detachment immediately began

construction work. Working around the clock, it completed a runway of 25 meters wide and 800 meters long by the 25th.^(39, 68) On the afternoon of the same day, the fighter planes of the 3d Air Division rapidly advanced to the airfield and launched the operation against Java on the opposite shore.⁽⁹⁶⁾

After having made a belly landing together with [Paratroop] Raiding Group Commander Kume on a clearing within a stretch of swampy jungle four kilometers [according to p. 331, ten kilometers] south-east of the Palembang airfield, Sixteenth Army Staff Officer Itoda directed [operations] in the Palembang sector and the preparation of Tanjungkarang airfield. On the 17th, he had reported the following from Palembang to the Sixteenth Army:⁽²³⁾

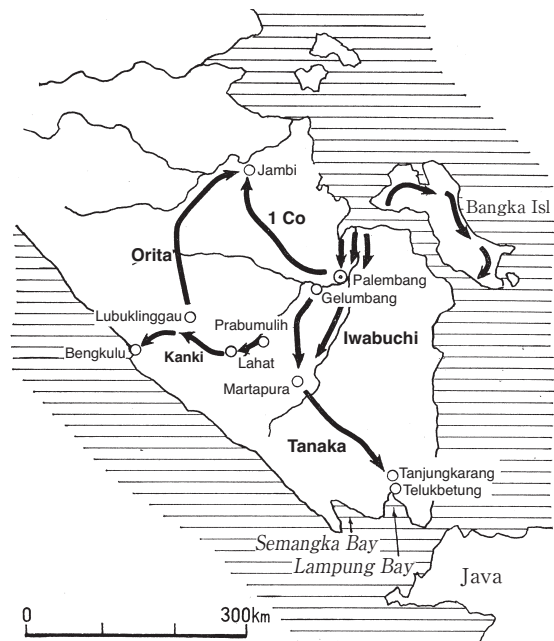


Illustration No. 30 — The 38th Division's
Southern Sumatra Operations

1. As of 2100 on the 15th, the right and the center column units of the advance party of the 38th Division have been working hard policing and restoring public order in key locations at Palembang. Around 1700 on the 16th, about one company [of the party] was sent off towards Tanjungkarang. The left column unit departed from [a place] east of Palembang at 0900 on the 16th for Martapura. At 2400 on the 16th, part of the aviation fuel arrived. There are no impediments to the operations of the fighter planes based in Palembang.
2. Policing and the restoration of public order in Palembang are appropriately carried out under the unified command of Colonel Kume. There are a few defeated troops in the vicinity, but the people mostly remain [in their places]. Electricity and water is supplied as usual; only the telephone is out of service.
3. Although I chose a landing spot slightly far from the airfield where enemy [troops] were sparsely deployed, due to the difficult terrain, I arrived at my present position [only] at 1800 on the 15th. I [hereby] apologize for the delay in sending my report. I will give the necessary instructions to the commander of the airfield company which arrived on the 17th, and advance to Tanjungkarang.
4. The brave and hard fighting of all the officers and men of the [Paratroop] Raiding Group in this operation cannot be related without tears. Those who did not participate in this battle make up no more than a [small] part of each company of the 2d Regiment, [which means that] if one intends to use [the paratroopers] for the Cilacap [operation], one will have no choice but to rely on those who fought in Palembang. Having seen the battle with my own eyes, I do not have the heart to drive them into another hardship, and I offer as my opinion that [the idea of] using the [Paratroop] Raiding Group in the Cilacap [operation] should be given up.

Delay in the Upriver Ascent of the Convoy of the Main Force

Earlier, on the 15th, the Tanaka advance party had started ascending the rivers in motorized landing craft at 0830, but it was not until two hours later at 1030 that the Navy started clearing the Musi River.⁽¹⁰²⁾ At 1030 the Navy river-ascending unit commander (i.e. the 9th Base Force commander) had his units start going upriver, in the order of: (1) the 1st Explosives Sweeper Unit ([consisting of] nine large and small motorized [landing] craft), the 2d Explosives Sweeper Unit ([consisting of] eight auxiliary cutters), and the 3d Explosives Sweeper Unit ([consisting of] four fishing boats) (the units above were generically referred to as the Explosives Sweeper Units); (2) the Minesweeper Unit ([consisting of] the *Otowa-maru* and the *Rumoi-maru*); and (3) the main unit (the *Hatsutaka*).⁽¹⁰²⁾ However, due to twelve bombing raids and strafes by an aggregate number of thirty-nine allied aircraft, and the frequent parting of the minesweeping ropes caused by the many obstacles on the sea/[river]bed, the mine sweeping operation was given up at 1300 after sweeping only ten nautical miles. The units returned to the mouth of the river at 1500.⁽¹⁰²⁾ Commander in Chief Ozawa then transferred three minesweepers from the Escort Unit to the river-ascending unit.⁽¹⁰²⁾ On the same day (the 15th), the five ships of the convoy of the advance party, which had been ordered to change their anchorage [in preparation] for the aforementioned decisive fleet battle, had left the Mentok anchorage for the anchorage at the mouth of the Musi River, and arrived there at 1740.⁽¹¹⁸⁾ At 0800 on the following day, the 16th, the Navy river-ascending unit [again] began clearing the river while sailing upstream reinforced by the three minesweepers mentioned earlier, and by 2030 roughly finished clearing [the river] up to Palembang.⁽¹⁰²⁾ At 1845 of that day, the fourteen ships of the convoy of the main force of the 38th Division arrived at the mouth of the Musi River, and entered the anchorage.⁽¹¹⁸⁾

On the following day, the 17th (the day when the Miyazawa Battalion started its advance to the south), the *Shimushu* (a coastal defense ship of 400 tons) started ascending the [Musi] river with the 38th Division headquarters on board, which had been transferred from the *Gin'yō-maru*. [Editor's note: the *Shimushu*-class coastal defense ships had a displacement of 860 tons; the 400 tons mentioned here are presumably gross registry tons.] Following [the *Shimushu*], the army convoy of nineteen ships ([of which] five belonged to the former advance party and fourteen to the main force of the division) left the anchorage at the mouth of the Musi River.⁽¹⁰²⁾ However, at [a point] three nautical miles upriver from Borang Island, [the convoy] encountered a mine barrier that was yet to be cleared and was forced to anchor temporarily. Only the *Shimushu* kept sailing on alone, reached Palembang at 1435 (on the 17th), and disembarked the division headquarters.⁽¹⁰²⁾

At 1830 on the 19th, [the operation of] clearing the river was completed; twenty-eight mines were dealt with. At 0800 on the 20th, the convoy departed from its temporary anchorage guided by the *Shimushu*, and arrived in Palembang around 1500 on the same day, where it started disembarkation. The disembarkation was completed on the 28th.⁽¹⁰²⁾

The Capture of Bengkulu

Division Commander Lt. Gen. Sano Tadayoshi, who had arrived in Palembang at 1435 on the 17th on the *Shimushu* ahead [of the rest of the convoy] as mentioned previously, on the night of the 19th issued the following order concerning the preparation for the seizure of Lahat and Bengkulu.⁽⁶⁹⁾ [At that time] the convoy was [still] stuck near Borang Island.⁽¹⁰²⁾

NUMA [38th Division] Operation Order A, No. 114

38th Division Order

Palembang, 2400, 19 February

1. As of 0850 today the 19th, the Tanaka Detachment has seized Martapura driving off weak enemy forces and continues its dash towards Tanjungkarang. The Orita Battalion completed the capture of Bangka Island on the 18th. The 3d Air Division has been supporting the offensive of the Tanaka Detachment with the Palembang airfield as its base. The people of Yukasuka (a place approximately 130 kilometers west of Palembang) have come to show their allegiance to us. [Editor's note: "Yukasuka" could not be identified. It might be a misspelling/misreading for Bungamas, between Lahat and Tebingtinggi.] The convoy of the main force is expected to come to Palembang and start disembarking here tomorrow the 20th.
2. The plan of the division remains the same as it was.
3. The Ōneda Unit (note by the author: 3d Battalion, 230th Infantry Regiment) shall put its Obata Platoon under my direct control at Palembang, let its main force first advance to Prabumulih (a three-forked railroad junction southwest of Palembang) and vicinity, seize the location, and prepare for the advance toward Lahat and Bengkulu. [The unit] shall come under the command of unit commander Kanki (note by the author: the artillery regiment commander) upon his arrival at Prabumulih. Further, [the Ōneda Unit] shall put the 10th Company (minus one platoon) under the command of Lieutenant Colonel Nagahata, the commander of the Division Oil-drilling Unit, upon his arrival at the location.
4. The Obata Platoon shall advance to Sekayu and vicinity, and secure the location, after which it shall prepare for the advance against Jambi. [The platoon] shall also investigate the condition of the oil fields in the vicinity.
5. The Orita Unit shall assign a unit consisting of about one infantry company and one machine gun platoon as the core for guarding the entire island of Bangka, and assemble its main force in the vicinity of Mentok, so that it can be redeployed to Palembang at any time (the rest omitted by the author).
6. After disembarkation, the Kanki Detachment shall successively advance to Prabumulih and prepare for the capture of Lahat and Bengkulu (the rest and item 7 omitted by the author).
8. The 1st [Paratroop] Raiding Group shall assemble in the Palembang barracks and prepare for the next operation. The group shall turn over the guard duty of the oil refineries and their vicinity to the disembarkation working unit at 0900 on the 20th (the rest omitted by the author).

When the disembarkation started, Division Commander Sano ordered Col. Kanki Takekichi to seize the oil fields and the airfield in Lahat, and [the towns of] Lubuklinggau and Bengkulu.⁽⁶⁶⁾

On 21 February, the Kanki detachment ([consisting of] the 38th Mountain Artillery Regiment headquarters and one mountain battery with Colonel Kanki as regimental commander, the main force of the 3d Battalion of the 230th Infantry Regiment with Maj. Ōneda Yasuhei as battalion commander, one squadron of the 4th Tank Regiment, one element of the divisional signals unit, one element of the divisional medical unit and others), left Palembang and advanced while commandeering motor vehicles. The detachment captured Lahat on the 22d, Lubuklinggau on the 23d and, after crossing a mountain range, Bengkulu on the west coast on the 24th.^(70, 71, 72) No allied units were seen in this area, and the locals lent their active cooperation to the operation of the detachment.^(70, 71, 72) Col. Abe Yoshimitsu, chief of staff of the division, who accompanied the detachment, gave directions particularly concerning the occupation of the oil fields in Lahat and the disposition of the oil production unit.⁽⁶⁶⁾

Occupation of the Jambi Oil Fields and Gelumbang

Following the assignments concerning the operations in Tanjungkarang (the Tanaka Detachment) and in Bengkulu (the Kanki Detachment), Division Commander Sano decided to re-deploy the main force of the Orita Battalion, which was still in Bangka, for carrying out the operation to occupy the oil fields in Jambi, and on the evening of the 21st he passed down the following order:⁽⁶⁹⁾

NUMA [the 38th Division] Operation Order A, No. 119

38th Division Order

Palembang, 1800, 21 February

1. Yesterday the 20th, the Tanaka Detachment completely occupied Tanjungkarang and Telukbetung and destroyed the enemy naval base(s) in Lampung Bay. [Editor's note: Tanjungkarang and Telukbetung are now together known as Bandar Lampung.] The rear guard unit of the enemy escaped from Lampung Bay on a gunboat at 1200 yesterday the 20th. Without a break, the Tanaka Detachment mopped up the enemy along Semangka Bay and is now making the Tanjungkarang airfield ready for use. The Orita Unit has completed its capture of Bangka Island.
2. The plan of the division remains the same as it was.
3. The Tanaka Detachment shall send Staff Officer Oyadomari back to Palembang to return him to my command.
4. The Orita Unit shall put [a unit consisting of] about one company and one machine gun platoon as the core under my direct control as the Bangka Island occupation unit, turn over its current duty to this unit, and head for Palembang with the main force of the remaining unit. The disembarkation unit commander shall be in charge of the transport.
5. The Bangka Island occupation unit shall hereafter come under my direct control and take over the current duty of the Orita Unit (the rest omitted by author).

The redeployed element of the Orita Unit consisted of the battalion headquarters, the 2d Company, one machine gun company and one regimental gun section as the core and departed from Mentok [one after another] by small cargo ships between 23 February and 1 March.⁽⁶⁹⁾ During that time, Mentok suffered a number of air strikes: [one air strike] by one aircraft on the 22d, two strikes by one aircraft each time on the 23d, again two by one aircraft each time on the 26th, then two strikes by one aircraft and one by four aircraft on the 27th.⁽⁶⁹⁾

As mentioned previously, the division commander had earlier (on the 19th) dispatched the Obata Platoon to Sekayu, partly in preparation for the operation against Jambi. Also, in order to occupy the oil fields in Jambi and the vicinity, at the time of the redeployment of the Orita Battalion he gave the order to a unit consisting of one infantry company and one artillery section as the core, led by Battalion Commander Captain Orita, to prepare at Lubuklinggau and capture Jambi. He also had Colonel Abe, the chief of staff of the division, accompany the unit and give directions to it. Separately, [the division commander] had one infantry company head for Jambi from Palembang (in northwesterly direction).⁽⁶⁶⁾ The Orita Unit, which [had been redeployed] from Bangka Island to assemble in Lubuklinggau via Palembang and made preparations for further advance, departed from the city on 23 February and headed for Jambi. On its way, the unit had two minor engagements with the enemy and [was held up] at a bridge that had been destroyed. Nevertheless, [the unit] dashed [toward Jambi] and, on 4 March, seized the place without engaging in combat. In the meantime,

the company that had headed for Jambi from Palembang was delayed by the bad condition of the road and finally arrived in Jambi on the following day, the 5th.⁽⁶⁶⁾

With the occupation of the Jambi oil fields, the main part of the southern and central Sumatra operations of the 38th Division was completed.

[In the meantime,] it was decided that the Navy would use the airfield of Gelumbang (fifty kilometers southwest of Palembang; discovered on 16 February) for the Java operation. On 23 February, the Southern Army sent a telegram to the 38th Division to instantly give full support to the Navy's preparation of the Gelumbang airfield (including the transport of fuel and ammunition).⁽²³⁾ Thanks to the cooperation of the 38th Division, from the 24th onwards, a powerful unit of the 22d Air Flotilla was deployed at this airfield, which will be mentioned later in detail.

Oil and the [Paratroop] Raiding Group

Whereas about eighty percent of the eastern oil refinery of Palembang (NKPM) had been lost due to deliberate detonation by the allied forces on the early morning of the 15th, only four gasoline tanks had been destroyed by fire at the western oil refinery (BPM) at the time right after the seizure. [Editor's note: NKPM, or *Nederlandsche Koloniale Petroleum Maatschappij*, was a subsidiary of the American Standard Vacuum Oil Company; BPM, or *Bataafsche Petroleum Maatschappij* was a subsidiary of Royal Dutch Shell.] The situation until 18 February was as described in the following [telegrams]:⁽²³⁾

From: 1st [Paratroop] Raiding Group Commander, at Palembang, on 18 February

The situation of the refineries according to the subsequent investigation conducted by [Southern] Army Staff Officer Satō Hiroo, and his comments:

1. As it is expected that at least approximately 150,000 tons of crude oil and approximately 400,000 tons of refined oil (the precise breakdown of the contents is still under investigation) that remained at the BPM Oil Refinery can be secured, I request that tankers be allocated and that preparations be made so that [the oil] can successively be sent to the homeland.
2. At the BPM Refinery, only about three fires are still burning. Although one tank has already been destroyed by fire (each tank contains 10,000 tons), the others remain intact with almost no fear that the fire will spread.
3. It is required to urgently dispatch a large number of engineers who can handle the distillation and cracking installations because all the main Dutch engineers have fled.
4. The NKPM Refinery is still on fire to such an extent that there is no prospect of when the fire will be extinguished. There are more or less ten tanks, which are in lesser danger of catching fire; it is expected that 70,000 to 80,000 tons of refined oil can be secured.
5. The two tankers seized at the refineries belong to the 300-ton class. We are searching for more [tankers] to the best of our abilities.
6. As such is the situation, I am of the opinion that it would be better if fuel for operations and other needs during the southern operation be supplied from Palembang as a base, so that the supply [of oil] from the homeland can be reduced as much as possible.

From: Chief of Staff, 38th Division, at Mentok, on 20 February

1. Apart from the oil tanks and pipes destroyed by fire, the BPM Refinery is for the most part intact. Further, it has a facility to process gasoline for aviation as well. Its loading facility is also

intact. The capacity of the remaining oil tanks (excluding smaller processing oil tanks) is some 500,000 tons.

2. The NKPM Refinery was blown up at the time of our occupation and is difficult to repair.

Note: this telegram was sent on the 20th, but reports the situation on the 18th.

However, allied aircraft, which infiltrated [the area] from the 19th onwards, brought an unexpectedly heavy loss.

As mentioned previously, [Japanese] fighter plane unit(s) had started to arrive from 15 February onwards at the Palembang airfield. These were followed by the 3d Air Division headquarters, which had advanced on the 17th, and by the 12th Air Division headquarters, which had advanced on the 19th. From the 19th onwards, [these units] launched air strikes against Java. However, the allied air forces managed to infiltrate the area with a small number of aircraft in the way described below:⁽⁹⁹⁾

[February]

15th: Three attacks were made on the airfield by a total of four aircraft. [The Japanese] brought down two of them. [The enemy aircraft] did not come to the refineries.

16th: Five attacks were made on the airfield by a total of nine aircraft. [The Japanese] forced one of them to make an emergency landing. No attacks were made on the oil refineries.

17th: More than dozen aircraft came to attack the airfield. [The Japanese] brought down three of them. No attacks were made on the oil refineries.

18th: No attacks were made on the airfield or the oil refineries.

19th: Three attacks were made on the airfield by a total of three aircraft. There was also an attack on the oil refineries, which set fire to the tanks of the BPM plant.

20th: One aircraft came for an attack on the refineries, and enlarged the number of tanks destroyed by fire.

21st: One aircraft came for an attack on the refineries, and destroyed one distillation and one cracking installation. This aircraft was brought down by [Japanese] fighter plane(s).

Since its seizure, they had worked all day and night until finally the fire was extinguished on the night of the 17th, and the refinery was brought in the condition of the 18th described in the telegrams above, but then this refinery was [again] enveloped in flames from the 19th onwards as related above, which moreover not only destroyed nearly thirty tanks, including all of the most important 100-octane gasoline tanks, but also put one each of the distillation and cracking installations out of commission. This could happen because [the Japanese] had been taken off guard during their air attack operation against Java and because the anti-aircraft artillery had arrived late due to the mine barrier which had held up the convoy [at a point] three nautical miles upriver from Borang Island until the 20th.^(99, 102)

For the [Paratroop] Raiding Group, which had occupied the refineries, this was a bitter pill to swallow.

By Southern Army Order of 22 February, the 1st [Paratroop] Raiding Group returned from the Sixteenth Army (the 38th Division) command to the command of the Third Air Force commander. Then, at 2400 on 1 March, it was brought back under the direct control of the Southern Army from the command of the Third Air Force commander.⁽²³⁾

5. The Capture of Balikpapan and Kendari (See Illustration No. 31)

The Balikpapan and Kendari landing operations were launched on the day (24 January) when the participants of the Manila Conference went on their way back after the conference, which had been held between the Southern Army and the [Navy] Southern Task Force to discuss the invasion schedule, and between the Sixteenth Army and the [Navy] Dutch East Indies Unit to make arrangements for the Java operation.

Balikpapan was a key resource location: oil, which was transported through pipelines from the oil fields in the Samarinda and Sanga Sanga areas located northwest of Balikpapan, was stored and refined there, and shipped from there as well. Besides, [the city] had an airfield, from which air attacks against eastern Java could be conducted. Kendari, on the other hand, was a strategic place, which would enable [Japanese] naval aircraft to conduct air attacks on eastern Java, while gaining command of the air over a vast area in the east and south-east, stretching from Ambon and Kupang to Bali Island. At the same time, it was an ideal place for establishing a naval base.

Whereas the capture of Balikpapan was to be conducted by both the Army and the Navy in conjunction, that of Kendari was to be carried out solely by the Navy.⁽¹⁾

In accordance with the Southern Army order of 20 November, the Sixteenth Army had ordered the Sakaguchi Detachment to capture Balikpapan.⁽³⁶⁾

The [Navy] Southern Task Force (i.e. the Second Fleet) had issued the order to shift to phase-two operations on 26 December, and [thereby] ordered the Dutch East Indies Unit to carry out the operations to capture Balikpapan and Kendari (which belonged to the phase-two operations of the Southern Task Force). It had also ordered its air unit (i.e. the Eleventh Air Fleet) to cooperate [in the operations].⁽¹¹⁰⁾ The chief task of the Southern Task Force in the phase-two operations was the escort of the transport of the main force of the Twenty-fifth Army [to Malaya].⁽¹⁰²⁾ [To that end,] after the escort of the transport of the main force of the Fourteenth Army [to the Philippines], the Southern Task Force had diverted the 5th Destroyer Squadron and others from the Philippines Unit (Dutch East Indies Unit, i.e. the Third Fleet) to the Malaya Unit (the Southern Expeditionary Fleet) and positioned the main force of the Southern Task Force in Cam Ranh Bay.⁽¹⁰²⁾ As support for the Dutch East Indies Unit, Southern Task Force Commander Vice Admiral Kondō had formed the Eastern Support Unit ([consisting of] the battleship *Haruna*, the heavy cruiser *Maya* and two destroyers) with an element of the main force (the order was given on 23 December), and separately sent the unit to the waters southeast of Davao.⁽¹⁰²⁾ As soon as the outlook for [the completion of] the escort of the main force of the Twenty-fifth Army became clear, Vice Admiral Kondō left Cam Ranh Bay on 8 January with the main unit of the Southern Task Force, advanced to Palau on 18 January, and took command of the Eastern Support Unit.⁽¹⁰²⁾

[Meanwhile,] on 28 December, Vice Admiral Takahashi, commander of the Dutch East Indies Unit, had in outline made the following disposition of forces (for the phase-two operations):⁽¹¹⁰⁾ [In this disposition,] the Western Attack Unit (after carrying out the landing operation on Tarakan on 11 January) would conduct the Balikpapan operation, and the Eastern Attack Unit (after conducting the operation to capture Menado on 11 January) would conduct the Kendari operation, while the main unit remained positioned in Davao.⁽¹⁰²⁾

Main Unit: directly led by the Vice Admiral Takahashi; the main force of the 16th Cruiser Division (the heavy cruiser *Ashigara*).

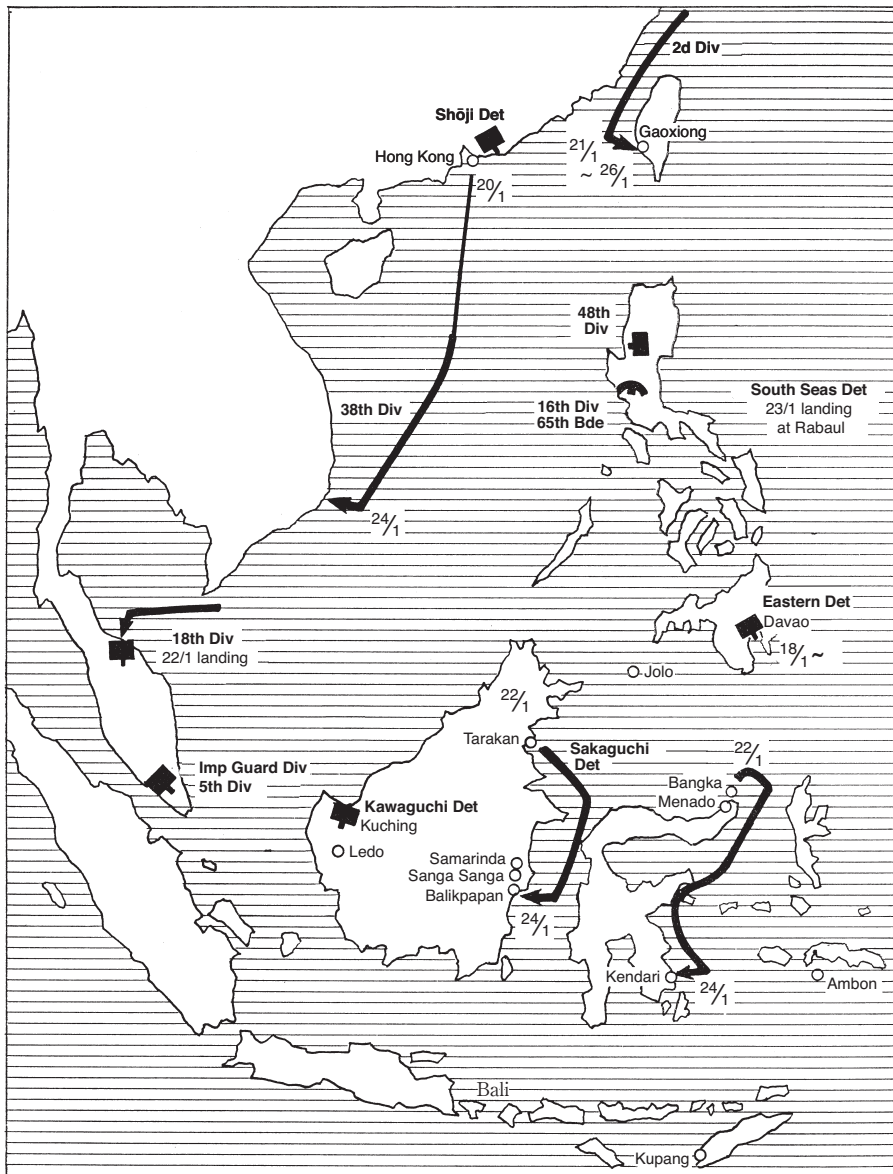


Illustration No. 31 — Balikpapan and Kendari Operations, and the General Situation at that Time

Western Attack Unit:

1st Escort Unit: the 4th Destroyer Squadron (minus the 4th Destroyer Division) as its core

2d Base Unit: the light cruiser *Kuma* (note: she belonged to the 16th Cruiser Division [at that time] and was transferred to the Third Southern Expeditionary Fleet on 3 January) and most of the 2d Base Force.

1st Air Unit: the auxiliary seaplane tenders *San'yō-maru* and *Sanuki-maru* as the core. [Editor's note: the Japanese text says "2d Air Unit," which is a misprint.]

Eastern Attack Unit:

Support Unit: the 5th Cruiser Division (the heavy cruisers *Myōkō*, *Haguro* and *Nachi* (note: the *Myōkō* was damaged on 4 January and moved to the mainland for repair)) and two destroyers.

2d Escort Unit: the 2d Destroyer Squadron (minus the 18th Destroyer Division) as its core.

1st Base Unit: the light cruiser *Nagara* (note: she belonged to the 16th Cruiser Division) and most of the 1st Base Force.

2d Air Unit: the 11th Seaplane Tender Division (the seaplane tenders *Chitose* and *Mizuho*).

Of the [naval] air unit (i.e. the Eleventh Air Fleet), the 23d Air Flotilla (the 2d Air Raid Unit) headquarters had advanced to Jolo Island on 3 January, and the 21st Air Flotilla (the 1st Air Raid Unit) headquarters to Manado on 16 January.⁽¹⁰²⁾ The headquarters of the Eleventh Air Fleet (V. Adm. Tsukahara Nishizō) had been positioned in Davao since 7 January.⁽¹⁰²⁾ The disposition of forces of the Eleventh Air Fleet as of 31 December was as already described, however, as of 20 January the disposition of forces of the 23d Air Flotilla was that it had its headquarters and twenty-four aircraft in Tarakan, fifty-five in Jolo, and twenty in Gaoxiong.⁽¹⁴³⁾

The attacks on Balikpapan and Kendari were to be launched from Tarakan and Manado respectively.⁽¹¹⁰⁾

Although [the operations to] capture Balikpapan and Kendari had been scheduled for day x + 43 (20 January) in the Cam Ran Agreement (on 1 January), they were postponed on 6 January for one day due to the delay in the capture of Davao and Jolo Island, the bad condition of the airfields, and the fact that the Philippines Unit (the Dutch East Indies Unit) as well as the air unit had been late in shifting to the Dutch East Indies operation. Then, on 16 January after the capture of Tarakan and Manado, [the operations] were [again] postponed for another three days, due to the mines laid in [the waterways of] Tarakan, the condition of its airfield, and information on [enemy] submarines in the Molucca Sea, finally resulting in a postponement of four days in total, and [the operations] came to be carried out on 24 January, as mentioned previously.

(1) The Capture of Balikpapan

The Scheme to Occupy [Balikpapan] Intact and the Plan for a Surprise

Attack (See Illustrations No. 32 and No. 33)

As we have seen, the arrangement of 16 November between the [Navy] Dutch East Indies Unit and the Sixteenth Army stipulated: "The Sakaguchi Detachment shall have its main force land near the Balikpapan pier and parts of the detachment near the Baru and Sepuluh batteries each (note by the author: the specific locations are unclear)." [Editor's note: the Baru battery was located north of the harbor front, the Sepuluh battery south of the harbor front near the residential area of Klandasan.] Also the contents of the arrangement between the Army and the Navy, which [Sixteenth Army] Vice Chief of Staff Harada Yoshikazu had conveyed when he had flown into Palau at the end of November, stipulated the same.⁽⁸⁸⁾ Having left Palau and captured Davao, the Sakaguchi Detachment held a preliminary meeting with the 4th Destroyer Squadron on [the operations to] capture Tarakan and Balikpapan on 2 January, as soon as the squadron had advanced to Davao on that day,⁽¹¹⁹⁾ after completing its escort of the main force of the Fourteenth Army. At the meeting, Yano Tsuneo, staff officer of the detachment, made a proposal, after pointing out that an assault on the strongest front where the enemy was well prepared should be avoided. On 5 January, the 4th Destroyer Squadron (led by R. Adm. Nishimura Shōji) prepared, based on this proposal, [a draft] "Arrangement between the 1st Escort Unit of the Navy and the Sakaguchi Detachment of

the Army," which both commanders signed the same day. The arrangement stated in outline the following:⁽⁸⁸⁾

Landing points: Plan No. 1 was to have the main force land in the area north of the Balikpapan airfield and one element in the area south of the airfield. Plan No. 2 was to have the main force land in the area south of the Balikpapan airfield and one element in the area north of the airfield.

Disposition of the landing forces: the main force shall consist of two battalions, and an element of one battalion (minus two companies).

No particular reconnaissance of the landing points will be made; a surprise landing will be conducted at 2200 on 19 January. A naval bombardment shall be provided at the request of the landing unit commander(s).

The Sakaguchi Detachment had landed on Tarakan Island before dawn on 11 January and made the commander of the Dutch garrison on the island surrender the next day, the 12th. The fierce firepower concentrated like hail at the front and the destruction of the oil resources by fire in that operation had taught Detachment Commander Sakaguchi and Staff Officer Yano a big lesson, which they applied in [planning] the coming operation to seize Balikpapan.⁽⁸⁷⁾

On 15 January, the Matsumoto Battalion arrived in Tarakan after completing the capture of Jolo Island.⁽¹¹⁹⁾ At 1800 on that day, Detachment Commander Sakaguchi passed down orders to start the embarkation and the changing of ships the next day, the 16th, and complete it on the morning of the 17th. He also announced that he would board the *Teiryū-maru* at 1800 on the 16th.⁽⁸⁸⁾ At that time, the plan was that the detachment would leave Tarakan on the 18th.⁽⁸⁸⁾ [However,] the preparation of the Tarakan airfield was terribly delayed, and it was not ready for use for either the 23d Air Flotilla or the Navy 1001 Unit (the naval paratroop unit that was to parachute down on Balikpapan).⁽¹¹⁹⁾ On that day (the 15th), after conferring with Detachment Commander Sakaguchi, Rear Admiral Nishimura wired the [Navy] Dutch East Indies Unit commander that an arrangement had been made to "postpone the landing in Balikpapan scheduled for the 21st until the 24th." (See the previous description.) On the next day, the 16th, the [Navy] Dutch East Indies Unit commander, Vice Admiral Takahashi, approved the wired report from Rear Admiral Nishimura, and ordered by telegram to "change the date of landing in Balikpapan from the 21st to the 24th."⁽¹¹⁹⁾ However, about the [progress of] readying the Tarakan airfield one could only be pessimistic. Although the *Asama-maru* carrying the officers and men of the Navy 1001 Unit had arrived in Tarakan at 0930 on that day (the 16th), due to the judgment that the three-day postponement would not be sufficient to make the airfield ready for use by the transport plane unit (twenty-eight to thirty-nine planes) required for the 1001 Unit to take off and land, it was decided to cancel the parachute drop [of the unit] on Balikpapan and to use [the unit] for Banjarmasin instead.⁽¹⁰³⁾

The Sakaguchi Detachment had continued the operation to mop up [the enemy] until the 14th, and on the 15th it passed down the order of embarkation in conformity with the previously mentioned arrangement of 5 January, while hurriedly carrying out various measures, reorganizations, and the transfer of control.⁽⁸⁸⁾ Then, [the detachment] faced two new situations: (1) the three-day postponement of the schedule, and (2) the cancellation of the paradrop of the paratroop unit.

Lieutenant Colonel Yano, staff officer of the detachment, immediately shaped some clever plans. One of them was a way to keep the Dutch East Indies forces from destroying and burning down the oil resource facilities, and another was a way to occupy Balikpapan by completely taking the Dutch East Indies forces by surprise.⁽⁸⁷⁾

Prior to that, the 44th Field Antiaircraft Artillery Battalion Commander Maj. Takagi Takeo had offered an idea of sending Captain Colijn, son of the former Governor-General of the Dutch East Indies, manager of BPM, and adjutant of the Tarakan garrison, and Captain Reinderhoff, staff officer of the garrison (both of whom had been taken prisoner at the time of the capture of Tarakan), to the Balikpapan garrison headquarters to have them transmit the message that the resources and equipment in the whole area of Balikpapan should not be destroyed.⁽⁸⁸⁾ [Editor's note: Captain Colijn was the son of the prewar prime minister and minister of the colonies Hendrik Colijn, who has never been Governor-General.] Staff Officer Yano had [once] turned down the idea. However, being allowed three extra days [before the Balikpapan operation], he began considering its implementation. At once, [Staff Officer Yano] drew up a plan to infiltrate [two] guides along with those military messengers, have a powerful unit led by a battalion commander secretly ascend the river in front of the city of Balikpapan to deeply advance into the rear of the city after landing at a point far upriver from the urban area under the guidance of the guides, take control of the weak points of the Balikpapan garrison at a stroke by seizing the water supply area, cutting off the escape route, and surrounding the shelter for Dutch noncombatants (families of the troops in particular), etc., and make the garrison surrender at an early stage.⁽⁸⁷⁾ Although Regimental Commander Yamamoto and three battalion commanders were against the proposal to detach a battalion to secretly ascend the river, Detachment Commander Sakaguchi approved Staff Officer Yano's entire plan.⁽⁸⁷⁾

On the next day, the 17th, the detachment proposed it at the meeting with the Navy. As the Navy agreed with it, the arrangement of 5 January was nullified, and the new plan was arranged.⁽¹¹⁹⁾

The next day, the 18th, the military messengers together with the guides left the port [of Tarakan].⁽⁸⁸⁾

The following day, the 19th, Detachment Commander Sakaguchi assembled the commanders of each unit on the *Teiryū-maru* to give them instructions and explain the new operation plan, the scheme [to send the messengers], etc. He [also] carried out test maneuvers in cooperation with the Navy that night.⁽⁸⁸⁾ The test maneuvers were for verifying whether the aforementioned secret unit led by a battalion commander would be able to go upriver in front of the city of Balikpapan [even] in the beams of the searchlights of the Dutch East Indies forces. The experiment was carried out by navigating a camouflaged [landing] craft at a distance of 500 meters from the side of a destroyer, which turned a searchlight on the craft. [The result] was reassuring.⁽⁸⁷⁾

A summary of the instructions given by Detachment Commander Sakaguchi on that day was as follows:⁽⁸⁸⁾ "The detachment's operations have made steady progress and [the detachment] is just about to cross the equator to advance further southward. (Part omitted by the author.) (1) Consider carefully once again the peculiarity of the coming operation. The main purpose of the coming operation is to secure resources. (Part omitted by the author.) (2) Make good use of your experience in the past battles. As shown in the history of war, errors will occur in battles one after another. What lets you turn these errors and mistakes into achieving

a brilliant victory is actually nothing but the unflagging, diehard effort and the strong spirit of unanimous cooperation shown by the commanding officers and their men. All units are required to maintain an ever closer contact with each other, push forward with their tasks with high morale, always foster a fresh and keen sense for opportunities, and have the grit to turn even mistakes into a key to victory. (3) Military discipline and morals: As the areas of the coming operations are places where the detachment will itself establish a military administration after the battles, it also makes both the method and the spirit of conducting the operations different from the traditional battles so far. Officers and men are required to ever more firmly stick to their principles, and exercise further self-control and self-discipline. (4) Preparation for the subsequent operations: The capture of Balikpapan does not mean that the detachment will stop at that place. The transport ships shall be replenished with water and coal, and part of [the detachment] will depart to further attack Banjarmasin. (Part omitted by the author.) (5) Provisions. (Part omitted by the author.) (6) Reporting. (Part omitted by the author.) Concluding remarks."

On the next day, the 20th, Detachment Commander Sakaguchi issued the following SAKA [Sakaguchi Detachment] Operation Order A, No. 19.⁽⁸⁸⁾

Sakaguchi Detachment Order

Teiryū-maru, 0800, 20 January

1. The enemy in Balikpapan is a unit consisting of the 6th Infantry Battalion as the core, led by Lieutenant Colonel Van Den Hoogenband. It has not yet destroyed resources, plants and other facilities in the area. Our Navy air unit shall cooperate in our operation with its main force using the Jolo airfield as its base, and one element of fighter planes using the Tarakan airfield as its base.
2. At 1700 tomorrow, the 21st, the detachment shall leave the port of Tarakan, go ashore in Balikpapan and vicinity under the escort of naval vessels and air units, mop up [the enemy] in Balikpapan and key areas in the neighborhood, and secure the air base and the oil resource plants.
3. All units involved shall be charged with the capture of Balikpapan, the airfield, and other key locations, in accordance with separate volume No. 1 "Outline of the capture of Balikpapan," and separate volume No. 2 "Balikpapan landing plan."

At 1700 on the next day, the 21st, the convoy left the port of Tarakan, and headed for Balikpapan.

The Operation Plan of the Sakaguchi Detachment (See Illustration No. 32)

The Sakaguchi Detachment was to make its way from Tarakan under escort of the Western Attack Unit and the 23d Air Flotilla to occupy the Balikpapan sector.

The Western Attack Unit consisted of the following strength, while it was supported by the main unit ([with] the heavy cruiser *Ashigara*) directly led by the commander of the Dutch East Indies Unit with Davao as its base.⁽¹¹⁸⁾

1st Escort Unit: the light cruiser *Naka*, the 24th Destroyer Division, the 9th Destroyer Division (minus the *Yamagumo*), and the 2d Destroyer Division (minus the *Murasame*) of the 4th Destroyer Squadron as the core, led by the squadron commander.

2d Base Unit: most of the 2d Base Force.

1st Air Unit: the auxiliary seaplane tenders the *San'yō-maru* and the *Sanuki-maru* with about twenty planes in total. [Editor's note: the Japanese text has "2d Air Unit," which is a misprint.]

The 23d Air Flotilla was going to provide support with its main force from Jolo, and with one element from Tarakan.⁽¹⁰⁴⁾

The Sakaguchi Detachment had made a plan in which it would sail ahead supported by the air and naval forces mentioned above, enter the anchorage on the afternoon of the 23d, and have one element of the detachment (a unit led by Battalion Commander Kanauji) ascend the river in front of Balikpapan after sunset, make a detour and raid [the city] from the north; at the same time it would have the main force [of the detachment] make a surprise landing on the coast to the north and the south of the airfield located on the coast northeast of Balikpapan; [then] one element of the main force (a unit led by Battalion Commander Kume) would make a sudden attack on the airfield as well as Samboja, while the main force ([consisting of] the Matsumoto Battalion led by Regimental Commander Yamamoto, and later joined by the main force of the Kume Battalion) would assault Balikpapan from the east and capture [the city].⁽⁸⁸⁾

The disposition of forces was determined as follows.⁽⁸⁸⁾

Raid Unit

Commanding officer: 2d Battalion Commander Maj. Kanauji Ken'ichi
 2d Battalion (minus the 7th Company)
 One regimental gun squad
 Three radio squads
 One engineer platoon
 One element of the medical unit

Airfield Seizure Unit

Commanding officer: 1st Battalion Commander Lt. Col. Kume Motozō
 1st Battalion (minus the 2d and the 4th Companies)
 One radio squad
 One armored car platoon (until the seizure of the airfield)
 One field artillery battery (one section will be removed after the seizure of the airfield)

Assault Unit

Commanding officer: 146th Infantry Regiment Commander Col. Yamamoto Kyōhei
 146th Infantry Regiment (minus the 1st Battalion {minus the 4th Company}, the 2d Battalion, one regimental gun squad, and four radio squads)
 Armored car unit (minus one platoon)
 1st Field Artillery Battalion (minus one battery)
 One engineer platoon
 One platoon each from the airfield seizure unit and the Samboja seizure unit shall be additionally attached after the seizure of the airfield and Samboja respectively.

Samboja Seizure Unit

2d Infantry Company (one armored car platoon and one artillery section shall be attached after the seizure of the airfield.)

Battlefield Resources Salvage Unit

Units under the direct command: headquarters, the 7th Company, the antiaircraft artillery battalion, and others

The outline for the capture of Balikpapan (Separate volume No. 1 of the SAKA [Sakaguchi Detachment] Operation Order A, No. 19) was as follows:⁽⁸⁸⁾

Outline for the Capture of Balikpapan

19 January, 1942

1. Mission

- (1) The detachment shall have one element make an unexpected surprise attack from the area north of Balikpapan and have the main force go ashore on the coast to the east and west of the airfield and advance while destroying the [enemy] positions east of Balikpapan one by one to occupy the urban area.
- (2) After the capture of Balikpapan, [the detachment] shall salvage the resources, set up a base, and prepare for subsequent operations while maintaining a strict antiaircraft guard.

2. Directives

- (3) At 1700 on 21 January, the detachment shall leave the port of Tarakan and head straight to the sea off the coast of Balikpapan in Dutch Borneo under the escort of naval vessels and aircraft while itself maintaining a strict watch on [enemy] submarines in particular.
- (4) After sunset on 23 January, the Raid Unit shall transfer to [landing] craft at the anchorage south of the [coral] reef fifteen kilometers southwest of Balikpapan and, while hiding the scheme in every possible way, thread its way camouflaged through the enemy searchlights along the coast and secretly go up the Wain River at high tide. After seizing and securing the water-pumping station, it shall storm, without missing an opportunity, at a stroke the headquarters of the command center of the Balikpapan garrison by way of the enemy's evacuation shelter while using the vehicles on site. Then, it shall launch surprise attacks on every barracks and battery to throw the enemy into confusion and prevent the destruction by fire of the resources.
- (5) Before daybreak on 24 January, the Airfield Seizure Unit shall transfer to [landing] craft at the anchorage east of the airfield and go ashore in the area about eight kilometers northeast of the airfield. At daybreak, following closely on the heels of the artillery bombardment, it shall storm into the airfield, seize and secure [the facility], after which [the unit] shall come under the command of the Assault Unit commander and leave a force of about one platoon at the airfield in charge of guarding [the facility].
- (6) The Assault Unit shall transfer to [landing] craft at the anchorage east of the airfield and go ashore about four kilometers southwest of the mouth of the Manggar River. While cooperating in the seizure of the airfield with one element of its force, its main force shall, after getting ready near the landing point [for the assault], storm and break through the [enemy] positions on the way to Balikpapan and rush into [the city]. [There] it shall assume the command of the Raid Unit as well and secure the resources and guard Balikpapan. Once the airfield is seized, it shall also bring the Airfield Seizure Unit under its command.
- (7) The Samboja Seizure Unit shall [also] go ashore at the [same] landing point as the Airfield Seizure Unit. After the seizure of the airfield, it shall advance toward Samboja through the areas along the coastal road and promptly seize and secure Samboja. After that, its main force shall return to its original command, leaving about one platoon there behind.
- (8) The Battlefield Resources Salvage Unit shall ... (the rest omitted by the author).
- (9) The detachment headquarters shall act along with the Assault Unit.
- (10) The Prisoner Internment Unit shall ... (the rest omitted by the author).
- (11) After the seizure of Balikpapan and Samboja, the Armored Car Unit shall assemble in one place, and ... (the rest omitted by the author).
- (12) After the seizure of Balikpapan, the artillery unit shall assemble ... (the rest omitted by the author).
- (13) (Omitted by the author.)

- (14) The engineer unit shall be in charge of repairing the disembarkation facilities for heavy materials near the airfield and the road and the bridges between the airfield and Balikpapan and make them ready for use. After that, it shall assemble in Balikpapan. (Part omitted by the author.)
- (15) – (19) (Omitted by the author.)
- (20) After completing [the operation] to mop up [the enemy] in Balikpapan and vicinity, the Samarinda Seizure Unit ([consisting of] about one infantry battalion, one armored car platoon and one artillery battery as the core) shall be sent to mop up [the enemy] in Sanga Sanga, Samarinda, and Tenggarong and vicinity.

In the Balikpapan landing plan (separate volume No. 2 of the SAKA [Sakaguchi Detachment] Operation Order A, No. 19 drawn up on 20 January), which the Sakaguchi Detachment had arranged with the 4th Destroyer Squadron commander, the noteworthy points were roughly as follows:⁽⁸⁸⁾

1. No reconnaissance of the landing points shall be conducted in advance.
2. The Raid Unit shall drop anchor at the 2d anchorage at 2100 on the 23d, and start ascending the river at 2230.
The main force of the detachment shall drop anchor at the 1st anchorage at 0230 [0100, see Vol. 26, p. 190] on the 24th and start landing at 0230.
- 3 Division of the Convoy (notes: B [in front of the name of ships] indicates a Navy transport ship.)
1st Section: *Tsuruga-maru*, *Liverpool-maru* ([with] the regimental commander [on board]), *Nisshō-maru* [*Hiteru-maru*], *Ehime-maru*, *B Asahisan-maru*, *B Nittei-maru*, [*B*] *Kumagawa-maru*, and *B Sumanoura-maru*
2d Section: *Havana-maru*, *Hankow-maru*, *Teiryū-maru* ([with] the detachment commander [on board]), *Kuretake-maru*, *B Kanayamasan-maru* [*Kayamasan-maru*], *B Tōei-maru*, *B Tatsugami-maru*, *B Nan'a-maru* (note: the *Havana-maru* and the *Hankow-maru* shall use the 2d anchorage.)
4. The Naval Landing Force ([consisting of] two platoons) shall come under the command of Detachment Commander Sakaguchi as far as ground operations are concerned from the time of landing until [the completion of] the operation to mop up [the enemy] in key areas of Balikpapan and guard the airfield after its seizure.
5. [Landing] craft to be used at the start of landing.
The Assault Unit: five large and five small motorized [landing] craft.
The Raid Unit: four large and six small motorized [landing] craft.
The Airfield Seizure Unit: five large and five small motorized [landing] craft.

Dispatch of the Messengers and Guides (See Illustration No. 34)

In order to prevent the oil and other resource facilities in Balikpapan from being destroyed and burnt down, Detachment Commander Sakaguchi had decided to send Captain Reinderhoff, a staff officer of the Tarakan garrison, and Captain Colijn, the adjutant of the garrison, and had them take a written notice addressed to the Balikpapan garrison commander, as mentioned previously.⁽⁸⁸⁾

Also, he had selected two indigenous police officers, who had been transferred from Balikpapan to Tarakan about two months before, as guides for the Kanauji Raid Unit, which would go upriver and come ashore [at a point] north of Balikpapan. He then added three Japanese interpreters to the above party of four, and had them leave Tarakan at 1535 on 18 January by a seized small gasoline boat to go southward.^(87, 139)

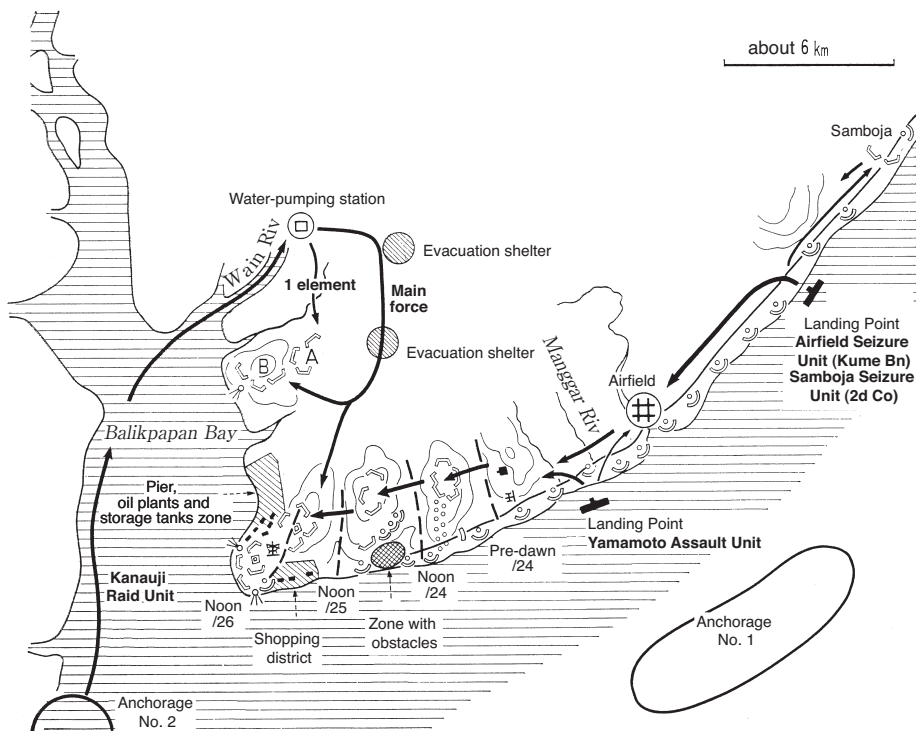


Illustration No. 32 — Information on Balikpapan, and Schematic Map of the Capture [Operation]

On the morning of the 20th [at a point] off Samarinda, the party was spotted by a Dutch flying boat, which picked up the two [Dutch] captains, [sent as] messengers, and left.^(87, 139)

The remaining five members of the party kept going southward and reached [a point] off Samboja around 1600 on the same day, where they temporarily anchored to wait for the reply from the commander of Balikpapan [garrison]. Around 1800, a messenger came to the boat displaying a flag of truce with a letter from the Balikpapan [garrison] commander, which read: "The key facilities have already been burned down on the 18th before the message from the Japanese army was delivered." The scheme to prevent the destruction [of the facilities] by fire before the fact came too late. While the two indigenous police officers, who acted as guides and the interpreters went ashore near Samboja by canoe at 0200 on the 21st, the gasoline boat headed back. Around noon on the 22d it met the convoy of the Sakaguchi Detachment, and returned to Tarakan on the evening of the 23d. On the 21st, the party of the guides and the others, who had landed near Samboja, headed for [the area] north of Balikpapan while crossing the mountains on foot. They passed through the minefields in the northern suburbs of Balikpapan on the morning of the next day, the 22d, and reached the Sumber River around 1500, where they rented a boat for fifty yen and went down the river. They stood by at the mouth of the river until the evening of the 23d. From around 2130 that night with their lamps lit, they waited for the Kanauji Raid Unit to appear at the mouth of the river.^(87, 139)

The Sailing of the Convoy and the Surprise Attacks on the Anchorage

(See Illustrations No. 33 and No. 34)

The convoy of a total of sixteen ships, [consisting of] eight ships with the Sakaguchi Detachment [on board] and eight transport ships of the Navy, had left the port of Tarakan at 1700 on the 21st and headed southward under the escort of one light cruiser (the *Naka*), nine destroyers, four minesweepers, three submarine chasers, and three patrol boats, led by 1st Escort Unit Commander ([and also] the 4th Destroyer Squadron Commander) Rear Admiral Nishimura.⁽¹¹⁹⁾

What was known about the situation in the air and at sea at that time was roughly as follows:⁽¹¹⁹⁾

1. Whereas the allied naval surface forces have been moving southward one after another out of reach of our air power and are staying in the Java Sea showing little fight, one element of the force seems to be maneuvering in the Makassar Strait.
2. A couple of submarines are spotted between Tarakan and Balikpapan every day, in addition to those that constantly appear off Tarakan.
3. There seem to be some destroyers, patrol vessels, minelayers, and torpedo boats in Balikpapan.
4. Dutch planes have been launching fairly aggressive counterattacks from airfields in various places, especially from secret airfields unknown [to us]. [Editor's note: The airfield Samarinda II, which the Japanese did not discover until 24 January and did not occupy until early March after the Dutch capitulation.]
5. Our reconnaissance from the air on the 20th spotted fires and explosions everywhere at Balikpapan, Samarinda and other places.

On the 21st, nothing happened at sea.⁽¹¹⁹⁾

On the 22d, nothing happened during the morning. Around noon, the detachment encountered the boat that was (on its way back) [from] having taken the previously mentioned messengers and guides, and was briefed [on the situation]. Around 1800, the *Havana-maru* and the *Hankow-maru* with the Kanauji Raid Unit on board were separated [from the convoy]

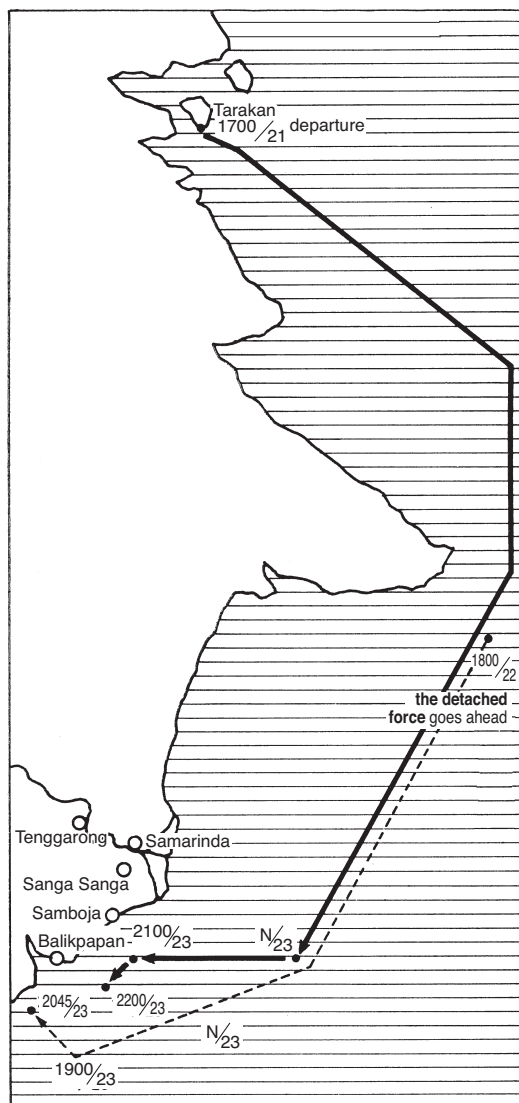


Illustration No. 33 — Outline of the [Operations] to Capture Balikpapan

and started advancing [ahead of the other ships] under the escort of two destroyers. Around 2300 the convoy crossed the equator.⁽¹¹⁹⁾

At 0005 on the 23d, the convoy of the Kanauji Raid Unit came under torpedo attack from an [enemy] submarine (four torpedoes [were launched]). At 1050, three allied aircraft flew in above the main convoy. From 1220 onwards, one allied aircraft reconnoitered the main convoy. [Then] at 1625, nine heavy and four light bombers of the allied forces came for an attack on the main convoy and did minor damage to the *Tatsugami-maru* (a naval munitions ship). In the meantime, at 1602 nine heavy and six light bombers strafed the Kanauji Raid Unit. At 1720, Rear Admiral Nishimura ordered minesweeping. However, around that time, one twin-engine aircraft came for an attack and caused a fire on the *Nan'a-maru* (a transport ship of the Eleventh Air Fleet), which [eventually] stalled the ship. At 2045, the convoy of the Kanauji Raid Unit (the *Havana-maru* and the *Hankow-maru*) completed entering into the anchorage. At 2230, the Raid Unit left the anchorage and started ascending the river in [landing] craft ([to be precise] four large and six small motorized [landing] craft, camouflaged with mangroves). As already described, the guides, consisting of the [two] indigenous police officers and others, were waiting [for them] from around 2130 with their lamp(s) lit. The *Havana-maru* and the *Hankow-maru* left the anchorage along with the two destroyers to join the main convoy (which was expected at 0900 on the 24th). Meanwhile, the main convoy also came under attack from [enemy] submarine(s) at 2040, but [the convoy] completed entering the anchorage at 2330.⁽¹¹⁹⁾

On the 24th at 0030, one small allied naval vessel appeared in the [anchorage] of the main force, and at 0040 the *Tsuruga-maru* (6,987 tons; with the Field Artillery Battalion headquarters, one field artillery battery, the Antiaircraft Artillery Battalion headquarters, the main force of the 2d Battery of the Antiaircraft Artillery Battalion, the main force of the medical unit, etc. on board⁽⁸⁸⁾) was sunk by torpedo(es).⁽¹¹⁹⁾ At that time, the transport ships were anchored in the following order:⁽¹¹⁹⁾

	<i>Sumanoura-maru</i>	
	<i>Kumagawa-maru</i>	
	<i>Nittei-maru</i>	
Coast	<i>Asahisan-maru</i>	<i>Tatsugami-maru</i>
	<i>Ehime-maru</i> (Army)	<i>Toei-maru</i>
	<i>Nisshō-maru</i> [<i>Hiteru-maru</i>] (Army)	<i>Kanayamasan-maru</i> [<i>Kayamasan-maru</i>]
	<i>Liverpool-maru</i> (Army)	<i>Kuretake-maru</i> (Army)
	<i>Tsuruga-maru</i> (Army)	<i>Teiryū-maru</i> (Army)

After a little while at 0140, Detachment Commander Sakaguchi ordered “the departure of the units to seize the airfield and the bridges.”⁽¹¹⁹⁾ The Kume Battalion (the Airfield Seizure Unit, in five large and five small motorized [landing] craft) and the main force of the Yamamoto Regiment (the Assault Unit, in five large and five small motorized [landing] craft) launched the landing [operations] all at once, and the first wave succeeded in landing at 0240.^(88, 119) Following them, the shuttle operation to land [the rest of the troops] was started. However, between 0420 and 0500, in the middle of the operation, allied naval vessels, which were judged to be three or four destroyers and one or two cruisers, appeared out of nowhere

like phantom killers, wreaked havoc in the dark, and disappeared like the wind.⁽¹¹⁹⁾ In an instant, the following loss was caused on our [Japanese] side:⁽¹¹⁹⁾

Sunk:

The *Sumanoura-maru* (auxiliary torpedo- and submarine-net layer and mine layer / oiler)

The *Tatsugami-maru* (munitions ship)

The *Kuretake-maru* (5,175 tons; with the 3d Battalion headquarters, the 12th Company, the 3d Machine Gun Company, and others on board)

Badly damaged:

Patrol boat No. 37

The *Asahisan-maru*

Slightly damaged:

The *Kumagawa-maru*

Note: The raiding [allied] naval vessels were four U.S. destroyers (the *USS [John D.] Ford*, *Pope*, *Parrott* and *Paul Jones*). On the 20th, having learned that the convoy of the Sakaguchi Detachment was heading southward, the joint headquarters of the United States, Britain, the Netherlands and Australia had six U.S. submarines and two Dutch submarines advance to the waters of Balikpapan from Surabaya as well as from the South China Sea, and [also] dispatched a task force ([consisting of] two light cruisers and four destroyers), which was refueling at Timor Island, to carry out a hit-and-run mission. Of this task force, the two light cruisers had troubles on the way, and [the remaining] four destroyers carried out the hit-and-run attack.^(51, etc.) For the four stealthily approaching destroyers, [the Japanese] convoy in the middle of the disembarkation operation against the backdrop of the land blazing with oil fires was of course an easy target.

At that time, the 1st Air Unit's *San'yō-maru* (with six Type-0 Observation Seaplanes and two Type-0 Reconnaissance Seaplanes) had left Tarakan on the 23d and was scheduled to reach Balikpapan on the 26th, while the *Sanuki-maru* (with six Type-0 Observation Seaplanes and two reconnaissance seaplanes) was to leave Tarakan on the 24th to reach Balikpapan on the 27th.^(131, 132) Furthermore, the main force of the 23d Air Flotilla (the 2d Air Raid Unit) was [still] in Jolo Island because the Tarakan airfield was not yet ready.^(104, 132) In the meantime, the operation to capture Kendari was going on in the east, simultaneously with the operation to capture Balikpapan. At 0930, Rear Admiral Nishimura received a telegram from the commander of the Dutch East Indies Unit, which said: "The main unit is hurrying to Balikpapan and will arrive there on the evening of the 24th."⁽¹¹⁹⁾

Occupation of the Balikpapan Sector

(See Illustration No. 34)

Although the Sakaguchi Detachment had two of its ships, the *Kuretake-maru* and the *Tsurugamaru*, torpedoed and sunk as mentioned previously, no more than thirty-nine men were killed in the sinking.⁽⁵³⁾ At 0240, the Kume and the Yamamoto Units succeeded in landing without meeting any resistance, seized the airfield and the bridges at daybreak as planned, and went on with their subsequent operations as scheduled.^(87, 119) The southwestward advance of the Yamamoto Unit (the Assault Unit) was hindered by the destroyed bridge(s) on the coastal road, but [the unit] managed to reach the north end of the city of Balikpapan at night.⁽⁸⁷⁾ As the Dutch East Indies garrison had already retreated from their positions, the Assault Unit

entered the city of Balikpapan at 0400 on the 25th with no engagements at all.^(87, 119)

The Raid Unit led by Battalion Commander Kanauji left its anchorage at 2230, and headed toward the prearranged waterway, keeping a distance of about 500 meters between its craft.^(87, 119) When passing in front of the Balikpapan stronghold, they were illuminated by searchlights as bright as daylight, but they managed [to pass] without being found out after all.⁽⁸⁷⁾ At 0330 on the 24th, the Raid Unit [successfully] got to the mouth of the Wain River, where the indigenous police officers were holding up signal lamp(s). One large motorized [landing] craft ran aground there, which threw the formation in disorder, and the vessels ascended the Wain River in disorderly fashion. However, at 1730 on the 24th, the main force reached the predetermined landing point under the guidance of the indigenous police officers.⁽¹¹⁹⁾ Early on the morning of the 25th, the Raid Unit Commander Kanauji sent one element of the force to seize the water-pumping station, had another powerful element



Obstacles Along the Coast in Front of Balikpapan

advance toward Balikpapan on a path along the water pipeline, and had the rest of the main force advance on the road between Batu Ampar and Balikpapan.⁽⁸⁷⁾ At 1440 when the main force of the Raid Unit advanced into Batu Ampar and was about to go on southward, it encountered the Dutch East Indies garrison commander and his men moving towards them in about one hundred vehicles with an armored car in front.⁽⁸⁷⁾ The Kanauji Unit defeated them, went [on] southward, and entered the city of Balikpapan.⁽⁸⁷⁾ By an investigation of the prisoners, it was learned that the Dutch East Indies garrison had had no idea at all about the detour of the Kanauji Raid Unit.⁽⁸⁷⁾

The detachment headquarters had landed after the Assault Unit and advanced behind the unit to enter Balikpapan on the morning of the 25th.⁽¹¹⁹⁾

On the 25th, the Sakaguchi Detachment completed occupying the whole urban area of the city. On the 26th, it started mopping up [the enemy] in the whole neighborhood and established a military administration. At the same time, it cooperated with the Navy in setting up the airfield.⁽⁸⁷⁾ Lt. Col. Kume Motozō became commander of the Kume Detachment, commanding the 1st Battalion and others. Having one element advance on the road between Balikpapan, Batu Ampar and Samarinda, and his main force on the road between Balikpapan, Samboja and Samarinda, he seized the oil fields in the whole area of Sanga Sanga and vicinity.⁽⁸⁷⁾

The loss sustained by the Sakaguchi Detachment in the operation to capture Balikpapan was eight men killed on land and thirty-nine at sea (most of the latter were missing).⁽⁵³⁾

After that, the Sakaguchi Detachment had its main force stationed in Balikpapan and vicinity, and the Kume Detachment in the Sanga Sanga area; while implementing the military administration, it also gathered information for the capture of Banjarmasin.⁽⁸⁸⁾

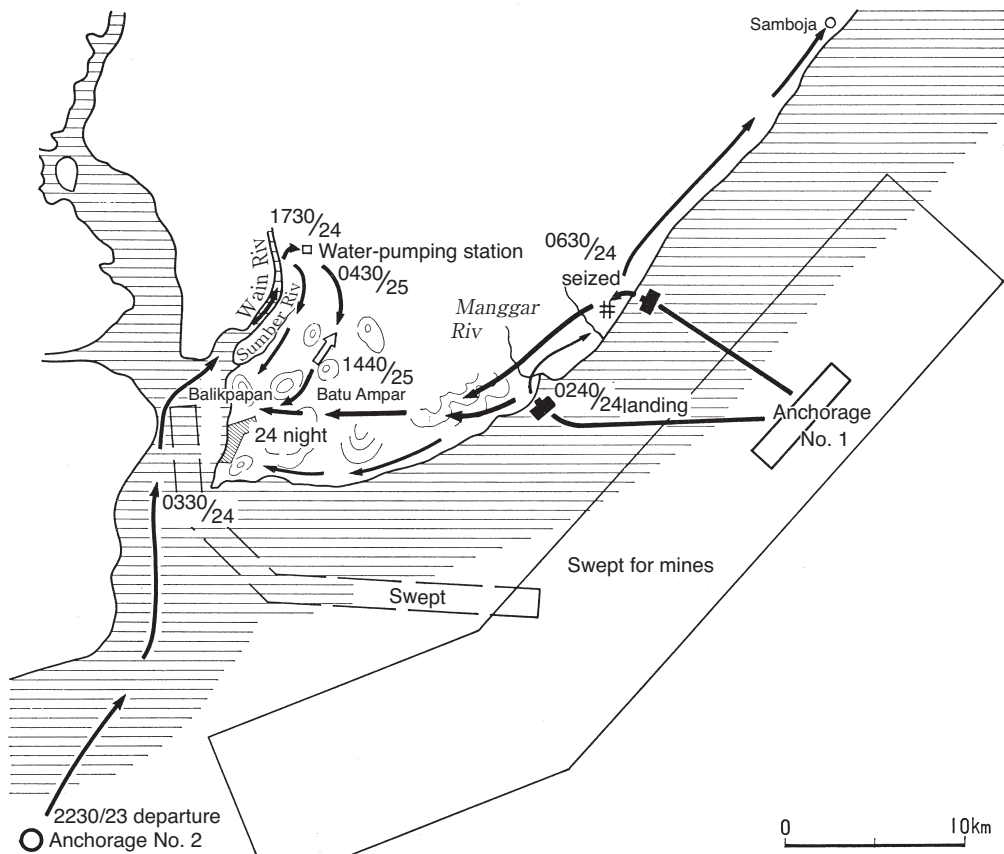


Illustration No. 34 — The Sakaguchi Detachment's Operation to Capture Balikpapan

As for the anchorage, on the 24th after the allied destroyers had gone, one [allied] heavy bomber came for an attack at 0812, which was followed by one [allied] flying boat at 0925, ten [allied] heavy bombers at 0950, seven [allied] heavy bombers at 1040, one [allied] flying boat at 1205, and eleven [allied] heavy bombers at 1710. On the next day, the 25th, ten [allied] heavy bombers came for an attack at 1000, which was [again] followed by seven [allied] heavy bombers at 1305, but they caused little damage.^(88, 119) The 1st Air Unit (the auxiliary seaplane tenders *San'yō-maru* and *Sanuki-maru*) arrived in Balikpapan on the 26th, and on the same day, the 2d Base Force (which had left Tarakan on the 24th), arrived as well.^(125, 131, 132) On the 28th, nine fighter planes of the 23d Air Flotilla advanced [to Balikpapan] and its headquarters [also] advanced there on the 30th.^(104, 143) The 2d Base Force removed fifty-seven mines by 5 February.⁽¹²⁵⁾ The main unit of the Dutch East Indies Unit turned around on the evening of the 25th and returned to Davao on the evening of the 26th.⁽¹⁰³⁾

The 44th Field Antiaircraft Artillery Battalion ([consisting of] two batteries) reported that it had fired 180 shells from its ship at fifty-two Douglas B-18A and forty-six Boeing B-17 bombers during the period from 23 January to 3 February and caused damage to three planes.⁽⁸⁸⁾

(2) The Capture of Kendari

Simultaneously with the operation to capture Balikpapan, the operation to capture Kendari was carried out independently by the Navy. The strategic significance of Kendari and the change in the invasion schedule have previously been related.

The operation to capture Kendari was carried out by R. Adm. Takagi Takeo, commander of the Eastern Attack Unit ([and] the 5th Cruiser Division), with the following disposition of the forces:⁽¹¹⁴⁾

Support unit: [consisting of] the 5th Cruiser Division ([with] the heavy cruisers *Haguro* and *Nachi*) and one section of the 6th Destroyer Division; assigned for general support.

1st Base Unit: led by the 1st Base Force commander; [consisting of] the light cruiser *Nagara*, the 15th and the 16th Destroyer Divisions, the main force of the 1st Base Force, and the main force of the Sasebo Combined Special Landing Force as the core; assigned for the capture of Kendari.

2d Escort Unit: [consisting of] the light cruiser *Jintsu* and the 8th Destroyer Division, led by the 2d Destroyer Squadron commander, assigned to cooperate with the 1st Base Unit.

2d Air Unit: [consisting of] the 11th Seaplane Tender Division (the seaplane tenders *Chitose* and *Mizuho*), assigned to cooperate with the 1st Base Force in its antisubmarine guarding and its landing operation.

The invasion unit departed from the Bangka anchorage on 21 January, came ashore in Kendari at 0428 on the 24th, and seized the airfield at 1700 on the same day.⁽¹¹⁷⁾ The support unit, which had departed from Davao on the 22d, kept guard [against enemy]. However there were no counterattacks by the allied navy, and it returned to Davao on the 26th.⁽¹¹⁴⁾

The 21st Air Flotilla (the 1st Air Raid Unit) had supported the operation from Menado, and as early as on the 25th, thirty planes advanced to the Kendari airfield.⁽¹⁴³⁾

The *Chitose* and the *Mizuho* had left the Bangka anchorage on the 21st and advanced to Salabangka Channel (north of Kendari) on the 24th [for the operation], but the *Chitose* left there on the 26th and returned to the Bangka anchorage on the 27th.⁽¹¹⁷⁾

6. The Capture of Ambon

Changes in the Plan to Capture Ambon

The Eastern Detachment landed on Ambon Island on 31 January in conjunction with the Navy. Being a historically famous place, Ambon was of strategic importance as well. Ambon was the foremost island of the Spice Islands (the Moluccas) and had served as the center of politics, the economy, and military affairs of the northeastern waters of the East Indies ever since the Dutch built their base in Ambon in 1599. The port, being [originally] a volcanic crater, was a deep-water inlet with deeply inward curving shorelines, while the peninsulas on both sides formed a natural stronghold, which made it a natural naval port. With the port as its center, further fortifications had been built. Added to that, there was a good air base. Together with Kupang, Ambon was an outpost of the Australian forces and it was an area that could become an offensive base for the U.S. and Australian forces.

As related previously, before the opening of hostilities, the plan to capture Ambon was very vague due to many uncertain factors. However, after the opening of hostilities, the decisive conditions [for the operation] were all of a sudden satisfied in less than a few days. The first was the success in the surprise attack on Hawaii, the second was the results in the battle off the coast of Malaya (in which two British battleships were sunk), and the third was the progress in the Hong Kong operation. The Eleventh Air Fleet, which had paid close attention to the British fleet (in the Malaya area), now could turn its attention to Ambon and so did the Combined Fleet. [The fleet] issued an order to dispatch the 2d Carrier Division ([consisting of] the aircraft carriers *Sōryū* and *Hiryū*), which had returned from the air strikes on Hawaii [to the area]. In concert [with the Navy], the Southern Army, for its part, decided to employ Detachment B instead of the South Seas Detachment and also increased the strength [of the detachment] from two battalions to three. Then, in the Cam Ranh Agreement (of 1 January), it was stipulated to "capture [Ambon] on 25 January."

However, due to the delay in the [Navy's] shift from the Philippines operation to the Dutch East Indies operation, the schedule was postponed for one day on 6 January, then for another three days on 15 January due to reports on [enemy] submarines in the Molucca Sea, and [again] for another two days on 19 January. In the end, it was decided to carry out [the operation] to capture [the island] on 31 January. The reasons for the two-day postponement on 19 January were related to the redeployment of the forces assigned to the capture of Kendari, the transport of the 1st Kure Special Landing Force and the 6th [3d on p. 367] Construction Squad, which were to advance into Ambon, [the situation of] the transport ship(s) for the air base materials of the Eleventh Air Fleet, the current situation of the air raids against Ambon, and others. The change in the schedule was decided in such a way that the Sixteenth Army [simply] agreed to the proposals made by the [Navy] Dutch East Indies Unit. Having learned about the change, the Southern Army admonished the Sixteenth Army that the latter "must obtain the approval of the Southern Army before making such a significant change."⁽²³⁾

24)

[The Ambon Operation] in Relation to the Navy's Shift to Phase-Three Operations

As we have seen, in the operational phases of the Navy, phase-two operations covered basically the period until the moment [the Navy] put ashore the main force of the Malaya invasion army.

The Combined Fleet had issued the order that "the shift to phase-three operations shall take effect as of 1200 on 24 January."⁽¹¹⁷⁾ What was so significant about 24 January? It was the day when the staff officers of the Southern Army and the Southern Task Force, and the officers concerned of the Sixteenth Army and the Dutch East Indies Unit started on their way back from Manila, where the former had discussed the changes in the invasion schedule, and the latter had made arrangements for the Dutch East Indies operation. It was also the day when the landing [operations] in Balikpapan and Kendari were carried out. And, one week earlier (on 17 January), the Endau and Mersing landing operation (which was assigned to the 56th Division in the original plan, but which was later reassigned to the 18th Division instead) had been cancelled, and two days before that day (on 22 January), the 18th Division had launched its operation to land in Singora.⁽²³⁾

Although the Combined Fleet had passed down the order to shift to phase-three operations on 24 January, the units on site were still in confusion. This was first of all because of the already described issue that the word "around" was attached to the dates in the invasion schedule; secondly because of the previously mentioned issue of the capture of Banjarmasin; and thirdly because of the fact that changes were made in the schedule of the operations currently under way. Above all, the Banjarmasin issue was the biggest issue. Whether the operation to capture the city was to be conducted [both] by the Army and the Navy in conjunction or not would affect the employment of the fleet. As we have seen, the schedule informally set at the Manila Conference was officially fixed on the day when the Banjarmasin issue was settled, which was 28 January. Consequently, the employment of the fleet was not fixed until after that date.

It was in such a period of transition [from one operational phase to the other] that the unit [assigned] to capture Ambon left Davao and carried out the landing in Ambon.

Departure of the Eastern Detachment from Hong Kong and Its Arrival in Davao

On the 30th [of December], Lt. Gen. Sano Tadayoshi, commander of the 38th Division, who had launched the attack on Hong Kong on 8 December, forced its surrender on the 25th, and had a triumphal entry on the 28th, received the order of the Twenty-third Army to organize the Eastern Detachment and prepare for its dispatch.⁽⁷⁶⁾ As already described, the Cam Ranh Agreement was [informally] reached between the Southern Army and the Southern Task Force the day before (on the 29th).

As mentioned previously, on 3 January at Guangdong, Sixteenth Army Commander Imamura met the staff officers of the 38th Division which, on the next day, the 4th, was transferred to the order of battle of the Sixteenth Army. The next day, the 5th, the Southern Army ordered the Sixteenth Army to capture Bangka, Palembang, Ambon and Kupang. Sixteenth Army Commander Imamura (i.e. 38th Division Commander Sano) had organized the Eastern Detachment, which was assigned to capture Ambon and Kupang, as follows:⁽⁷⁶⁾

Eastern Detachment

Commander: 38th Infantry Group Commander Maj. Gen. Itō Takeo
 38th Infantry Group headquarters
 228th Infantry Regiment
 Light-armored Car Unit
 2d Battalion of the 38th Mountain Artillery Regiment
 3d Company of the 38th Engineer Regiment (minus one platoon)
 One element of the 38th Divisional Signal Unit
 One platoon of the 38th Transport Regiment
 One element of the 38th Divisional Medical Unit
 38th Divisional 1st Field Hospital (minus one half)
 One element of the 38th Divisional Sick Horse Depot
 3d Battery of the 23d Antiaircraft Artillery Regiment
 1st Battery of the 44th Field Antiaircraft Artillery Battalion
 2d Battery of the 2d Independent Antitank Gun Battalion
 One independent engineer company



Commander of the 38th
 Infantry Group
 Maj. Gen. Itō Takeo

Water supply and purification department
One element of the anchorage headquarters

Maj. Tosaka Susumu, staff officer of the 38th Division, was attached to the detachment. The detachment, which was expected to depend mainly on packhorses but also to use motor vehicles, consisted of 5,300 men, 400 horses, and 110 motor vehicles, and for the operation carried ammunition for about half a campaign, and provisions and fodder, and other supplies for about half a year.⁽⁷⁶⁾

On 30 December, the Southern Task Force (the Second Fleet) issued an order to escort the Eastern Detachment to Davao with one section of the 8th Destroyer Division (of the 2d Destroyer Squadron; it had originally been assigned to the main unit of the Southern Task Force and then transferred to the Malaya Unit to escort [the units of] the second landing of the Fifteenth Army in southern Thailand).⁽¹¹⁷⁾ The section arrived in Hong Kong on 4 January. On that day, the Southern Task Force gave an order to also commit the 2d section of the destroyer division [to the task].⁽¹¹⁷⁾

However, the arrival of the army radio unit and others, which were being brought together from afar to be transferred to the Eastern Detachment, had been delayed and so had the preparation of matériel, about which Sixteenth Army Staff Officers Saiki, Nishiura and others had racked their brains, as previously described. [Editor's note: Apart from the general description of the shipping problems in Chapter V, no specific description concerning the Eastern Detachment was found.] [Eventually,] the [scheduled] departure date (of 9 January) was inevitably postponed until the 12th. On 6 January, in conformity to the arrangements between the Dutch East Indies Unit and the Sixteenth Army of that day (which was mentioned earlier), Dutch East Indies Unit Commander Vice Admiral Takahashi transmitted an order that "the 8th Destroyer Division commander shall escort the Itō Detachment to Davao by 18 January, leaving Hong Kong on 12 January; arrangements shall be made with Detachment Commander Itō at Hong Kong on the 11th."⁽¹¹⁷⁾

The situation at the time of the arrangements was as described previously. Being sent off by Colonels Takashima Tatsuhiko and Kitamura Yoshifuto, who were specially dispatched [there] by [Sixteenth] Army Commander Imamura, the Eastern Detachment departed from Hong Kong on the 12th and first headed for Davao under escort of the 1st Section of the 8th Destroyer Division (the *Ōshio* and the *Asashio*).^(34, 117) The 2d Section (the *Michishio* and the *Arashio*) left Magong on the 13th and joined the convoy [at a point] south of Taiwan on the same day.⁽¹¹⁷⁾ The Eastern Detachment had embarked on the following ships:⁽⁷⁶⁾

Miike-maru (12,000 tons): headquarters, and the units under direct control.

Africa-maru (9,000 tons): regimental headquarters, and the 3d Battalion.

Ryōyō-maru (6,000 tons): main force of the Artillery Battalion and one element of infantry.

Zen'yō-maru (6,000 tons): 1st Battalion as the core.

Yamaura-maru (6,000 tons): 2d Battalion as the core.

Apart from the *Ryōyō-maru*, the other four ships arrived in Davao at 1115 on 18 January under the escort of the *Ōshio* and the *Michishio*, as they were fast ships and could sail at a speed of twelve knots or over. The *Ryōyō-maru* arrived in Davao at 1930 on the next day, the 19th, under the escort of the *Asashio* and the *Arashio*.⁽¹¹⁷⁾

Operation Plan (See Illustrations No. 35 and No. 36)

Detachment Commander Itō, who arrived in Davao on 18 January, put under his command the antiaircraft artillery battery which had been left there by Detachment Commander Sakaguchi,⁽⁸⁸⁾ and immediately set about making arrangements with the Navy side.

At that time, the situation in the eastern area of the Dutch East Indies was roughly as follows: On the 11th, the Sakaguchi Detachment and the Western Attack Unit had conducted the landing operation in Tarakan, and the Eastern Attack Unit in Menado, while the commander of the 2d Destroyer Squadron had returned to Davao the day before (on the 17th), after having completed its support of the Menado landing operation. While the Western Attack Unit was making preparations to carry out the coming Balikpapan landing operation (on the 24th) in conjunction with the Sakaguchi Detachment, the Eastern Attack Unit was preparing for the coming operation to capture Kendari (on the 24th), which would mainly be conducted by the 1st Base Unit. [The Eastern Attack Unit] was also about to start preparations for the subsequent operation to capture Ambon, which would mainly be carried out by the 2d Destroyer Squadron ([though the operation] which had been scheduled for the 29th, was on the 19th postponed until the 31st).⁽¹⁰²⁾ The headquarters of the 21st Air Flotilla (the 1st Air Raid Unit) had advanced from Davao to Menado on the 16th.⁽¹⁰⁴⁾ The main unit of the Dutch East Indies Unit was positioned in Davao to support the operation to capture Balikpapan.⁽¹⁰³⁾ The main unit of the Southern Task Force, which had shifted its position from Cam Ranh Bay via Magong to support the operations in the eastern area of the Dutch East Indies, arrived in Palau that day (the 18th).⁽¹⁰³⁾ The 2d Carrier Division (the aircraft carriers *Sōryū* and *Hiryū*) assigned to support the Ambon invasion operation had left the Bungo Channel on the 13th and were heading southward.⁽¹⁰³⁾

Considerable difficulties were expected in the operations to capture Kendari (landing to be executed on 24 January) and Ambon (on 31 January), in view both of their location and the situation of the allied forces. Eventually, it was decided that those operations should be conducted in the following way:⁽¹¹⁴⁾

Eastern Attack Unit (led by the 5th Cruiser Division commander)

Support Unit: 5th Cruiser Division (the heavy cruisers *Haguro* and *Nachi*), and the 2d Section of the 6th Destroyer Division, assigned to support [the operations to] capture Kendari and then Ambon.

1st Base Unit: the light cruiser *Nagara*, the 15th and the 16th Destroyer Divisions, and the 1st Base Force shall capture Kendari from Bangka. After the capture, the 16th and the 15th Destroyer Divisions shall head for Ambon, the 16th Destroyer Division from the Bangka anchorage after [once] returning there, and the 15th [directly] from Kendari.

2d Escort Unit: The commander, [i.e.] the 2d Destroyer Squadron commander, shall support the 1st Base Unit in [the operation to] capture Kendari with the light cruiser *Jintsū* and the 8th Destroyer Division (which had returned to his command after escorting the Eastern Detachment from Hong Kong to Davao) while preparing for the capture of Ambon. After completing the operation to capture Kendari, he shall execute [the operation to] capture Ambon also employing the 16th Destroyer Division ([which will join from] the Bangka anchorage) and the 15th Destroyer Division ([from] Kendari), both of which will have returned to his command as mentioned above.

2d Air Unit (the 11th Seaplane Tender Division): After supporting the operation to capture Kendari, the seaplane carrier *Chitose* shall return to the Bangka anchorage, and the *Mizuho*

to the Salabangka Channel (north of Kendari), and both shall take part in the operation to capture Ambon from these anchorages.

On the 18th, when Detachment Commander Itō arrived in Davao, and on the next day, the 19th, the staff officers of the Southern Task Force and the Dutch East Indies Unit held meetings with the commanders and staff officers of the 5th Cruiser Division and the 2d Destroyer Squadron to discuss the plans.^(114, 117) On that day, the 19th, the operation to capture Ambon scheduled for the 29th was postponed until the 31st for the reasons previously described. On the next day, the 20th, Detachment Commander Itō and R. Adm. Tanaka Raizō, commander of the 2d Destroyer Squadron, made a [draft] arrangement, which was signed on the next day, the 21st.⁽¹¹⁷⁾ On that day (the 21st), Rear Admiral Tanaka [also] made arrangements with the 21st Air Flotilla, and on the following day, the 22d, he gathered his commanding officers in Davao and passed down the 2d Escort Unit order.⁽¹¹⁷⁾ Around the same time, Detachment Commander Itō also issued his detachment order.

At that time, the situation known about Ambon Island was roughly as follows:⁽¹²⁸⁾

1. The strength of the Dutch East Indies garrison guarding Ambon Island was estimated at about one thousand troops, but it seems that it has recently been reinforced by about two thousand Australian troops.
2. Mines are laid at the entrance of Ambon Bay and at Baguala Bay.
3. There seem to be coastal batteries on the shores both north and south of the entrance to Ambon Bay. It is certain that there are anti-aircraft battery positions [around] the sea[plane] base in Halong as well as at the Laha airfield.
4. Taking all information into account, it seems that the whole of Ambon Island has been turned into a stronghold, and that particularly strong defense facilities have been built in the neighborhood of the city of Ambon and to the west of the Laha airfield with the area of Ambon Bay serving as the front gate defense and the Baguala Bay area as the back gate defense.

The Eastern Detachment was merely provided with several maps that were no better than rough sketches apparently taken from intelligence survey maps.⁽⁷⁸⁾ Although it was [also] provided with some aerial photographs taken by navy aircraft, needless to say, these could never clearly show the terrain and the disposition of the [enemy] garrison in detail.⁽⁷⁸⁾ Judging that the allied forces on the island would defensively try to secure strategic points near the city of Ambon, the Eastern Detachment decided to land on the east coast of the southeastern peninsula, where the defense was considered weak, so that it could catch and destroy the main force [of the enemy] on the southeastern peninsula and promptly seize the strategic points on Ambon.⁽⁷⁸⁾ It was decided that ammunition, provisions and fodder required in the early operations after the landing should be carried along, and that the rest should be unloaded and supplied by the transport ships which would be brought around to Ambon Bay after the capture of Ambon. And it was [also] decided that the landing should be carried out before daybreak on 31 January from the drifting transport ships.⁽⁷⁸⁾ [Editor's note: The sea was apparently too deep to anchor.] [Further] it was decided that the Navy should have the 1st Kure Special Landing Force go ashore from the Hitu-lama anchorage and head for the Laha airfield.⁽¹²⁸⁾ From the Army, 1st Lt. Wakabayashi Tōichi's company was attached to the [naval] landing force,⁽⁷⁸⁾ making the force a total of 745 men.⁽¹²⁸⁾



A View of the Landing Beach on Ambon

R. Adm. Takagi Takeo, commander of the Eastern Attack Unit ([and] 5th Cruiser Division commander), deployed his force in the following way:⁽¹¹⁴⁾ The 2d Destroyer Squadron properly consisted of the *Jintsū* (a light cruiser), and the 8th, the 15th, the 16th and the 18th Destroyer Divisions (four destroyers each), but the 18th Destroyer Division had been assigned to the Carrier Task Force.⁽¹¹⁷⁾

Support Unit: [consisting of] the 5th Cruiser Division (the heavy cruisers *Haguro* and *Nachi*) and the *Ikazuchi* of the 6th Destroyer Division; [assigned to] support all the operations.

2d Escort Unit: [consisting of] the light cruiser *Jintsū*, the 8th, the 15th, and the 16th Destroyer Division, the main force of the 1st Kure Special Landing Force, and the 3d [6th on p. 362] Construction Squad as the core, led by the 2d Destroyer Squadron commander; [assigned to] (1) escort the units to capture Ambon, (2) capture Ambon in conjunction with the Army, and (3) seize the Ambon air base and make [the airfield] ready for use.

1st Base Unit: [consisting of] the main force of the 1st Base Force, the *Nagara* (a light cruiser of the 16th Cruiser Division), the 21st Destroyer Division (minus the *Hatsuharu*), and the Sasebo Combined Special Landing Force as the core; [assigned to] prepare for the capture of Makassar, and other tasks.

The 2d Air Unit: [consisting of] the 11th Seaplane Tender Division (with the seaplane tenders *Chitose* and *Mizuho*) as the core; [assigned to] (1) support the 2d Escort Unit, (2) guard against [enemy] submarines and aircraft, while supporting the ground combat.

It was decided that the 2d Escort Unit commander should escort the 1st echelon ([consisting of] the Itō Detachment) from Davao to Ambon with the [Navy] 1st detachment ([consisting of] the 8th Destroyer Division as the core), and the 2d echelon ([consisting of] the landing

force, construction squad and other units) from the Bangka anchorage to Ambon with the [Navy] 2d detachment (i.e. the 2d Section of the 16th Destroyer Division); that he should have the cover unit ([consisting of] the 15th Destroyer Division) advance eastward from Kendari for the cover [operation], and that he himself would form the main unit, directly leading the light cruiser *Jintsū* and the 1st Section of the 16th Destroyer Division and depart from the Bangka anchorage.⁽¹¹⁷⁾

Sailing, Landing and Capture (See Illustration No. 36)

As already described, on 21 January, the units to capture Balikpapan and Kendari departed from Tarakan and Menado respectively and started landing on the 24th. On that day (the 24th), the 2d Carrier Division (the *Sōryū* and the *Hiryū*, which had departed from the Bungo Channel on the 13th and been brought under the command of the commander in chief of the Eleventh Air Fleet) conducted an [air] strike on Ambon Island with their carrier aircraft, but having found no allied naval vessels or aircraft they mainly made the batteries and [military] facilities their target.⁽¹⁰³⁾ On the next day, the 25th, the 1st Air Raid Unit (the 21st Air Flotilla) had already advanced thirty aircraft to Kendari. The 21st Air Flotilla headquarters also advanced there from Menado on the 27th,⁽¹⁴³⁾ which completed [Japanese] preparations. Although the allied naval surface forces seemed to have escaped to the south of Timor Island and to the west of Makassar, [enemy] submarines were judged to be in the Molucca Sea.⁽¹¹⁷⁾

At 1530 on the 27th, the Eastern Detachment (the 1st echelon, [consisting of] the previously-mentioned five ships) departed from Davao under the escort of the [Navy] 1st detachment ([consisting of] the 8th Destroyer Division and minesweepers).⁽¹¹⁷⁾

On the 28th, the 1st Section of the 15th Destroyer Division departed from Kendari and headed for the east, while the *Jintsū* and the 2d Section of the 15th Destroyer Division left the Bangka anchorage.⁽¹¹⁷⁾

On the 29th, the 2d echelon ([consisting of] six navy transport ships) left the Bangka anchorage under escort of the 16th Destroyer Division.⁽¹¹⁷⁾ On that day, the seaplane tender *Chitose* left the Bangka anchorage, while the *Mizuho* left the Salabangka Channel.⁽¹⁰³⁾ On the same day, the 1st echelon detected allied submarine(s) for the first time, but they were not attacked.⁽¹¹⁷⁾

On the 30th, the Support Unit (which had departed from Davao on the 29th) advanced to the Bangka anchorage.⁽¹¹⁴⁾ One [enemy] bomber approached the convoy at 0745 and [another] at 1320, but they conducted no air attacks.⁽¹¹⁷⁾ The 2d echelon came under a torpedo attack of [enemy] submarine(s) at 2216, but sustained no damage. It entered the Hitu-lama anchorage at 2300.⁽¹¹⁷⁾ The 1st echelon entered the Rutung anchorage in the middle of the night (at 0020 on the 31st) without being attacked by [enemy] submarine(s) at all.⁽¹¹⁷⁾ Command of the air and the sea was in [Japanese] hands.

At 0030 on the 31st, the Eastern Detachment completed its entrance into the anchorage, and at 0215 completed its shift to the [landing] craft. Without encountering major resistance, the detachment successfully came ashore in the area east of Rutung in front of the enemy. The right attack unit ([consisting of] the 2d Battalion (minus the 7th Company) of the 228th Infantry Regiment as the core) landed at 0240, and the left attack unit ([consisting of] the 228th Infantry Regiment (minus the 2d Battalion and the 10th Company), an antitank gun unit, and a light-armored car unit) landed at 0250.⁽⁷⁶⁾ Major General Itō sent a telegram [to

the Navy] to express his gratitude, saying, "Thanks to your support, we have succeeded in landing. We sincerely appreciate the escort which you so devotedly provided."⁽¹¹⁷⁾

Following the landing, both attack units of the Eastern Detachment single-mindedly pushed ahead and advanced toward the city of Ambon braving the heavy rains and steep mountains.⁽⁷⁶⁾ The right attack unit ([with] 2d Battalion Commander Maj. Kimura Eijirō as its commander) seized the strong position near Paso, which was fortified with several lines of obstacles and pill-boxes, after which it charged into the city with one element at 2030, and into Halong with its main force at 0500 on 1 February.⁽⁷⁶⁾ The main force of the left attack unit ([with] Regimental Commander Col. Doi Sadashichi as its commander) defeated some scattered allied units and charged into the city of Ambon at 1700 on the 31st.⁽⁷⁶⁾ The allied units positioned in the Paso and the Halong area got hemmed in between the [Japanese] right attack unit, which had been advancing [into Paso and Halong], and the left attack unit, which had captured the city of Ambon. First of all, Lieutenant Colonel Kapitz, the Dutch East Indies garrison commander and his men, about 800 in total (including indigenous troops), laid down their arms at 0230 on 1 February.⁽⁷⁶⁾

In the Hitu-lama area, the 1st Kure Special Naval Landing Force had departed in its [landing] craft at 0120 and tried to go ashore around 0200, but it encountered fierce resistance from allied units and did not succeed in landing until 0320. Following the seizure of Hitu-lama, it rushed toward the Laha airfield, advanced to the front of the airfield at 1530, and launched an attack at 1600. However, it could not move at all due to concentrated mortar fire. At nightfall, the commander of the landing force requested bombardments on the next day, the 1st.⁽¹²⁸⁾ [Then,] 1st Lt. Wakabayashi Tōichi, commander of the 10th Company of the 228th Infantry Regiment, which was attached to the [naval] landing force (he had graduated from the Imperial Japanese Military Academy with distinction and received citations of merit for [his contribution in] the previous Hong Kong operation and the subsequent Guadalcanal operation; Detachment Commander Itō and Regimental Commander Doi had expressly selected his company to be attached to the Navy) proposed [to outflank the enemy]. He went into the jungle with his company in the dark night (at 2100 on the 31st) in order to seize the highlands north of the Laha airfield in a surprise attack by making a detour through the jungle.^(76, 128)

On 1 February, the naval landing forces in front of the Laha airfield repeatedly wired requests for air strikes at around 0600, around 0900 and around 1200.⁽¹¹⁷⁾ The telegrams said: "There are four rows of barbed wire entanglements, and twenty or more pillboxes at the front; besides the mortar fire from the front, [we are] exposed to lateral shelling, fired from the battery in front of the Doi Regiment; [what is more] the Wakabayashi Company's move-



*Detachment Commander Itō and Staff Officer
Tosaka [at] the Eastern Detachment Headquarters
Right After the Landing on Ambon*

ments are unknown; we request air strikes."⁽¹¹⁷⁾ [Editor's note: the so-called Nona battery, a coastal battery to the southeast of Ambon city, could not be turned to the direction of Ambon but was employed to fire by the map across the bay at the Laha airfield and the road leading to it.]

Because he had split the allied forces in a northern and southern group through his seizure of [the city] of Ambon on the previous evening (the 31st), and moreover had forced the surrender of the commander of the Dutch East Indies garrison at Halong at daybreak the following morning, Detachment Commander Itō expected that he could seize the stronghold in the southern part of the peninsula by the end of the day. So, from early morning, he sent the left attack unit southward and had the right attack unit mop up [the enemy] in Halong and Paso.⁽⁷⁶⁾ On seizing the highlands east of Ambon at 0800 that day (the 1st), the left attack unit commander, Col. Doi Sadashichi, immediately headed southward and launched an attack at 1100, positioning the 3d Battalion (commander: Maj. Nishiyama Haruka) and the 1st Battalion (commander: Maj. Hayakawa Kikuo) at the right and the left front lines respectively.⁽⁷⁶⁾ However, the [enemy] unit they were facing was a strong Australian force, and [what is more,] apart from several lines of barbed wire entanglements and many pillboxes, there was a gun battery and the terrain was steep. The [Japanese] attack had made little progress by the time night fell. Detachment Commander Itō wired the Navy: "The enemy is putting up stubborn resistance with [only] one small caliber gun. [As] we intend to seize Highland [of] 514 [meters high] tonight, we request air strikes and shelling of the southern side of Highland 514 (exclusive of the highland itself) tomorrow, the 2d."⁽¹¹⁷⁾



Commander of the
228th Regiment, Col.
Doi Sadashichi

On the next day, the 2d, at the Laha airfield, the naval landing force charged into a corner of the airfield at dawn. However, the attack made little progress after that, and it seemed that the commander of the force, Cdr. Ieki Kōnosuke, had been killed as well.⁽¹¹⁷⁾ Requests for air strikes were repeated by the landing force.⁽¹¹⁷⁾ At 1030, 2d Destroyer Squadron Commander Rear Admiral Tanaka requested Major General Itō to send Army reinforcements.⁽¹¹⁷⁾ They tried to bring [landing] craft [into Halong] and take [the reinforcements] across Ambon Bay from Halong to the Laha airfield and put them ashore, but it was impossible to bring the [landing] craft into Halong.⁽¹¹⁷⁾ At 0800 on that day, Rear Admiral Tanaka ordered to sweep mines in the bay for the first time, and under cover of the 15th Destroyer Division, which, at 1045, had begun firing (eighty shells) at the [enemy] battery and the airfield, the 21st Minesweeper Division ([consisting of] five minesweepers) started minesweeping. However, between 1330 and 1400, one of them was sunk and two of them were heavily damaged, which led to the order to suspend the minesweeping at 1445.⁽¹¹⁷⁾ Major Kimura, commander of the right attack unit, who had been mopping up [the enemy] in the Halong and the Paso areas, had assembled the 2d Battalion (minus two companies) and waited for the [landing] craft to arrive. However, having learned that the craft would not come, he left Halong at 1600, and headed for Laha on the road along the inner edge of the bay.⁽⁷⁶⁾ [In the meantime,] at 1230 on that day, the Wakabayashi Company was heading southward after repelling some twenty enemy troops carrying machine guns in the highlands north of Laha, and was preparing to make a surprise attack on the airfield in the early morning of the next day, the 3d.⁽⁷⁶⁾ On that day, the 11th Seaplane Tender Division ([with] the seaplane tenders *Chitose* and *Mizuho*) sup-

ported the ground combat with their full force.⁽¹¹⁷⁾

On the next day, the 3d, at 0600, the Wakabayashi Company charged into the airfield from the rear.⁽⁷⁶⁾ At 0630, the garrison unit in Laha raised the white flag. The 1st Kure Special Landing Force reported to Rear Admiral Tanaka: "At 0630 on the 3d, we charged into the airfield again and completely seized it. The Laha airfield [has a runway of] 1,300 meters long and 60 meters wide, and ... will be completely ready for Type-0 fighter planes and land-based medium-sized attack planes to land this morning."⁽¹¹⁷⁾ At the time of charging into the airfield, Company Commander Wakabayashi had sent one element of his force to the river in the west in order to cut off the [enemy's] escape route.⁽⁷⁶⁾ In the afternoon, the naval landing force reported: "The

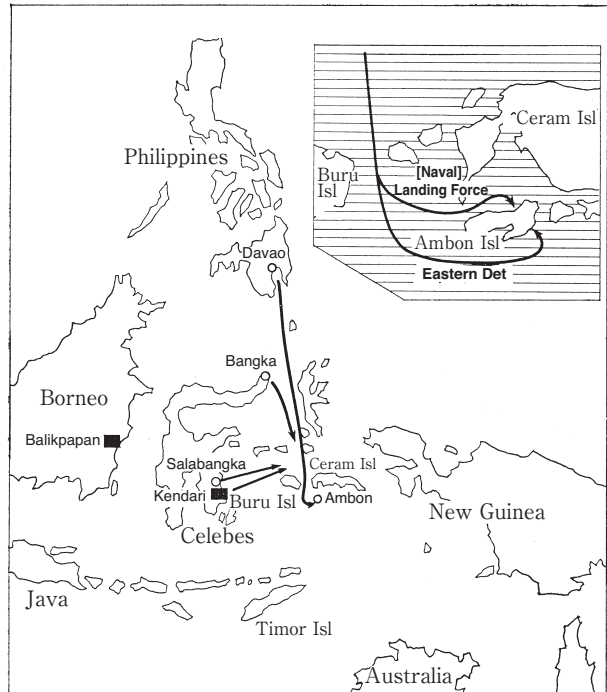


Illustration No. 35 — The Invasion of Ambon

Wakabayashi Unit experienced considerable difficulties due to the fact that the jungle was denser than expected, but all reached the airfield in safety at noon today."⁽¹¹⁷⁾ The fact was that the [enemy] garrison in Laha had raised the white flag because the main force of the Wakabayashi Company had charged into the airfield from the rear, but the ranking commanders of the Army did not talk much about it [in order to avoid disputes with the Navy].

The right attack unit had moved from Halong [to the airfield] in rapid night marches, but it was 0800 when it [finally] reached Suakodo east of Laha. By then the [enemy] garrison at the Laha airfield had already surrendered.⁽⁷⁶⁾ The garrison at the Laha airfield was made up of some four hundred Australian and Dutch troops.⁽⁷⁶⁾ Major Kimura reincorporated the Wakabayashi Company and in conjunction with the [naval] landing force mopped up [the enemy] in the vicinity, after which he returned to Halong at 0045 on 6 February.⁽⁷⁶⁾

After continuously attacking, the left attack unit ([consisting of] the main force of the 228th Infantry Regiment) seized Highland 514, the peninsula's strategic point, and got close to the southern tip of the peninsula on the 3d. At 1530 [on the 3d], the Australian main force (including indigenous troops), consisting of Lieutenant Colonel Scott and his men, some 1,500 troops in total, surrendered at last.⁽⁷⁶⁾

After the surrender of the main force of the Dutch and Australian forces near the Laha airfield and on the southeastern peninsula, the Eastern Detachment assumed the task of mopping up [the enemy] on the whole island and of implementing a military administration. However, as the [Navy] 24th Special Base Force ([with] R. Adm. Hatakeyama Kōichirō as commander) was organized on 5 February,⁽¹²⁷⁾ [the Eastern Detachment] transferred this task to the latter as of that day and started preparing for the next operation to capture Timor.^(76, 127) Due to the delay in the minesweeping of Ambon Bay, it was not until 8 February that the

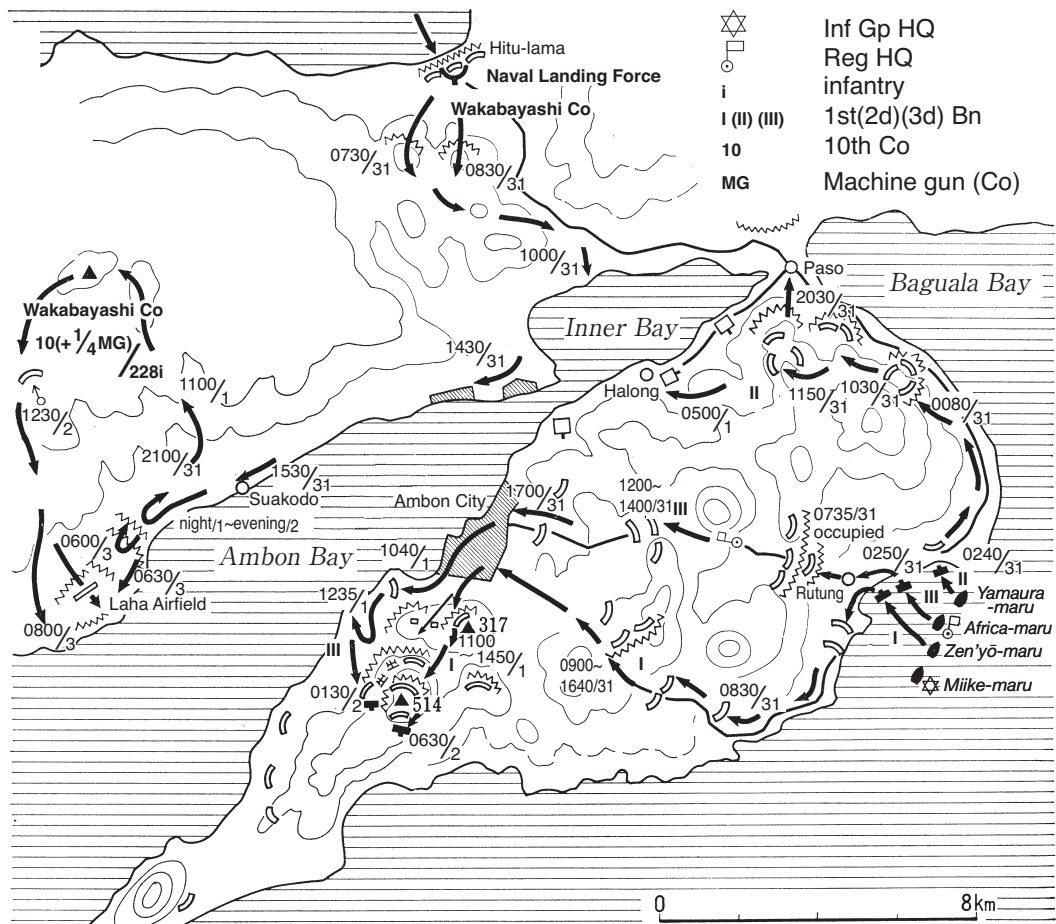


Illustration No. 36 — The Operation to Capture Ambon

five transport ships of the Eastern Detachment, which had been drifting off the coast of Rutung, were able to enter the port of Ambon.⁽¹¹⁷⁾

The number of allied troops the Eastern Detachment had engaged was about 3,000 ([consisting of] some 1,200 Australian troops, some 400 Dutch troops, and some 1,400 indigenous troops). The loss the detachment had sustained was fifty-five killed in action (including five officers), 135 wounded in action (including five officers), one horse killed, and four wounded. The military gains were as follows:⁽⁷⁶⁾

Abandoned dead bodies (confirmed): 340

Prisoners of war: 2,182 (782 Australian troops, 334 Dutch troops, and 1,066 indigenous troops)

Seized [weaponry, vehicles and aircraft]: two bombers, three flying boats, one 24-cm. howitzer, four 15-cm. guns, eight field guns ([with] 1,520 shells), two mountain guns ([with] 1,240 shells), six armored cars, two antitank rifles ([with] 235 bullets), four antiaircraft guns ([with] 168 shells), two tank guns ([with] 108 shells), five mortars ([with] 4,904 shells), six antiaircraft machine guns ([with] 13,990 shells), thirty-one machine guns ([with] 1,085,844 bullets), 261 light machine guns ([with] 31,900 bullets), 2,365 rifles ([with] 3,662,000 bullets), 128 motor vehicles, and others.

7. The Capture of Banjarmasin, Makassar, Bali and Timor

(1) Politico-Strategic Issues and Phase-Three Operations of the Navy

On 31 January, the Twenty-fifth Army advanced to the Johor Strait, landed on Singapore [Island] on the night of 8 February, and forced its surrender on the 15th. The day before (the 14th), the 1st [Paratroop] Raiding Group had conducted its drop on Palembang, while the 38th Division launched its landing operation on Sumatra on the 15th and seized Tanjungkarang on the 20th. Meanwhile, in the east the Eastern Detachment landed on Ambon on 31 January, the Yamamoto Unit (a powerful element of the Sakaguchi Detachment), which had left Balikpapan on 30 January, seized Banjarmasin on 10 February, and the Naval unit, which left Kendari on 6 February, seized Makassar on the 9th. Then, on 17 and 18 February the Eastern Detachment left Ambon and landed in Kupang and Dili on Timor Island on the 20th, while the Kanemura Detachment ([consisting of] one battalion of the 48th Division as the core) left Makassar on 18 February and landed on Bali on the 19th. [In the meantime] on the 19th, the Carrier Task Force (i.e. the First Air Fleet) conducted an air strike on Port Darwin in northwestern Australia. After that, on the 25th the main force of the Southern Task Force (directly led by the commander in chief of the Second Fleet) and the Carrier Task Force left Staring Bay and advanced into the sea south of Java. The Sixteenth Army carried out the Java landing operation on 1 March with the support of the Dutch East Indies Unit (i.e. the Third Fleet) and the air unit (i.e. the Eleventh Air Fleet), and the cooperation of the Malaya Unit (i.e. the First Southern Expeditionary Fleet). The capture of these key locations in the east took place against the following political and strategic background.

The Strategic Background and the Major Strategic and Tactical Issues

The major strategic and tactical changes in the plans to capture key areas east of Borneo and their implementation were in [chronological] outline as follows:

1. On 6 January, IGHQ replied to a question [by the Emperor] about the conduct of the phase-two operations by stating: "The matter of isolating Australia from the United States and the operations in the Indian Ocean are still being studied."⁽¹⁰⁾ On 10 January, concerning the immediate measures against Australia and New Zealand, the Liaison Conference between IGHQ and the Government decided: "To strive to cut Australia loose from its ties with the United States and Britain, while intensifying the pressure on Australia through the progress of the southern operation and the cutting-off of its communications with the United States and Britain."⁽³⁾

On 8 January, the main force of the Carrier Task Force (which had returned on 24 December to the Inland Sea after the air strikes on Hawaii) left the Inland Sea in order to support the Rabaul and the Kavieng landing operations, which were to be conducted both by the South Seas Detachment and the South Seas [Pacific Islands] Unit (i.e. the Fourth Fleet) in conjunction. Only the 2d Carrier Division (with the aircraft carriers *Sōryū* and *Hiryū*) headed for Ambon.^(53, 103)

2. At the Manila [conference] from 21 to 23 January, the Southern Task Force requested a ten to fourteen day postponement of the operation to capture the Dutch East Indies, but the Southern Army only approved a five day postponement for the western Java

[operation] and a seven day postponement for the eastern Java [operation].⁽²³⁾ At that time, the 21st and the 23d Air Flotillas were heading southward along Celebes and the east coast of Borneo respectively, and the 2d Carrier Division, which was additionally deployed above and beyond the [original] plan, was sailing southward towards Ambon. At that time, as the Southern Task Force (the Dutch East Indies Unit in particular) was painfully aware of the shortage of escort ships due to the shortened invasion schedule, it was informally agreed that the capture of Banjarmasin by both the Army and the Navy in conjunction should be cancelled, and that the Bali airfield should be seized right before the Java landing operation [instead].⁽²³⁾

3. On receiving a report of the above-mentioned draft agreement, the Army Department of IGHQ, which considered the plan of the Southern Army and the Southern Task Force to be risky, repeatedly wired the Southern Army from the 24th onwards to request the capture of Banjarmasin prior [to the Java operation] and [also] asked the Navy Department to let the Carrier Task Force cooperate in [the operation to] capture Java.⁽²³⁾
4. However, the Combined Fleet had already turned its interest to the northeastern part of Australia. On the 25th, on learning the views on subsequent operations from the Fourth Fleet, which had conducted the operations to land in Rabaul and Kavieng on 23 January, and the Carrier Task Force, which had supported these operations, the Combined Fleet approved of their views. On the 26th, [the Fleet] presented the plan "to have the Fourth Fleet capture Lae, Salamaua and Port Moresby in conjunction with the South Seas Detachment and have the Carrier Task Force carry out operations on the eastern part of Australia while cooperating in the [above operations]."^(100, etc.)

After completing the support for the landing operations in Rabaul and Kavieng, the Carrier Task Force returned to Truk on the 27th and set about preparing for the subsequent operation, expecting that "the next operation [would be] the implementation of the operation against the eastern part of Australia in mid-February."⁽¹²³⁾ On the 29th, the *Shōkaku*, an aircraft carrier of the 5th Carrier Division, left Truk for the mainland to replenish its aircraft.⁽¹¹⁶⁾

5. On the 29th, having approved the plan of the Combined Fleet regarding the capture of key locations in the southeastern area, the Navy Department of IGHQ issued IGHQ Navy Department Instruction No. 47, in which it gave directions "to capture Lae and Salamaua in eastern New Guinea, and Tulagi in the Solomon Archipelago, with a force [consisting of] the Fourth Fleet as the core, in conjunction with the South Seas Detachment and, if possible, [also] capture Port Moresby in southeastern New Guinea."⁽¹⁾
6. Although the Navy Department of IGHQ had given clear directions as to the employment of the Fourth Fleet, as in the above-mentioned IGHQ Navy Department Instruction of the 29th, at that time another employment plan for the Carrier Task Force emerged at the Navy Department of IGHQ, which was different from the Combined Fleet's view of the 26th. This plan was partly the result of the previously described [IGHQ] Army Department's request for the [Navy's] cooperation in the Java operation and partly the result of the 2d Carrier Division's proposal that the Carrier Task Force should conduct an operation against Port Darwin. Other considerations were that the landing operation on Bali, which was within a stone's throw from Surabaya, was risky [if only] under the cover of the Eleventh Air Fleet, whose losses would not have been

sufficiently replenished; that the military gains for the Carrier Task Force might be bigger if it participated in the operation to capture Java; and that on 24 January a detailed report had been received on the sinking of the U.S. aircraft carrier *Lexington*, [which was regarded as certain, and which diminished the need for the Task Force's presence in the southeastern area].^(100, 108)

7. On 28 January, the Army Department of IGHQ wired the Southern Army, saying: "Although there were various arguments about the seizure of Banjarmasin, we learned from OSAMU [Sixteenth Army] Operation Order A, No. 119 that the army planned to seize the airfield on its own and make it ready for use by early February. Since it became clear to us that you also intended to attach great importance to the place for the Java operation, we approved everything."⁽²³⁾ [Editor's note: The quotations on p. 226 and p. 389 in the Japanese text have slightly different redactions.] It was at this juncture that the policy inside the Navy Department of IGHQ as to the employment of the Carrier Task Force came to a turning point.⁽¹⁴⁷⁾

On the next day, the 29th, the Carrier Task Force, with the operations against the eastern part of Australia in mid-February in mind, sent the aircraft carrier *Shōkaku* from Truk to the mainland to replenish its aircraft,⁽¹²³⁾ but the order which the Navy Department of IGHQ issued on that day (the 29th) regarding the operations in the southeastern area was only an order for the unit [consisting of] the Fourth Fleet as the core [and not for the Carrier Task Force].⁽¹⁾

Notes:

As we have seen, on receiving a telegram from the Southern Army that the capture of Banjarmasin would be omitted, the Army Department of IGHQ wired back on 24 January, saying, "we are deeply concerned about ... in a situation where the cooperation of the aircraft carriers cannot necessarily be expected," and again sent another [reply] telegram to the Southern Army on the 26th, "we have also been negotiating about the cooperation from aircraft carriers in the Java operation. However, at present it cannot be expected for sure, as the Navy is extremely cautious about sending them to a dangerous sea where the enemy air force is [still] strong." [Editor's note: In Army General Staff Telegram No. 591, cited on p. 217, the word "dangerous" is absent.]

We have already explained the power of the B-17s, which raided Menado at that time, and the fact that the Southern Army had to give priority to the Palembang airfield in the paradrop operation for fear of the B-17s. According to the action report of the 44th Field Antiaircraft Artillery Battalion, B-17 super heavy bombers with a flying range of 1,680 kilometers raided Balikpapan on 24 January in four waves of seven, two, nine and three aircraft at a time (twenty-one aircraft in total). After dropping some forty bombs, all of them flew away in no hurry. [So,] in one view one could argue that "[the Navy] has to be cautious about sending the Carrier Task Force because the sea where the [enemy] B-17 [bombers] had command of the air was dangerous," but on the other hand, one could argue the view that "Port Darwin has to be attacked with the Carrier Task Force in order to contain the power of the B-17s."

8. By the morning of the next day, the 30th, the Army and Navy Departments of IGHQ had prepared the groundwork, so that Chief of the Army General Staff Sugiyama and Chief of the Navy General Staff Nagano could meet and the former could make the request which will be mentioned later.⁽¹⁴⁷⁾

On that day (the 30th), Kusaka Ryūnosuke, chief of staff of the First Air Fleet (i.e. the Carrier Task Force), who had been summoned from Truk (accompanied by Staff Officer Genda Minoru), held talks with the staff officers of the Navy Department of IGHQ and those of the Combined Fleet. [Editor's note: According to Vol. 80, p. 170, they just happened to be there.] As a result, it was decided that the entire force of the Carrier Task Force and one element of the Submarine Fleet (i.e. the Sixth Fleet) should participate in the Java operation.⁽¹⁰⁸⁾

As described previously, on that day (the 30th), Chief of the Army General Staff Sugiyama met with Chief of the Navy General Staff Nagano. Chief of the Army General Staff Sugiyama requested the cooperation [from the Navy] in the Burma operation and in the following words asked for cooperation in the Java operation as well, while [also] giving his view on the future conduct of the war:⁽²⁾

Request to Chief of Navy General Staff Nagano (30 [January])

(First part omitted by the author)

Needless to say, the Java operation is very difficult. [In fact,] in the light of the results of previous studies such as war games and others, the operations against Malaya and Java were deemed the most difficult. This can be said in particular about the air operations. As it is, in the Malaya operation, owing to divine aid and the close cooperation between the Army and the Navy, we were able to achieve brilliant military gains by conducting a surprise attack on the enemy. However, as for the Java operation that we will conduct shortly, we must expect that it will be extremely difficult compared to the Malaya operation, owing to the facts that the enemy has rapidly been reinforcing its defense in the area these days, that it is more difficult to make a surprise attack on Java than on Malaya, and that the enemy is getting familiar with our ways of conducting landing operations, and so on. In view of these characteristics of the Java operation, the Army is determined to accomplish the operation after thorough preparations. We sincerely hope that the Navy will also closely cooperate [with the Army] in various operations, in air operations in particular, so that we can fully demonstrate the essence of cooperation between the Army and the Navy in the final stage of the southern operation. [Editor's note: This paragraph was also quoted on p. 127 in a slightly different redaction. We have kept to the redaction given on p. 127]

The cutting-off of U.S. and British reinforcements

The situation of U.S. and British reinforcements [for the allied forces] in East Asia is as shown in the separate table and the sketch map on the separate sheet; we may assume that the greater part will be transported by ship and a part by air. We consider it most advantageous if it is possible to catch and destroy them in the middle of their transport. Although the Navy has [also] been paying attention to it and has allocated some submarines and other forces, we hope you will pay as much attention as before to the cutting-off of reinforcements to the enemy, particularly to its forces in the Burma and Java areas.

The conduct of the war after [the southern operation]

We are now studying the conduct of the war after [the southern operation.] When the southern operation is almost wrapped up, we shall of course make every effort to carry out the operations necessary to speed up the ending of the war. However, we must attach great importance particularly to increasing the flexibility of our defensive strength as well as to promptly establishing a condition in which we are self-sufficient and ready against all possible attacks. As for the places to be captured from now on, we think that for now we should take the above into account and give careful thought to the limits [of our expansion], so as

not to bring about a disadvantageous war of attrition. Furthermore, we consider it extremely important to conduct the first stage, that is, the operation against the south, always with an eye on the situation in the north. Because among our war aims great importance is attached to the surrender of Britain, the operations against the Indian Ocean are especially critical. Moreover, considering the above-mentioned U.S. and British reinforcements, we particularly hope that the Navy will concentrate its strength in that area. We will make efforts to frankly exchange opinions with the Navy on the detailed measures for these issues as soon as possible, so that we can draw up a definite plan.

9. On the next day, the 31st, the Combined Fleet issued Telegraphic Operation Order No. 54, by which it assigned the entire force of the Carrier Task Force and one element of the Sixth Fleet to the Southern Task Force as of 3 February, and had the latter conduct carrier operations during the Java operation.⁽¹²³⁾ It was the day when the Twenty-fifth Army had advanced to the Johor Strait, while the Eastern Detachment had landed in Ambon.

However, on the next day, 1 February, a U.S. Carrier Task Force raided the Marshall Islands. The Japanese Carrier Task Force immediately departed from Truk and headed eastward. However, judging that the U.S. Task Force had already gone far away, it turned around and headed for Palau before daybreak on the 3d, expecting to arrive there on the 8th [to join the Java operation].⁽¹¹⁶⁾

The above-mentioned air raid on the Marshall Islands on the 1st was the first air strike by a U.S. Carrier Task Force that [the Japanese] had experienced since the opening of hostilities. The Combined Fleet was forced to change its policy. It issued Telegraphic Operation Order No. 63 on 5 February as a first step, by which it removed twenty-one aircraft of the Gaoxiong Air Group (which had returned from Jolo to Gaoxiong at that time) from the Southern Task Force and transferred them to the South Seas [Pacific Islands] Unit (i.e. the Fourth Fleet). Then, it decided to cancel the deployment of the entire force of the Carrier Task Force to the Java area, to reserve the 5th Carrier Division (the aircraft carriers *Shokaku* and *Zuikaku*) in the mainland, and to assign the main force of the remaining force ([consisting of] the 1st Carrier Division, with the aircraft carriers *Akagi* and *Kaga* as the core) to the Southern Task Force [instead]. On 8 February, it issued Telegraphic Order No. 64, by which it revised the previous order, and ordered: "The Carrier Task Force (minus the 5th Carrier Division and the 2d Section of the 18th Destroyer Division) and the 2d Submarine Squadron shall be transferred to the Southern Task Force."^(116, 123)

In the meantime, the air unit of the Southern Task Force (i.e. the Eleventh Air Fleet) had achieved great military gains in Operation Z (a large air campaign carried out from 3 through 5 February against eastern Java from Balikpapan and Kendari with the force of the 2d Carrier Division and the 21st, and the 23d Air Flotilla) and destroyed allied aircraft and naval vessels in eastern Java.

10. The operation to capture Makassar by a Navy unit (which departed from Kendari on 6 February and landed in Makassar on the 9th) was conducted just after Operation Z, making use of the military gains of the latter.
11. The commander of the Southern Task Force, to which the Carrier Task Force had been transferred, brought the 2d Carrier Division (the *Sōryū* and the *Hiryū*) back under the command of the latter. He gave an order to the Carrier Task Force to carry out air

strikes on Port Darwin the day before the landing of the Eastern Detachment on Timor, and then to leave Staring Bay on the 25th after replenishing and advance into the sea south of Java to conduct carrier operations. Furthermore, he gave orders to the air unit (i.e. the Eleventh Air Fleet) and the Dutch East Indies Unit (i.e. the Third Fleet) to co-operate in the operations of the Carrier Task Force with part of their forces.⁽¹¹⁷⁾

While the Eastern Detachment left Ambon for Timor on 17 and 18 February, the 21st Air Flotilla headquarters (in Kendari) took up position in Ambon during the period from the 11th to the 17th to take charge of directing the air operations in this area.⁽¹³⁴⁾ The Carrier Task Force had left Palau on the 15th to carry out air strikes on Port Darwin on the 19th.⁽¹¹⁶⁾ The Eastern Detachment went ashore on Timor on the next day, the 20th, with little interference from [enemy] air or naval [forces].

12. Although the air unit (the Eleventh Air Fleet) carried out air strikes (Operation Z) on eastern Java from 3 [through 5] February as mentioned previously, it could not make sufficient [military] gains due to bad weather and other reasons after Operation Z. The Kanemura Detachment of the 48th Division ([consisting of] one battalion as the core) had left Lingayen on 7 February, advanced to Makassar on the 14th [the 15th according to p. 400], and then left Makassar on the 18th under the escort of only a few naval vessels and launched the landing [operation] on Bali on the night of the 19th [actually at 0100 on the 19th, see p 401]. At that moment, a strong allied fleet raided [the anchorage] and created a situation that terrified the Dutch East Indies Unit headquarters.

As reasons [for the panic], the following issues concerning the invasion schedule have to be taken into account, apart from the insufficient results of the air operations and the shortage of escort vessels.

13. As we have seen, the unofficial agreement at the Manila Conference was officially concluded on the day when the Banjarmasin issue was settled, that is, 28 January, and [on that day] the Dutch East Indies Unit officially passed down the disposition of forces and the outline of the phase-three operations. Although the Combined Fleet and the Southern Task Force (i.e. the Second Fleet) had already passed down the shift to phase-three operations on 24 January, the Dutch East Indies Unit was not able to decide the disposition of its forces until the Banjarmasin issue was settled.

Consequently, the arrangement between the Dutch East Indies Unit and the Sixteenth Army, which had informally been made in Manila on 23 January, was [finally] concluded on the 30th. This agreement stipulated that "the landing on Bali [shall be made] no later than day I - 2." On the other hand, the agreement between the Southern Army and the Southern Task Force, concluded on 28 January, had stated [the landing] as "around day I - 2." Day I indicated the [scheduled] date of landing on eastern Java, which was day $x + 77$ (23 February). At that time, the scheduled date of landing on western Java (day H) was day $x + 75$ (i.e. 21 February, which was day I - 2). The idea then was to conduct the capture of Bali within the main flow of the Java landing operations.

However, as described earlier, the Malaya Unit requested postponement of [the day to conduct Operation] L for two days on 4 February and for another four days on the 6th. The Southern Task Force considered it inevitable to put off L ([scheduled for] day $x + 64$) for six days in total, and consequently, a six-day postponement of [the day to conduct Operation] H ([scheduled for] day $x + 75$ [to be carried out in] western

Java). On 8 February, [the Southern Task Force] discussed these matters with the Southern Army, and upon the approval of the latter on that day, it transmitted at 2040 on the next day, the 9th, the following order by Telegraphic Order No. 96.⁽¹¹⁷⁾ [The text is given on p. 305.]

The following amendments were made in the target dates for the invasions in the Dutch East Indies operation:

1. Western Java: day $x + 81$ (Note by the author: 27 February)
2. Eastern Java: no later than day $x + 81$, depending on the arrangements between the commander in chief of the Third Fleet and the Sixteenth Army commander.

The Southern Task Force considered it regrettable that the Malaya Unit had requested the postponement of L. Therefore, as for Java, it decided to stick to the previous plan, and ordered that the landing on eastern Java [should be executed] no later than day $x + 81$.

As we have seen, before the Southern Task Force transmitted the above order, the prospect of when the Kuantan airfield would be ready for use had become certain around noon on that day (the 9th), and the advance unit of the 38th Division had left Cam Ranh Bay in the evening of that day; as a result, L was advanced by one day. Based on this and the above-mentioned telegraphic order of the Southern Task Force, the Dutch East Indies Unit, which had made the arrangements with the Sixteenth Army, transmitted the following telegraphic order at 1150 on the 11th:

The schedule for the Dutch East Indies invasion shall be revised as follows:

- (a) Batavia and Surabaya: 26 February
- (b) Kupang and Dili: 20 February
- (c) Bali: 18 February (as scheduled)

[This meant] that [the unit] advanced the date [stipulated in the telegraphic order of the Southern Task Force] from day $x + 81$ to day $x + 80$. Apart from this, [the order of the unit] had three remarkable points: First, it set the [scheduled] dates of landing on [both] eastern and western Java on the same day despite the intention of the telegraphic order of the Southern Task Force. This was because it was the fixed opinion of the Sixteenth Army to simultaneously conduct [the landing operations] in [both] eastern and western Java. Secondly, Dili was added [to the targets to capture,] which will be explained later. Thirdly, [the date of the landing operation on] "Bali [shall be] 18 February as scheduled." This means that the date of the landing on Bali, which had been changed from around day $I - 2$, set in the order of the Southern Task Force, to day $I - 5$ by the Dutch East Indies Unit, was [further] changed to day $I - 8$ this time. The reason [for this] will also be described later.

On the 16th, the [scheduled] date of the landing on Bali was postponed [again] for one day due to circumstances that will be described later. However, [in the meantime,] the [scheduled] date of landing on Java was postponed for two days on the 23d, and again for one more day on the 27th due to circumstances that will [also] be described later. In the end, the [scheduled] date of the landing on Bali, which had been set as

around day I – 2, ended up as day I – 10, which eventually presented the allied forces with an opportunity to smash the Bali invasion units one by one.

14. Earlier, for the seizure of Makassar (on the 9th), the unit had left the Bangka anchorage (north of Celebes) on the 2d and Kendari on the 6th. It had crossed [the sea] north of the Lesser Sunda Islands right in front of the enemy.

The reasons why this course had been taken boiled down to the shortening of the schedule to capture Java and the shortage of naval escort vessels. To be precise, it was because the main force of the 4th Destroyer Squadron, which had been positioned in Balikpapan, had headed north for the Philippines to escort the 48th Division, and because it was further decided that the naval vessels that had participated in the operation to capture Ambon (the landing was launched on 31 January), would [afterwards] join to provide support [to the Makassar landing], leaving Ambon on the 4th.

15. The unit to capture Timor left Ambon on 17 and 18 February, while the unit to capture Bali left Makassar on 18 February. It (the 18th) was [also] the day when the unit to land in central western Java departed from Cam Ranh Bay. The 48th Division left Jolo and headed for eastern Java on the next day, the 19th.

The Issue of Seizing Dili

As mentioned previously, Dili was the seat of the governor-general of [Portuguese] Timor, a territory of neutral Portugal. On 7 February, IGHQ endorsed the seizure of the city, the details of which were as follows:

At the time of the opening of hostilities, Dutch Timor was included in the [invasion] plan as one of the areas to be captured, but how to deal with Portuguese Timor had not been decided.^(1, 23) The stance of IGHQ was to avoid a [Japanese] advance into Portuguese Timor in every possible way, because [the advance] might make Portugal join the allied forces.⁽¹⁶⁾

At the beginning of January 1942, the Southern Army obtained information that a total of about 1,000 Dutch East Indies and Australian troops had intruded into Portuguese Timor.⁽²³⁾ On 5 January, while giving the Sixteenth Army the order to capture Ambon and Kupang, as mentioned previously, the Southern Army, which regarded the issue as troublesome, wired IGHQ on the same day as follows:⁽²³⁾ “(1) In consequence of our order [to launch] the Kupang operation, we believe that it is a reasonable action in terms of both international law as well as our strategy that we will possibly conduct air and ground attacks as needed, if the enemy forces should use the Portuguese territory on Timor. (2) Further, we would like your consideration to strictly keep the launch of the landing [operation] secret because considerable difficulties are anticipated in conducting this landing operation. (3) We inform you in advance of these two matters just to make sure. [Also,] we would like you to kindly send us as soon as possible actual proof that the enemy forces are using Portuguese territory.” [However, the Southern Army] did not receive a reply on this matter from IGHQ until early February.⁽²³⁾ Meanwhile, the Dutch East Indies Unit, which had to provide an escort for the Eastern Detachment’s advance to Kupang, was in a serious predicament. At the Manila Conference (from 21 to 23 January), the senior staff officer of the Third Fleet, Captain Yamaki, had earnestly explained the difficulties of the Kupang operation to Southern Army Staff Officer Ishii. According to him, “unlike many other landing operations, the Kupang operation will be extremely difficult because it is [necessary to] pass through the [Lesser] Sunda Islands,

and advance out into the Indian Ocean to carry out [the operation]. Especially, if [our convoy] should sail to Kupang by way of the Ombai Strait, it would be passing through the sea off Portuguese Timor all day, which is bad if we want to keep our intentions secret. If it is unavoidable to go southward passing through [other] narrow channels, we would need considerable minesweeping as well as escorting forces." Captain Yamaki repeatedly insisted that simultaneous attacks on Kupang and on Dili would make the operation comparatively less difficult.⁽²³⁾ The Southern Task Force, like the Southern Army, had also suggested to the Navy Department of IGHQ to attack Dili [along with Kupang].⁽¹¹⁷⁾

As described previously, on 1 January, an agreement was reached between the Southern Army and the Southern Task Force to "capture Kupang around 11 February." Having received the above-mentioned Southern Army telegram on 5 January, Chief of the Army General Staff Sugiyama reported to the Emperor: "The landing in Kupang has to be made in the face of the enemy. If the enemy enters Portuguese territory, Portugal, as a neutral country, should rightfully demand their withdrawal, or disarmament. If Portugal neglects that and sabotages our operations, attack operations must be carried out [as well] against Portuguese territory."⁽⁴⁾ After that, the Liaison Conference between IGHQ and the Government was held on 20 January. At the conference, Chief of the Army General Staff Sugiyama told Foreign Minister Tōgō: "This is the way the Army Department [of IGHQ] thinks about the Portuguese territory. I request you to make a study on the case of warning them. We will further inform you about when and how to warn them, etc."⁽⁴⁾ Right after the statement of Chief of the Army General Staff Sugiyama, Chief of the Navy General Staff Nagano demanded: "Allied aircraft, if any, in the Portuguese territory will certainly attack our convoy at the time of our Kupang landing operation. Therefore, we must attack them before that. In order to avoid such a scenario, we would like you to give a warning."⁽⁴⁾

As a result of the study which had been made since then, the conclusion was reached that it was necessary to advance into Dili in Portuguese [Timor] as well as simultaneously into Kupang, because the Australian and Dutch forces had already entered Portuguese territory, and the neutrality of Portuguese Timor was violated. The [Japanese] government had no particular objection to this conclusion. However, on 24 January (the day when participants in the Manila Conference made their way back), a problem arose.⁽⁷⁾ While Prime Minister (and War Minister) Tōjō Hideki maintained that "troops shall be promptly withdrawn from Portuguese territory, once they have achieved the purpose of the operation against it," Chief of Navy General Staff Nagano insisted that "Portuguese Timor must be secured for operations against Australia, even after the mopping up [of the territory is over]."⁽⁷⁾ The intent of Prime Minister Tōjō was to strictly prevent the expansion of the number of countries against which [Japan] was waging war.

On 27 January, the following draft was drawn up between the chief staff [officers] in charge:⁽⁷⁾

Measures to be taken against Portugal at the time of operations against Dutch Timor

1. In carrying out the operations against Dutch Timor, it is possible that the Empire [of Japan] may conduct operations against Portuguese Timor for self-defensive purposes. However, after mopping up the British, Australian and Dutch forces on Portuguese territory, (Plan A) the Imperial Japanese forces shall withdraw from the area concerned, as long as Portugal ensures its neutrality; or

(Plan B) whether the Imperial Japanese forces will be withdrawn from the place or will continue their use [of the place] as an operational base shall be determined depending on the attitude of the Portuguese and other circumstances at the time.

2. From the viewpoint of keeping our intention secret, diplomatic measures, such as further requesting the Portuguese government in advance to have British, Australian and Dutch forces pull out of Portuguese Timor, shall not be taken.
3. Just before the entry of [Japanese] ground units into Portuguese Timor, a notice shall be timely given to the Portuguese side, and an offer shall be made that the sovereignty of Portuguese Timor will be respected, and that "[Japan] intends to promptly pull out its forces once its purpose of self-defense is achieved, as long as Portugal ensures its neutrality." The Imperial Japanese Government shall announce the above intent, just after the entry [of its units into the territory.]

Note 1. As long as Portugal maintains its neutral position, we will maintain our present attitude toward Macao.

2. We will timely issue a statement to Germany and Italy as needed.

3. In case the Imperial Japanese forces should enter Portuguese Timor, they shall make efforts in every possible way so as not to make an enemy of the Portuguese forces.

The next day, the 28th, the subject was brought up for discussion at the Liaison Conference between IGHQ and the Government, and all of a sudden the argument became heated. For about an hour, a heated discussion continued between Prime Minister Tōjō, who pressed to "choose plan A," and Chief of the Navy General Staff Nagano, who insisted to "choose plan B," but they failed to come to an agreement.^(3, 4, 7)

The tenor of Chief of the Navy General Staff Nagano's argument was as follows:

- According to the talks held on 23 January at Lisbon between Minister Chiba and the vice foreign minister of Portugal (regarding the additional dispatch of Portuguese troops to Timor), and also in view of the actual confinement of Japanese [residents] in Portuguese Timor, it may surely be said that the rightful status of Japan has already been infringed in the territory of a [supposedly] neutral country. Under such circumstances, it is (1) necessary to secure Portuguese Timor, which is of great immediate value for operations against Port Darwin, in anticipation of a prolonged war from now on, in which U.S. and British forces, U.S. aircraft and submarines in particular, will gather in Australia; and (2) even though [Plan A] says that [the Japanese forces] shall withdraw [from the territory] as long as Portugal ensures the neutrality of Timor, it is highly doubtful whether [the territory] will be able to ensure its neutrality on its own in a situation where the territory has already been invaded. In short, I find it difficult to clearly state our withdrawal while the Portuguese attitude and the changes in the other circumstances are still far from clear. Therefore, I prefer to decide this matter after seeing what happens.
- Prime Minister Tōjō regards the Timor operation as a campaign in a limited area, but that is wrong. When a prolonged war is anticipated, [the territory] is extremely important to check Australia. Even if Portugal takes sides against the Axis, it will probably not make a big difference in the war situation in Europe. No matter how seriously we treat the country, if it is incapable of maintaining its neutrality, in the long run it will never be able to ensure the neutrality [of its territory] against the pressure of Britain and the United States. It is not necessary to decide upon our withdrawal now as in plan A.
- I do not agree with deciding at this point matters that are absolutely essential for the implementation of the Empire's military operations without seeing first how the situation develops, as for instance a withdrawal, only because it would be necessary for tactical political reasons.

The officers in charge racked their brains after the conference was over, but with no success. On the 30th, the chiefs of the Military Affairs Bureau of the Ministry of War [Maj. Gen. Mutō Akira] and the Naval Affairs Bureau of the Navy Ministry [R. Adm. Oka Takazumi] set out to settle the issue and reached agreement on the 31st.⁽⁷⁾

On 2 February, the Liaison Conference between IGHQ and the Government made the following decision (as drawn up in the original draft).⁽³⁾ Chief of the Navy General Staff Nagano did not utter a single word that day.⁽⁷⁾

After mopping up the British, Australian, and Dutch 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 inevitable 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.

On 4 February, the IGHQ Army Department wired the Southern Army the following message by way of Army General Staff Telegram No. 741, which was received by the Southern Army on the 5th:⁽²³⁾

We were ordered to notify you of the measures to be taken against Portugal at the time of the operation against Dutch Timor, which were decided at the liaison conference yesterday, the 2d, in the following way. Concerning the implementation of [operations in conformity with] these measures, you will be separately instructed.

The measures [against Portugal]

1. In carrying out the operation against Dutch Timor, it is possible that the Empire [of Japan] may conduct operations in Portuguese Timor for self-defensive purposes. Then, after mopping up the British, Australian and Dutch 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 inevitable 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.
2. From the viewpoint of keeping our intentions secret, diplomatic measures, such as further requesting the Portuguese government in advance to have the British, Australian and Dutch forces pull out of Portuguese Timor, shall not be taken.
3. Just before the entry of [Japanese] ground units into Portuguese Timor, a notice shall timely be given to the Portuguese side and an offer shall be made that Japan respects the territorial integrity of Portuguese Timor and as long as Portugal strictly observes its neutrality, [Japan] intends to promptly pull out its forces once its purpose of self-defense is achieved. The Imperial Japanese Government shall announce the above intent just after the entry [of its units to the territory].
4. If it is unclear before our entry whether the British, [Australian] and Dutch forces have pulled out, operations shall be conducted as planned for the time being. If the pullout of British, [Australian] and Dutch forces is confirmed after our entry, matters shall be handled in accordance with Item No. 1.

Note 1. As long as Portugal maintains its neutral position, we will maintain our present attitude toward Macao.

2. Explanations shall timely be given to Germany and Italy.

3. Imperial Japanese forces entering Portuguese Timor shall make every effort so as not to make an enemy of the Portuguese forces.

On 5 February (the day when it received the aforementioned Army General Staff Telegram No. 741), the Southern Army was stunned to unexpectedly receive a telegram sent by the Southern Task Force on the 4th, which read: "In view of the present situation where both Australian and Dutch East Indies forces have occupied Portuguese Timor, we would like to have an element of the Itō Detachment go ashore in Dili (under the escort of the Navy) [at the time of the operation] to capture Timor almost simultaneously with the landing in Kupang and seize the vicinity."⁽²³⁾ On the same day (the 5th), the Southern Army sent the Army Department of IGHQ the following telegram:⁽²³⁾

We duly received Army General Staff Telegram No. 741.

1. As it is said that the operations against Dutch Timor are extremely difficult from the viewpoint of naval tactics, it would be highly advantageous if it were possible to conduct operations against Portuguese Timor simultaneously with those against Kupang. As we have received an advisory telegram from the Second Fleet as well, it would be highly appreciated if you could consider the above and give us instructions immediately.
2. When entering [into Portuguese territory] from the sea, we would appreciate it if you gave notice to the territory after our entry into the anchorage.
3. We would like [to be notified?] immediately of the time and date of implementation, when fixed, by telegrams from the fleet. (Note by the author: This item seems to contain some misinterpretations of the code.)

On the next day, the 6th, the Southern Army [further] sent the following telegram to the Army Department of IGHQ:⁽²³⁾

1. We would like you to immediately provide instructions, on which to base our operations against every kind of action from Portuguese forces, before the units to carry out the operations against Timor depart from the assembly point. The departure of the above units from the assembly point shall be on 17 February.
2. Further, in view of the strategic value of the island, it is expected that even if the Portuguese Army does not put up resistance, we should make considerable demands concerning such matters as the stationing of troops, guarding and counterintelligence, for the purpose of the defense of the island. Therefore, we think it highly advantageous if we can immediately induce Portugal to declare the island a war zone just after the landing of our troops.

On the next day, 7 February, after receiving approval [of the Emperor], Chief of Army General Staff Sugiyama passed down the following order, and the concomitant instructions:⁽¹⁾

IGHQ Army Department Order No. 597

Order

1. The commander in chief of the Southern Army can conduct, in conjunction with the Navy, operations against Portuguese Timor for the purpose of self-defense.
 2. The chief of Army General Staff shall provide detailed instructions.
- 7 February, 1942

IGHQ Army Department Instruction No. 1101

Instructions

Based on IGHQ Army Department Order No. 597, the following instructions are given:

1. The outline of the operations against Portuguese Timor shall be discussed and determined between the commanders in chief of the Southern Army and the Combined Fleet.
2. When conducting the operations against Portuguese Timor, its sovereignty shall be respected as much as possible, unless Portugal takes hostile action.

In the meantime, the movements of the naval units on site were as follows: As we have seen, in giving shape to its phase-three operations, the Dutch East Indies Unit had wished to [include operations to] capture Dili and Kupang simultaneously, but it gave up [the plan] because central command [the Navy Department of IGHQ] gave no directions. Meanwhile on 27 January at central command [IGHQ], the aforementioned policy on measures against Portugal was informally agreed and expected to be approved at the Liaison Conference between IGHQ and the Government on the 28th. At 1000 on that day, the 28th, the Southern Task Force wired the Dutch East Indies Unit and the unit to capture Timor (i.e. the Eastern Attack Unit, led by the 5th Cruiser Division commander): "If you have drawn up a plan to go ashore on Portuguese Timor (in Dili and vicinity) in the operation to capture Timor, we would like you to promptly inform us of the outline."⁽¹¹⁷⁾ As already described, central command [IGHQ] failed to reach agreement at the liaison conference on the 28th. On 1 February, the Dutch East Indies Unit wired back to the Southern Task Force that for reasons of the airfield in Dili being poor with a runway of [a mere] 800 meters, and the construction squad having no extra strength to spare, "[the unit] has decided to concentrate its full force on Kupang, but [also] plans to take appropriate measures without an missing opportunity should the enemy take advantage of Dili."⁽¹¹⁷⁾ It may look odd that this telegram was sent by the Dutch East Indies Unit, whose Senior Staff Officer Yamaki had so ardently appealed to Ishii, [senior] staff officer of the Southern Army, for capturing Dili simultaneously with Kupang. It seems that the main factor [in this change of heart] was that the unit had taken the views of the Sixteenth Army seriously. The Sixteenth Army felt it risky to disperse the strength of the Eastern Detachment in the operation to capture Timor, which was receiving reinforcements from Australian forces.⁽²³⁾ Later, on 8 February, when Southern Army Staff Officer Ishii had just received approval to issue the Southern Army Order that "the Sixteenth Army commander shall conduct operations against Portuguese Timor in conjunction with the Navy, for the purpose of facilitating the operations against Dutch Timor," and was about to arrange the transmission of the order, Colonel Takashima, senior staff officer of Section 1 of the Sixteenth Army presented himself. On receiving an explanation about [the operation to] capture Dili from Staff Officer Ishii, [Takashima] expressed his disapproval and strongly insisted that the Sixteenth Army intended to concentrate as much of its power as possible in one place in view of the case of Ambon (where the unit heading from Hitu-lama for the Laha airfield separately [from the other troops] had faced an uphill battle). He would not yield and in the end Staff Officer Ishii had to go so far as saying that "it has already been sent to the Second Fleet in reply, and has [also] been approved by [the commander in chief of the Southern Army]," in order to overcome his opposition.⁽²³⁾ However, on the 2d, the day after the Dutch East Indies Unit had sent the aforementioned reply [to the Southern Task Force], the policy on measures against Portugal was decided at central command [IGHQ], as mentioned previously. Learning about the decision, the Dutch East Indies Unit changed its mind [again], and sent the following telegram on the 4th:⁽¹¹⁷⁾

To Chief of Staff, Second Fleet

From Chief of Staff, Third Fleet, sent at 1530 on 4 February

Regarding IGHQ Navy Department Classified Telegram No. 638, we would like you to negotiate with the [Southern] Army about occupying Dili with one element of the Itō Detachment (the naval landing forces have no extra strength to cooperate in this [operation]) simultaneously with [the operation] to capture Kupang. As the schedule [is drawing near], we are going to proceed with the preliminary negotiations with the Sixteenth Army, based on the above scheme.

The developments after that were as previously described.

On 17 and 18 February, the Eastern Detachment left Ambon under the escort of the Navy, and went ashore in Kupang and Dili on the 20th. [Also] on the 20th, the [Japanese] government issued the following statement:^(3, 13)

On 17 December last year, British and Dutch forces took the step to invade Portuguese Timor despite the refusal of the Governor-General of the territory [to let them in] and occupied it. Since then, negotiations for withdrawal have been started between Britain and Portugal, and although the Portuguese government seems to be making efforts to improve the situation, it has remained unchanged until today. Now, with the advance of our operations towards Dutch Timor, the Imperial Japanese Army has come to a point that it is compelled to drive off the British and Dutch forces in Portuguese Timor for the purpose of self-defense. As the Empire of Japan fully understands the position of Portugal, which came to be greatly troubled by the actions of Britain and the Netherlands in disregard of international good faith, the Imperial Japanese government will ensure the territorial integrity of Portuguese Timor. And as long as the Portuguese government maintains its neutral attitude, it shall promptly withdraw its forces after attaining its purpose of self-defense. The Empire of Japan hereby declares that it has no other intentions against Portugal.

Phase-Three Operations of the Naval Units

The Southern Task Force

On 24 January, the Combined Fleet had ordered the Southern Task Force to shift to phase-three dispositions, as mentioned previously. That was the day when the participants in the Manila Conference started on their way back, and when the landing operations in Balikpapan as well as in Kendari were carried out. It was also the day when the two ships to disembark [air units, fuel and ammunition] at Endau and the unit to occupy the Anambas Islands departed from the Gulf of Thailand sector. On the same day, the Southern Task Force transmitted an order to switch to phase-three operations with the current disposition of forces.⁽¹¹⁷⁾ An outline of the phase-three operations of the Southern Task Force as of that day was roughly as follows:

1. [The Southern Task Force] shall continue the operations to capture Ambon, Makassar and Kupang with the Dutch East Indies Unit. If IGHQ approves, [the operation] to seize Banjarmasin shall be omitted, and [the operations to seize] Bali and Dili shall be included [instead].
2. Air campaigns against eastern Java from Balikpapan and Kendari shall be carried out as preliminary operations for the invasion of Java.
3. It shall conduct the operation to capture southern Sumatra with the Malaya Unit.
4. Just before the landings on Java, it shall capture Bali and advance air units there.

5. It shall have the 2d Carrier Division attack Port Darwin first in concert with [the operation to] capture Timor.
6. It shall have the Dutch East Indies Unit escort the main force of the Sixteenth Army to eastern and western Java. For this [operation], it shall transfer the necessary vessels to the Dutch East Indies Unit from the Malaya Unit and return the 22d Air Flotilla to its original control (the Eleventh Air Fleet).
7. It shall deploy submarine units in the sea near Java to provide support.
8. After the capture of Singapore, it shall prepare for the northern Sumatra operation.

On 28 January, the cancelation of the operation to capture Banjarmasin by way of the sea was [officially] decided, and [consequently] the new schedule for the invasion operations set at the Manila Conference was fixed on the same day. Around that time, through the good offices of the Combined Fleet, the Southern Task Force had made efforts to successively increase [the number of] destroyers of the Dutch East Indies Unit, as already described [p. 235].

On 31 January, [the Southern Task Force] received a telegraphic order from the Combined Fleet to transfer, as of 3 February, the entire force of the Carrier Task Force and one element of the Sixth Fleet to the Southern Task Force.⁽¹¹⁶⁾ However, [the order] was revised on 8 February, and on the same day, it [again] received a telegraphic order that “[the Combined Fleet] will transfer the Carrier Task Force (minus the 5th Carrier Division and the 2d Section of the 18th Destroyer Division) and the 2d Submarine Squadron to the Southern Task Force.”⁽¹¹⁶⁾ By this [order], the [aircraft carriers] *Akagi* and *Kaga* (of the 1st Carrier Division) were added to the *Sōryū*, the *Hiryū* (of the 2d Carrier Division), and the *Ryūjō* (of the 4th Carrier Division). Also, the 2d Submarine Squadron was added to the submarine unit [consisting] of the 4th, the 5th, and the 6th Submarine Squadrons, and the battleships *Hiei* and *Kirishima* (both of the 3d Battleship Division) were added to the battleships *Kongō* and *Haruna*.

On the next day, the 9th, the Southern Task Force drew up the outline of the carrier and submarine operations:⁽¹¹⁷⁾

1. The Carrier Task Force (which has brought back the 2d Carrier Division under its command) shall depart from Palau, conduct a surprise attack on Port Darwin the day before [the operation to] capture Timor, and enter [the anchorage] at Staring Bay (this operation will be called the first carrier operation). After that, in concert with the Java operations, it will depart from Staring Bay and conduct carrier operations for five days against the area south of Java. (This will be called the second carrier operation.)
2. The Air Unit (i.e. the Eleventh Air Fleet) shall cooperate in the above operations in addition to its cooperation in the operations of the Dutch East Indies Unit.
3. Besides carrying out its predetermined operations, the Dutch East Indies Unit shall [also] cooperate in the operations of the Carrier Task Force by sending a force, consisting of the 5th Cruiser Division as the core, to the Banda Sea in the first carrier operation and to the southwest of Timor in the second carrier operation.
4. As for the submarine units, Submarine Unit A (the 4th and the 6th Submarine Squadrons) shall be in charge of the sea east of Java (including the island), Submarine Unit B (the 5th Submarine Squadron) of the sea west of Sumatra (including the island), and Submarine Unit C (the 2d Submarine Squadron) of the Java and the Lesser Sunda [Islands] areas.
5. The main force of the Southern Task Force shall leave Palau on 18 February and advance to the south of Java via Staring Bay.

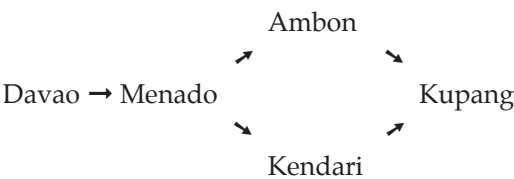
The air unit (the Eleventh Air Fleet) launched an air campaign against eastern Java on 3 February, and the Malaya Unit against western Java on 9 February. Makassar was seized on 9 February, and Banjarmasin on the 10th, and [the operation to] land in Bangka and Palembang was carried out on the 15th. On the 17th (the day before the departure of the main force of the Sixteenth Army from Cam Ranh Bay), the Southern Task Force issued an order to transfer one light cruiser, five destroyers and other ships from the Malaya Unit to the Dutch East Indies Unit. It also ordered the return of the 22d Air Flotilla from the Malaya Unit to the air unit (the Eleventh Air Fleet), etc.

The Air Unit

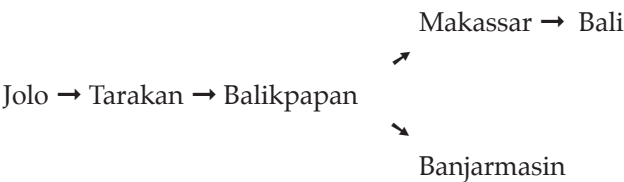
On 26 January, the air unit (the Eleventh Air Fleet) deployed nine carrier aircraft and twenty-eight carrier aircraft of the 2d Carrier Division ([consisting of] the aircraft carriers *Sōryū* and *Hiryū*), which had completed attacks on Ambon (on 24 January), respectively in Balikpapan and Kendari. [Editor's note: Date and number of aircraft differ in the description in Vol. 26, p. 231.]

On 28 January, along with the cancellation of the operation to capture Banjarmasin by way of the sea, [the unit] changed its lines of operation as follows:⁽¹⁴³⁾

The 1st Air Raid Unit (the 21st Air Flotilla)



The 2d Air Raid Unit (the 23d Air Flotilla)



On 30 January the air unit (the Eleventh Air Fleet) passed down the order concerning the air campaign against eastern Java and conducted a massive air campaign from the bases in Kendari and Balikpapan from 3 through 5 February.⁽¹⁴³⁾ On the 3d, thirty-seven land-based medium-sized attack planes and fifty-nine fighter planes carried out an air strike and reported a military gain of bringing down forty-eight [enemy] aircraft and destroying thirty-six. On the Japanese side, [the number of] aircraft which had crashed [themselves] on the enemy or did not return reached five. On the 4th, the unit attacked four allied cruisers and seven destroyers off the coast of Java with sixty land-based medium-sized attack planes and reported a military gain of sinking two cruisers and causing substantial damage to the two other cruisers.⁽¹⁰⁰⁾

The 2d Carrier Division returned to [the command of] the Carrier Task Force (the First Air Fleet) from the command of the Air Unit (the Eleventh Air Fleet) by the Southern Task Force order of 9 February.⁽¹¹⁷⁾

The 21st Air Flotilla headquarters (in Kendari) was positioned in Ambon from 12 through 17 February.⁽¹³⁵⁾ (As already mentioned, on 15 February, the Carrier Task Force had left Palau to head southward.)

The 23d Air Flotilla headquarters advanced from Balikpapan to Bali on 26 February.⁽¹⁰⁴⁾

Since 9 February, the 22d Air Flotilla had been launching an air campaign over western Java from Kuching with its main force under the command of the Malaya Unit. After that, it rapidly advanced into southern Sumatra,⁽¹⁰⁴⁾ and returned to the direct control of the Air Unit (i.e. the Eleventh Air Fleet) on the 19th by the Southern Task Force order of 17 February.⁽¹²⁰⁾ The air unit (the Eleventh Air Fleet) shifted its force to phase-three dispositions on and after that day (the 19th).⁽¹⁰²⁾

The Eleventh Air Fleet headquarters advanced from Davao to Kendari on 21 February.⁽¹⁴³⁾

The Carrier Task Force

The Carrier Task Force ([consisting of] the 1st and 2d Carrier Division, namely the aircraft carriers *Akagi*, *Kaga*, *Sōryū*, and *Hiryū*) left Palau on 15 February, carried out the air strike on Port Darwin on the 19th (the day before the landing of the Eastern Detachment on Timor), and entered the anchorage at Staring Bay on the 21st.⁽¹¹⁶⁾

The main force of the Southern Task Force, which had left Palau on 18 February, also arrived in Staring Bay on the same day (the 21st).⁽¹⁰³⁾

Both of them were to leave Staring Bay on the 25th, to advance into the waters south of Java.

The Dutch East Indies Unit

As we have seen, after the Dutch East Indies Unit had made draft arrangements with the Sixteenth Army in Manila on 23 January, the Banjarmasin issue was settled on the 28th, and a new schedule for the Java operations was set on the same day. Further, in order to fill the shortage of escort forces of the Dutch East Indies Unit, the following units had been assigned or preliminarily assigned by then:

1. Orders [were given] to add the 21st Destroyer Division ([consisting of] four destroyers) [to the Dutch East Indies Unit] on 21 January, and [again] the 7th Destroyer Division (three destroyers) and the 1st Section of the 6th Destroyer Division (two destroyers) on the 28th.⁽¹¹⁴⁾
2. Informal arrangement to transfer the 2d Section (two destroyers) [probably the 1st Section is meant, see p. 235] of the 6th Destroyer Division [to the Dutch East Indies Unit] from the air unit (the Eleventh Air Fleet) on the 30th.
3. Informal arrangement to transfer the light cruiser *Yura*, and the 11th Destroyer Division (three destroyers) and the 12th Destroyer Division (two destroyers) of the 3d Destroyer Squadron [to the Dutch East Indies Unit] from the Malaya Unit in tandem with the progress of the southern Sumatra operation.

Then, the commander of the Dutch East Indies Unit was able to determine the outline of the phase-three operations on the 28th and passed down Order No. 9 on the same day.⁽¹¹⁷⁾

The plan of the phase-three operations of the Dutch East Indies Unit was to capture Makassar, Bali and Kupang (and Dili, which was included on 7 February) with the Eastern Support Unit, the 2d Escort Unit and the 1st Base Unit, after the operation to capture Ambon (the landing on the island was executed on the 31st), as well as to escort the 48th Division (which was joined by the Sakaguchi Detachment on 16 February) to eastern Java with the 1st Escort Unit, the 1st Base Unit [2d Base Unit?], and the 2d Air Unit, and also to escort the main force of the Sixteenth Army to western Java with the 3d Escort Unit and the 1st Air Unit. The disposition of the forces was roughly as follows.^(117, 119, 131) [Editor's note: The author seems to have mixed up the "1st Base Unit" with the "2d Base Unit."]

Main Unit: [consisting of] the 16th Cruiser Division (minus the *Nagara*, so only the heavy cruiser *Ashigara*) and two destroyers, shall support the operations mainly in the Makassar Strait, Bali, and Surabaya areas from Davao.

1st Escort Unit: [consisting of] the main force of the 4th Destroyer Squadron (i.e. the light cruiser *Naka*, and a total of nine destroyers of the 2d, the 9th and the 24th Destroyer Divisions) as the core, shall escort the 48th Division (which was later joined by the Sakaguchi Detachment), to eastern Java after reversing course from Balikpapan. (However, one powerful element of the force shall first cooperate with the 1st Base Unit in its operation to capture Makassar and reverse course after that).

2d Base Unit: [shall conduct operations in] the Makassar Strait area from Balikpapan.

2d Air Unit: [consisting of] the 11th Seaplane Tender Division (with the seaplane tenders *Mizuho* and *Chitose*), shall first support [the operations] to capture Ambon, then Makassar, and [subsequently] for the most part cooperate with the 1st Escort Unit and the 2d Base Unit.

3d Escort Unit: [consisting of] the 5th Destroyer Squadron (the light cruiser *Natori* and a total of eight destroyers of the 5th and the 22d Destroyer Divisions) and [also] one section of the 6th Destroyer Division (two destroyers), which will later be joined by the light cruiser *Yura* and the 11th and 12th Destroyer Divisions (five destroyers in total) of the Malaya Unit, shall escort the main force of the Sixteenth Army to western Java.

1st Air Unit (the auxiliary seaplane tenders *Kamikawa-maru* and *San'yō-maru*): shall cooperate with the 3d Escort Unit.

Eastern Support Unit: [consisting of] the 5th Cruiser Division (the heavy cruisers *Haguro* and *Nachi* (note: the *Myōkō* was under repair in the mainland)), one section of the 6th Destroyer Division (two destroyers), and the 7th Destroyer Division (three destroyers), shall support the 2d Escort Unit and the 1st Base Unit.

2d Escort Unit: [consisting of] the main force of the 2d Destroyer Squadron (i.e. the light cruiser *Jintsū* and a total of twelve destroyers of the 8th, the 15th and the 16th Destroyer Divisions), shall cooperate with the Eastern Detachment in its operations to capture Ambon, Kupang (and [also] Dili, which was included later).

1st Base Unit: [consisting of] the main force of the 1st Base Force, the light cruiser *Nagara* (which belonged to the 16th Cruiser Division), and four destroyers of the 21st Destroyer Division, which shall be joined by the 8th and the 15th Destroyer Divisions (eight destroyers in total) of the 2d Destroyer Squadron at the time of the operation to capture Makassar, and by the 8th Destroyer Division (with four destroyers) at the time of the operation to capture Bali, shall support the operations to capture Makassar and Bali.

Special mention should be made of the following points concerning the operations of the Dutch East Indies Unit.

The first point is the previously mentioned clockwise route in [the operation to] capture Makassar. When the Dutch East Indies Unit ordered [the operation] on 28 January, the unit

to capture Makassar was assembling in the Bangka anchorage, planning to sail counterclockwise [toward the city], while the Eastern Detachment had left Davao the day before (on the 27th) and was on its way to Ambon. On that day (the 28th), after confirming that the operation to capture Banjarmasin by sea was cancelled and that the new schedule set at the Manila Conference [was adopted], the Dutch East Indies Unit immediately ordered the main force of the 4th Destroyer Squadron to head northward to Luzon from Balikpapan (in order to make arrangements with the 48th Division, that is, to escort the transport of the division). [The Dutch East Indies Unit also] ordered the Makassar invasion unit to conduct the operation by a clockwise route, by which it intended to reinforce or support the Makassar invasion unit with the forces that were to be temporarily left in Balikpapan by the 4th Destroyer Squadron, and the forces that were to be diverted from the Eastern Attack Unit after its operation to capture Ambon (the landing on the island was scheduled for the 31st).^(114, 117) At that time, the 21st Air Flotilla headquarters had advanced into Kendari the day before (on the 27th),⁽¹³⁴⁾ while the 2d Carrier Division had carried out an air strike on Ambon on the 24th.

The second point is [the emergency situation during] the operation to capture Bali. At the time of the operation to capture Bali, the 1st Base Unit had the *Nagara*, and the 8th and the 21st Destroyer Divisions as its components, but due to various circumstances, merely two destroyers were in charge of the direct escort of the Kanemura Detachment. A number of allied cruisers and other vessels raided the anchorage. At that time, the commander of the Dutch East Indies Unit was in Balikpapan where he heard about the emergency and hurried southward with the main unit.

The third point is [the change in] the employment of the 5th Cruiser Division. As we have seen, before the Combined Fleet transmitted the order to transfer the Carrier Task Force [to the Southern Task Force] (on the 8th), the Air Unit (the Eleventh Air Fleet) had [already] carried out a massive air campaign on eastern Java (since 3 February). Therefore, along with the order concerning the operation of the Carrier Task Force on 9 February, the Southern Task Force had ordered that the 5th Cruiser Division should advance towards the sea southwest of Timor and cooperate with the Carrier Task Force in the second carrier operation.⁽¹¹⁷⁾ However, due to the weather and other factors, the Air Unit did not achieve satisfactory results, and when the convoy of the 48th Division entered the Java Sea, a powerful allied fleet was still very active in the Surabaya area. This brought about the necessity to resume the air attacks. Furthermore, the allied fleet came for an attack and the convoy of the 48th Division and the Sakaguchi Detachment were made to stand by at sea for three days. As a result, it was decided to cancel the cooperation of the 5th Cruiser Division with the Carrier Task Force, and to have the division take part in the battle off the coast of Surabaya [instead].

(2) The Seizure of Banjarmasin (*See Illustration No. 37*)

Preparations for the Seizure

When Detachment Commander Sakaguchi, who had landed in Balikpapan on 24 January and seized the city on the 25th, was implementing a military administration and was about to mop up the enemy in the areas of Samarinda and Sanga Sanga with a force [consisting of] the 1st Battalion as the core led by Lt. Col. Kume Motozō, he received the aforementioned Sixteenth Army order (of the 25th) regarding the seizure of Banjarmasin [p. 220].

As the Sakaguchi Detachment had been studying [the possibility of] an overland attack as well, the order came as no surprise. However, [the problem was that] the issue of an attack by sea [in conjunction with the Navy] was not settled until the 28th.

On the 28th, it was [finally] decided to cancel the joint Army-Navy operation to seize the city by sea. The next day, the 29th, the Dutch East Indies Unit ordered the commander of the 4th Destroyer Squadron to head for Manila [i.e. Lingayen]. He left Balikpapan on the 30th with the light cruiser *Naka* and the 2d Destroyer Division.⁽¹¹⁹⁾ On that day (the 30th), Detachment Commander Sakaguchi had the unit for the Banjarmasin operation depart from Balikpapan on the *Ehime-maru* and the *Liverpool-maru*.

Detachment Commander Sakaguchi planned to have the unit for the Banjarmasin operation rapidly advance toward the city with the main force by going ashore at Tanahgrogot and rushing toward the city overland, and one element by maneuvering from Balikpapan along the coast in small boats. The outline of his operation plan was as follows:⁽⁸⁸⁾

1. Mission

- (1) With the purpose of promptly seizing the airfield so that it can be used [in the operation to] capture Java, the unit shall make a surprise attack on the area of Banjarmasin and seize it, with its main force going by land after landing near Tanahgrogot and one element by landing in the area south of Banjarmasin after maneuvering along the coast in small boats.
- (2) The transport of the troops and the maneuvering at sea shall be conducted only at night in order to keep the plan secret.

2. Disposition of forces

The overland task force

Commander: 146th Infantry Regiment Commander Col. Yamamoto Kyōhei

146th Infantry Regiment (minus the 1st and the 2d Battalions)

One artillery battery

One engineer company (minus one platoon)

One radio platoon

Medical unit

One transport company

The seaborne task force

One infantry company

One engineer platoon

One independent engineer platoon

3. Outline of Operations

(1) Operations of the overland task force

- (a) The unit shall leave Balikpapan on the evening of 30 January, land in Tanahgrogot before daybreak of the 31st, and immediately make preparations for traversing the jungle and the mountains.
- (b) When pushing its way through the jungle, the unit shall have one element of its force move ahead in the sector south of the main force in order to facilitate engagements after advancing into the Banjarmasin plain.
- (c) Once emerging from the jungle, it shall start southward at once without waiting for the entire unit to gather. It shall rapidly advance, particularly in order to make it difficult for the enemy to destroy bridges while retreating.
- (d) When seizing Banjarmasin, it shall make efforts to bring the seaborne task force [back] under its command.
- (e) Provisions shall be procured on site as much as possible, but rations for nine days shall be carried along.

- (2) Operations of the seaborne task force
 - (a) The unit shall leave Balikpapan a few days earlier than the overland task force and seize Banjarmasin in close cooperation with the latter.
 - (b) It shall only use large and small motorized [landing] craft for the maneuver, and pay utmost attention to keeping the plan secret. [For that purpose,] no daytime actions are allowed until the end of the seaborne operation.
 - (c) When suspending operations during daylight, it shall go upriver at some distance from the mouth of rivers, moor the craft at the riverbank, and take a rest in the forest so as never to be spotted by [enemy] air reconnaissance.
 - (d) In order to make it safe to sail through the channel west of Laut Island, and facilitate the supply of provisions for the task force, it shall conduct a night raid on Kotabaru on the island to obtain supplies and collect information.
 - (e) After the landing, it shall rush toward the Martapura airfield.
 - (f) For provisions after landing, the unit shall depend on the resources on site.
- (3) Operations after the seizure of Banjarmasin
 - (a) The commander of the overland task force shall bring the seaborne task force back under his command as soon as possible.
 - (b) It shall do its utmost to make the airfield ready while mopping up the remaining enemy.
 - (c) When the naval units arrive, it shall turn over the guarding, seized supplies and other matters to these units, and assemble in Banjarmasin.

The Seizure

The seaborne task force embarked on four large and two small motorized [landing] craft and left Balikpapan on the night of 30 January, loaded with fuel and ammunition from the Navy. It reached Tanahgrogot at daybreak on the 31st and continued its southward advance. A naval officer was attached as pilot. They sailed only at night; during the day they brought the craft into mangrove forests at the river mouths and camouflaged them. As they avoided using the radio, naval aircraft were sent to contact them, but every time these returned in vain without finding them. The unit operated in accordance with the orders, seized Kotabaru at the northern end of Laut Island on 10 February, further advanced, and went ashore at the coast southeast of Martapura. However, as the surprise attack of the overland task force had already scattered the enemy, they entered Martapura without a fight.^(87, 115)

The advance party of the overland task force had left Balikpapan on the morning of 31 January, reached Adang Bay at 2000 of the same day, and seized Tanahgrogot at 1030 on 1 February, while the main force left Balikpapan on the next day, the 2d, landed in Tanahgrogot on the 3d, and started its overland trek. There were no roads in the jungle, let alone bridges. [The unit] advanced and while being attacked by swarms of mosquitoes, land leeches and other insects, they clambered up steep mountains and threw temporary log bridges over deep gorges. They had abandoned their motor vehicles soon after departure. Although they [also] brought along 600 bicycles, only one soldier of the engineer unit carried his all the way through with an indomitable spirit. Just after they narrowly managed to make their way through the jungle-covered mountain range, they came across a Dutch East Indies army unit moving northward, which the Yamamoto (Kyōhei) Unit drove off after a minor battle. The Yamamoto Unit tried to hotly pursue the [enemy] unit toward Martapura, but it was not easy to assemble the entire unit and make it advance due to the fatigue from making its way through the jungle. However, the advance company led by Captain Kataoka, vying with the

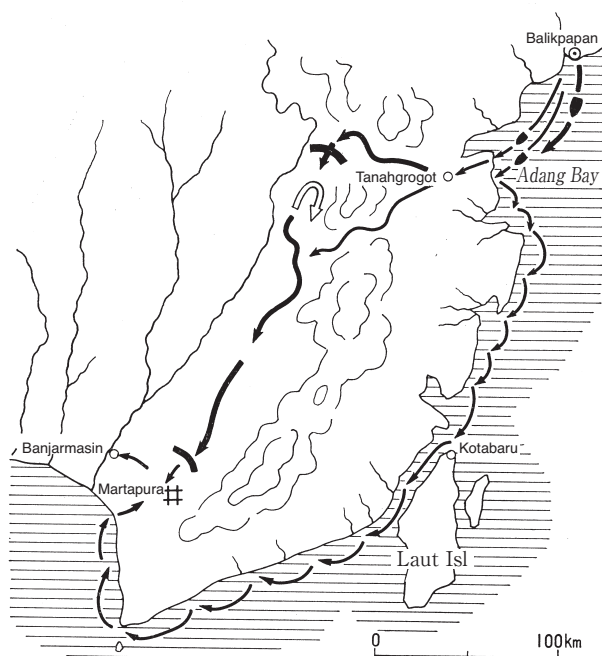


Illustration No. 37 — The Operation to Seize Banjarmasin

engineer company to be the first, chased [the enemy]. As the unit advanced, it gained more cooperation of the indigenous people. While obtaining bicycles, vehicles and provisions, the unit rushed forward and at 0900 on 10 February, the engineer company and the advance company seized the Martapura airfield.⁽⁸⁷⁾

The overland travel distance in this operation was some 400 kilometers, of which the jungle covered some 100 kilometers. The loss sustained in this operation was nine men killed by malaria. About 80% of the officers and men of the overland task force caught malaria.⁽⁸⁷⁾

A unit in fishing boats loaded with the base matériel of the Eleventh Air Fleet left Balikpapan on 9 February and arrived at the Martapura airfield around 20 Febru-

ary.⁽¹³⁹⁾ On 25 February, one element of the 23d Air Flotilla advanced to the airfield,⁽¹⁰⁴⁾ which was used as a relay base for the naval aircraft to advance to Bali.

(3) The Seizure of Makassar (See Illustration No. 38)

We have described the strategic significance of Makassar. The operation to seize Makassar was to be executed solely by the Navy and the date was [at first] arranged as day $x + 45$ on 10 November. However, it was rescheduled for day $x + 53$ on 1 January, due to the delay in the capture of Davao, [again] postponed to day $x + 60$ on 6 January due to the delay in preparations for launching the Dutch East Indies operation, and [further] postponed to day $x + 63$ (9 February) on 28 January due to the delay in making the Tarakan airfield ready and other reasons.

The seizure of Makassar was carried out by sailing from Kendari and crossing in front of the Lesser Sunda Islands, in front of the enemy. This came about because of the following circumstances.

Shortly before the Manila Conference (from 21 to 23 January), the Dutch East Indies Unit had the idea that it would have a ten-day-or-more postponement of the date of the Java landing operations approved, and that [then] the 1st Base Force, which was to [conduct the operation] to seize Kendari on 24 January, would [also] seize Makassar around 8 to 9 February, by sailing counterclockwise via Bangka and the Makassar Strait, along with the Sasebo Combined Special Landing Force, the 21st Destroyer Division, which would be transferred from the Combined Fleet, and one destroyer division, which would be brought in after the capture of Ambon (scheduled for 31 January). The 4th Destroyer Squadron would then conduct [the

However, only a seven-day postponement was approved for the Java landing operation as a result of the Manila Conference, and the main force of the 4th Destroyer Squadron had to head northward for Luzon earlier to escort the transport of the 48th Division. Therefore, [the operation to] seize Banjarmasin by sea [in conjunction with the Navy] was cancelled. These matters were decided on 28 January, and the Southern Task Force transmitted order(s) concerning them on the same day. Then, based on the order of the Southern Task Force, the Dutch East Indies Unit sent a telegram at 1930 on the same day to change the operation to seize Makassar so as to be carried out by sailing clockwise.⁽¹¹⁴⁾ Because at that time, the unit [for the operation] to seize Makassar had already left Kendari the day before and had started northward for Bangka^(117, 124) to seize Makassar by sailing counterclockwise, it ended up by having to turn around at Bangka to conduct the operation by sailing clockwise. On 29 January, the Dutch East Indies Unit ordered the 4th Destroyer Squadron commander to leave Balikpapan for Manila [i.e. Lingayen] with one destroyer division.⁽¹¹⁹⁾ It was [also] decided that the remaining forces of the squadron, which were left in Balikpapan, should sail northward for Jolo to escort the 48th Division, after cooperating in the Makassar [operation]. Further, on the same day, [the Dutch East Indies Unit] gave order(s) to increase the force to be diverted to the Makassar operation from Ambon after the capture of the island to two destroyer divisions by adding one more destroyer division.⁽¹¹⁹⁾

The units of the 1st Base Unit, which had left Kendari and had headed northward to Bangka since 27 January based on the original plan of the Dutch East Indies Unit to seize [Makassar by sailing] counterclockwise, made a U-turn and left Bangka on 2 February for Kendari at the change [to the new operation plan] to seize [Makassar by sailing] clockwise. Including the reinforcements [diverted] from the Ambon area, they left Kendari on 6 Febru-

ary, conducted the Makassar landing operation on 9 February, and seized the city on the same day.⁽¹²⁴⁾

The disposition of forces of the Eastern Attack Unit (commander: the 5th Cruiser Division commander) was in outline as follows:⁽¹¹⁴⁾

Eastern Attack Unit

Support Unit: [consisting of] the 5th Cruiser Division (with the heavy cruisers *Haguro* and *Nachi* (note: the *Myōkō* was still under repair in the mainland)), and the *Akebono* of the 7th Destroyer Division shall provide support, leaving Davao on 6 February.

1st Base Unit: [consisting of] the light cruiser *Nagara* ([of] the 16th Cruiser Division, shall leave Bangka on 2 February and [then] Kendari on the 6th); the 21st Destroyer Division (the *Wakaba*, the *Nenohi*, and the *Hatsushimo* shall operate in the same way as the *Nagara*); the 15th Destroyer Division (the *Natsushio*, the *Kuroshio*, the *Hayashio*, and the *Oyashio* shall arrive in Kendari on the 4th from Ambon and leave there on the 6th); the 8th Destroyer Division (the *Arashio*, the *Michishio*, the *Asashio*, and the *Ōshio* shall arrive in Kendari on the 5th from Ambon and leave there on the 6th); the auxiliary seaplane tender *Sanuki-maru* (which had been damaged and was positioned in Balikpapan, and which was transferred to the 1st Base Force to use her seaplanes), and the main force of the Sasebo Combined Special Landing Force (shall leave Bangka on the 2d, arrive in Kendari on the 4th, and leave there on the 6th), shall [carry out the operation to] seize Makassar on the 9th, leaving Kendari on the 6th, under the command of the 1st Base Force commander.

2d Escort Unit: [consisting of] the light cruiser *Jintsu*, the 16th Destroyer Division (the *Hatsukaze*, the *Amatsukaze*, the *Tokitsukaze*, and the *Yukikaze*), and the main force of the 7th Destroyer Division (the *Sazanami* and the *Ushio*; this division was transferred by the Combined Fleet order of the 28th to the Dutch East Indies Unit as of 31 January) under the command of the 2d Destroyer Squadron commander, shall support the operation to seize Makassar, while continuing the Ambon operation.

2d Air Unit: [consisting of] the seaplane tenders *Mizuho* and *Chitose* of the 11th Seaplane Tender Division, shall support [the operation to] seize Makassar by winding up its support for the Ambon operation and advance westward toward the area southeast of Makassar.

While the operation to seize Makassar was conducted by the Eastern Attack Unit, the tasks of the units which had formerly belonged to the Western Attack Unit (under the command of the Dutch East Indies Unit commander), such as cooperating with the 48th Division and with the operation [to seize] Banjarmasin and Makassar, were in outline as follows:

The main unit of the Dutch East Indies Unit: [consisting of] the heavy cruiser *Ashigara* (of the 16th Cruiser Division), and the 1st [2d?] Section of the 24th Destroyer Division (the *Suzukaze* and the *Yamakaze*), shall support from Davao.

The 4th Destroyer Squadron commander shall leave Balikpapan on 30 January for Manila [Lingayen] with the light cruiser *Naka* and the 2d Destroyer Division (the *Harusame*, the *Murasame*, the *Samidare* and the *Yūdachi*).

The 2d Base Force commander shall assume command of the force, which was left in Balikpapan by the 4th Destroyer Squadron, as well, and:

1. Transport base personnel and matériel of the Eleventh Air Fleet from Balikpapan to Banjarmasin by fishing boats, and
2. Leave Balikpapan on 8 February with the 9th Destroyer Division (the *Natsugumo*, the *Minegumo*, and the *Asagumo*; the *Yamagumo* was under repair at Lingayen Gulf) and the 1st Section of the 24th Destroyer Division (the *Umikaze* and the *Kawakaze*), and advance

off the coast of Makassar on the 9th to support [the operation to] seize Makassar, after which he shall head northward to Jolo to join the escort of the 48th Division.

Note: Of the 1st Air Unit (i.e. the auxiliary seaplane tenders *San'yō-maru* and *Sanuki-maru*), which had taken part in the seizure of Balikpapan, the *San'yō-maru* was diverted toward Cam Ranh Bay to escort the main force of the Sixteenth Army. The *Sanuki-maru* was deployed as mentioned above.

The organization of the 2d and 4th Destroyer Squadrons was as follows:

The 2d Destroyer Squadron: the light cruiser *Jintsū* and the 8th, the 15th and the 16th Destroyer Divisions. (The 18th Destroyer Division had been transferred to the Carrier Task Force since before the opening of hostilities.)

The 4th Destroyer Squadron: the light cruiser *Naka* and the 2d, the 9th and the 24th Destroyer Divisions. (The 4th Destroyer Division had been transferred to the main force of the Southern Task Force since before the opening of hostilities, but was [temporarily re-transferred] to the 2d Carrier Division during early February.)

The unit [for the operation] to seize Makassar departed from Kendari on 6 February.⁽¹²⁴⁾ Each unit concerned operated as planned.⁽¹¹⁴⁾ The air unit (i.e. the Eleventh Air Fleet) had launched a massive air campaign against eastern Java since 3 February, as mentioned previously. There was [almost] no interference [by the enemy] in the air as well as at sea, except some by allied submarines. Although some 1,000 Dutch East Indies troops were said to be [stationed] in Makassar, [the Japanese] easily seized the city on 9 February.^(102, 114, 124)

The only loss sustained was the destroyer *Natsushio*, which was torpedoed and sunk on 9 February.

After the successful landing in Makassar (on the 9th), each unit operated in the following way:^(114, 117, 119, 124)

1. The 15th Destroyer Division and the seaplane tender *Mizuho* turned around for the coming operation to capture Timor.
2. The seaplane tender *Chitose* headed for Jolo to escort the 48th Division.
3. The 8th Destroyer Division headed for Jolo to escort the unit for [the operation to] capture Bali (the Kanemura Detachment).
4. The *Nagara* and the 21st Destroyer Division made preparations for the coming [operation to] capture Bali while taking charge of maintaining stability in Makassar and the vicinity.
5. The 9th Destroyer Division and the 1st Section of the 24th Destroyer Division, which had departed from Balikpapan, turned around on the 10th and headed northward for Jolo to escort the 48th Division.
6. The 5th Cruiser Division (which had left Davao on the 6th) entered Staring Bay on the 10th to make preparations to support the coming operation to capture Timor.

(4) The Capture of Bali (See Illustration No. 39)

We have seen that [the operation] to occupy Bali, which had been agreed on at the Iwakuni Conference for the first time, automatically disappeared [from the plans] after the Cam Ranh Agreement due to the moved-up schedule of the Java operation, but that it [again] came up for discussion in connection with the Banjarmasin issue at the Manila Conference; that in the middle of that conference, the chief of staff of the 48th Division, Kawagoe Moriji, visited the Eleventh Air Fleet headquarters in Davao and made arrangements [for the operation]; that

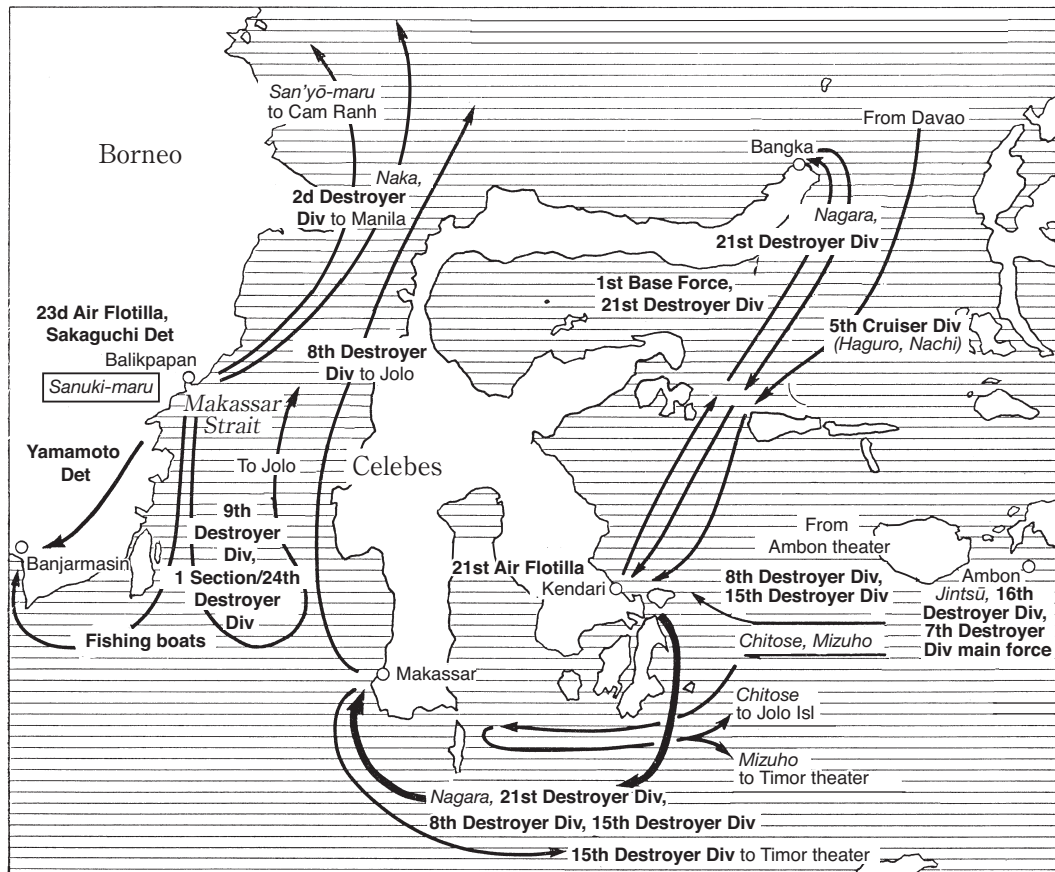


Illustration No. 38 — Overview of the Operation to Seize Makassar

in the draft arrangements between the Sixteenth Army and the Dutch East Indies Unit on 23 January, it was agreed to schedule it no later than day I - 2, and that on the 25th, the Southern Task Force sent the Southern Army a telegram to propose a date around day $x + 75$ (day $x + 75$ was [at that time] equivalent to day I - 2, that is, 21 February); and that although the execution of [the operation to] capture Bali and the schedule (around day $x + 75$) was [finally] decided on 28 January, the Sixteenth Army had already passed down an order to capture Bali to the 48th Division earlier on 24 January.

As soon as capture of Bali was [officially] decided on 28 January, the commander of the Dutch East Indies Unit in Davao made up his mind to have the 1st Base Force commander conduct the Bali operation on the heels of [the operation to] capture Makassar, employing a force [consisting of] the *Nagara* (a light cruiser of the 16th Cruiser Division) and the 8th and the 21st Destroyer Divisions. On the same day, he ordered the 8th Destroyer Division (which was at that time sailing southward, escorting the Eastern Detachment for the operation to capture Ambon) to go to Jolo by 10 or 11 February in the wake of the capture of Ambon (on the 31st) and the capture of Makassar (on 9 February) and [then again] sail southward to escort the Kanemura Detachment.⁽¹¹⁷⁾

On 30 January, Commander in Chief of the Eleventh Air Fleet Tsukahara passed down order(s) in Davao concerning Operation Z (the massive air campaign over eastern Java to be

launched from 3 February onwards).⁽¹⁴³⁾ We have already related how surprised Chief of Staff Kawagoe of the 48th Division was about the great enthusiasm of Commander in Chief Tsukahara, when he previously (on the 23d) visited him in Davao, but at that time, the morale of the Eleventh Air Fleet was indeed sky-high.⁽¹³⁶⁾ In line with the enthusiasm of the air fleet, Commander in Chief of the Third Fleet Takahashi, in Davao, decided to bring forward the operation to capture Bali by three days and ordered the 1st Base Force commander to [conduct the operation] on 18 February (day I – 5); (the latter was at the Bangka anchorage at that time, directing the clockwise change [in the operation] to capture Makassar).⁽¹¹⁷⁾

As previously related, in contrast to the order of Third Fleet Commander in Chief Takahashi to bring forward the [operation to capture] Bali by three days, Ozawa, commander in chief of the First Southern Expeditionary Fleet, proposed a postponement of [Operation] L for two days on 4 February and for another four days on the 6th (six days in total). Consequently, [the operation to] capture Bali became a stand-alone operation, separated from the Java landing operations in terms of schedule, which ended up increasing the risks, along with the bad weather (which hindered a satisfactory air campaign).

As previously related, on the 30th, Commander in Chief Takahashi gave orders to launch the operation “to capture Bali on the 18th [of February],” and at the same time he [also] gave instructions to advance [the operation] to seize Makassar. [Editor’s note: Actually, the orders for Makassar were issued on 1 February.] As of that day [the 30th], the Combined Fleet had not yet issued orders to have the Carrier Task Force take part in the Java operation.

On 3 February, the air unit (i.e. the Eleventh Air Fleet) launched a massive air campaign over eastern Java (Operation Z).⁽¹³⁴⁾ On that day, the *Nagara* and the 21st Destroyer Division under the command of the 1st Base Force commander were sailing southward to Kendari from Bangka to seize Makassar by a clockwise route, and the 8th Destroyer Division was still in the middle of the operation to capture Ambon.^(117, 124) On that day (the 3d), Maj. Kanemura Matabē, commander of the 3d Battalion of the 1st Taiwan Infantry Regiment, received in Manila the 48th Division’s order concerning [the operation to] capture Bali, which was in outline as follows:⁽⁸⁵⁾

The force consisting of the 3d Battalion (minus one company) of the 1st Taiwan Infantry Regiment, one mountain artillery section, and one independent engineer platoon as the core, led by Major Kanemura, commander of the battalion, shall be called the Kanemura Detachment.

The Kanemura Detachment shall leave Lingayen on the 5th, and assemble in Jolo on the 8th, where it shall make arrangements with the Navy and embark naval air [units’] matériel. [Then it shall] leave Jolo on the 13th, arrive in Makassar on the 15th, and go ashore on the coast east of Denpasar in Bali at midnight of the 18th, after which it shall seize the Kuta airfield (four kilometers southwest of Denpasar) and make it ready for use. It shall send out the empty ships on the night of the 19th and transfer the personnel and matériel of the independent engineer unit to the convoy of the main force of the division at the Makassar Strait.

At that time, Battalion Commander Kanemura had obtained the following information: There was about one battalion (some 600 troops) in Bali under the command of the eastern Java territorial commander, of which the main force was stationed in Singaraja, while one infantry company with armored cars was stationed in Denpasar and was guarding the Kuta airfield there. [Editor’s note: There were no Dutch East Indies Army units stationed on Bali. The garrison consisted of local Balinese auxiliary troops led by a few European officers.] Four fortress



Commander of the 3d Battalion of the 1st Taiwan Infantry Regiment, Maj. Kanemura Matabe

guns were deployed along the Lombok Strait. Mountains stretched close to the shorelines, and many petrified reefs and narrow channels made it difficult to carry out landing [operations] on Bali, but Sanur beach in the southeastern part of the island was sandy and suitable for the operation. Even then, the current in the Lombok Strait was so strong that it could reach five knots at its fastest. Although palm forests, dense forests and paddy fields were all around Denpasar and Kuta, the roads were well developed, etc.⁽⁸⁵⁾

On the 7th, the fast ships *Sasako-maru* and *Sagami-maru* (how they were selected and brought around [for this operation] has been previously described) with the Kanemura Detachment on board left Lingayen plowing the waves and arrived in Jolo as early as on the 10th.⁽⁸⁵⁾

The 8th Destroyer Division, which had left Ambon on the 4th and took part in the Makassar landing operations on the 9th, [also] arrived in Jolo at 1600 on the 10th.⁽¹¹⁷⁾

On the next day, the 11th, the Dutch East Indies Unit ordered the 1st Base Force to have the 21st Destroyer Division escort the transport ships loaded with matériel required for the Bali airfield and the like from Balikpapan and to have them arrive in Bali by the 24th.⁽¹¹⁷⁾ Accordingly, on the 13th, the 1st Base Force commander issued the following order:^(102, 114, 124)

1st [phase]: Raiding Operation

The attack unit ([consisting of] the 8th Destroyer Division) shall leave Makassar on the 17th, escort the Kanemura Detachment (the *Sasako-maru* and the *Sagami-maru*), put [the detachment] ashore on Bali on the 18th, and leave Bali on the 19th to head back. After escorting the *Sasako-maru* and the *Sagami-maru* to Makassar, the 8th Destroyer Division shall return to its original unit (i.e. the 2d Destroyer Squadron).

The support unit ([consisting of] the *Nagara* and (three destroyers of) the 21st Destroyer Division) shall leave Makassar on the 17th and take timely action to provide support.

2d [phase]: Transport Operation

The transport ships shall leave Balikpapan on the 20th and arrive in Makassar on the 22d under the escort of submarine chasers. The *Nagara* and the 21st Destroyer Division (three destroyers) shall leave Makassar on the evening of the 22d accompanying the transport ships and arrive in Bali on the 24th.

On that day (the 13th), the Kanemura Detachment and the 8th Destroyer Division left Jolo and advanced to Makassar on the 15th to stand by.^(114, 124) On that day (the 15th), the *Nagara*, which had returned to Staring Bay after [the operation to] seize Makassar, left the bay and advanced to Makassar on the 16th.⁽¹²⁴⁾

As previously related, on 3 February the air unit (the Eleventh Air Fleet) had launched Operation Z. However, the weather had been bad since 10 February. The attacks had not yet caused major damage to the allied air and naval forces, the surface forces in particular, in and around the Greater and Lesser Sunda Islands, and [what is more], the [real] situation was totally unknown due to the bad weather. On the 14th, the commander of the Eastern Attack Unit (i.e. the 5th Cruiser Division commander) expressed concern about [the situation] and requested to carry out an adequate air campaign in advance.⁽¹¹⁴⁾ The Dutch East Indies Unit commander agreed and on the 15th requested the air unit (the Eleventh Air Fleet) to do

so.⁽¹¹⁴⁾ [However,] the weather still remained bad. On the 16th, the Dutch East Indies Unit commander passed down the order to postpone [the operation to] capture Bali by one day.⁽¹¹⁴⁾ On that day, the 21st Destroyer Division left Makassar for Balikpapan for replenishment.⁽¹²⁴⁾

The next day, the 17th, the weather was still bad. The main unit of the Dutch East Indies Unit (the heavy cruiser *Ashigara* and the destroyer *Yamakaze*), which had left Davao on the 13th and advanced to Jolo on the 14th, left Jolo on that day to advance southward.⁽¹⁰³⁾ The support unit of the Eastern Attack Unit (the heavy cruisers *Haguro* and *Nachi* and the destroyer *Akebono*), which had been positioned in Staring Bay since 10 February, left the bay on that day (the 17th) to support the Eastern Detachment in [its operation to] capture Timor.⁽¹¹⁴⁾

At 0100 on the next day, the 18th, the 8th Destroyer Division and the Kanemura Detachment ([on board] the *Sasako-maru* and the *Sagami-maru*) left Makassar for Bali.⁽¹⁰²⁾ Ten minutes before [departure], the Dutch East Indies Unit commander wired: "[The detachment 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 make a flight. In such a case, the Bali operation shall be postponed for another day."⁽¹¹⁴⁾ However, the 1st Base Force commander decided to push ahead [regardless of the weather].⁽¹¹⁴⁾ Fortunately the weather improved. The seaplanes of the *Sanuki-maru* in Makassar and the fighter plane unit of the 3d [Naval] Air Group of the 23d Air Flotilla from Balikpapan provided cover for the convoy. Twenty-seven land-based attack planes and eight Type-0 fighter planes of the air unit advanced over Surabaya, and conducted attacks on six destroyers, more than a dozen transport ships and other [vessels of the enemy] in port while engaging twenty [enemy] planes [in the air].⁽¹⁰⁰⁾ On that day, the Kanemura Detachment, which was only approached by one [enemy] flying boat coming for reconnaissance, sailed at high speed without being attacked by other enemy aircraft or vessels at all, entered the Sanur anchorage at 0015 on the 19th, and successfully went ashore at 0100.⁽¹⁰²⁾

Upon landing, the Kanemura Detachment headed westward, taking advantage of the darkness of the night and the heavy rain, seized the Denpasar barracks in a surprise attack, and [also] seized the Kuta airfield at 1130, clearing away resistance from a Dutch East Indies unit.⁽⁸⁵⁾

On that day (the 19th), allied aircraft began a relentless bombardment [on the anchorage] from daybreak onwards, and their attacks lasted into the evening.⁽¹¹⁷⁾ The bombardment caused the *Sagami-maru* so much damage that she could only navigate with one screw, and it also caused some damage to the *Sasako-maru*.⁽¹¹⁷⁾ The disembarkation was continued amid the bombardment and submarine torpedo attacks.⁽¹¹⁷⁾ After completing the disembarkation, the *Sagami-maru* left the anchorage at 1725, and started on her way back under the escort of the 2d Section (the *Michishio* and the *Arashio*) [of the 8th Destroyer Division].⁽¹¹⁷⁾ The *Sasako-maru* stayed at [the anchorage] under the escort of the 1st Section (the *Ōshio* and the *Asashio*) to collect the [landing] craft. After the completion of collecting and loading the craft at 2350, she was about to start on her way back⁽¹¹⁷⁾ when allied naval vessels came for a raid, and an engagement began at 0000.⁽¹¹⁷⁾ The allied fleet came in for an attack one after another. The destroyers *Ōshio* and *Asashio* bravely fought with the dominant allied naval vessels four times in some three hours* and sank one Dutch destroyer.⁽¹¹⁷⁾

*Note: According to U.S. and Dutch military history books, the first engagement [was with] two Dutch cruisers, one Dutch destroyer and two U.S. destroyers; the second through the 4th engagement [were with] one Dutch cruiser and four U.S. destroyers.

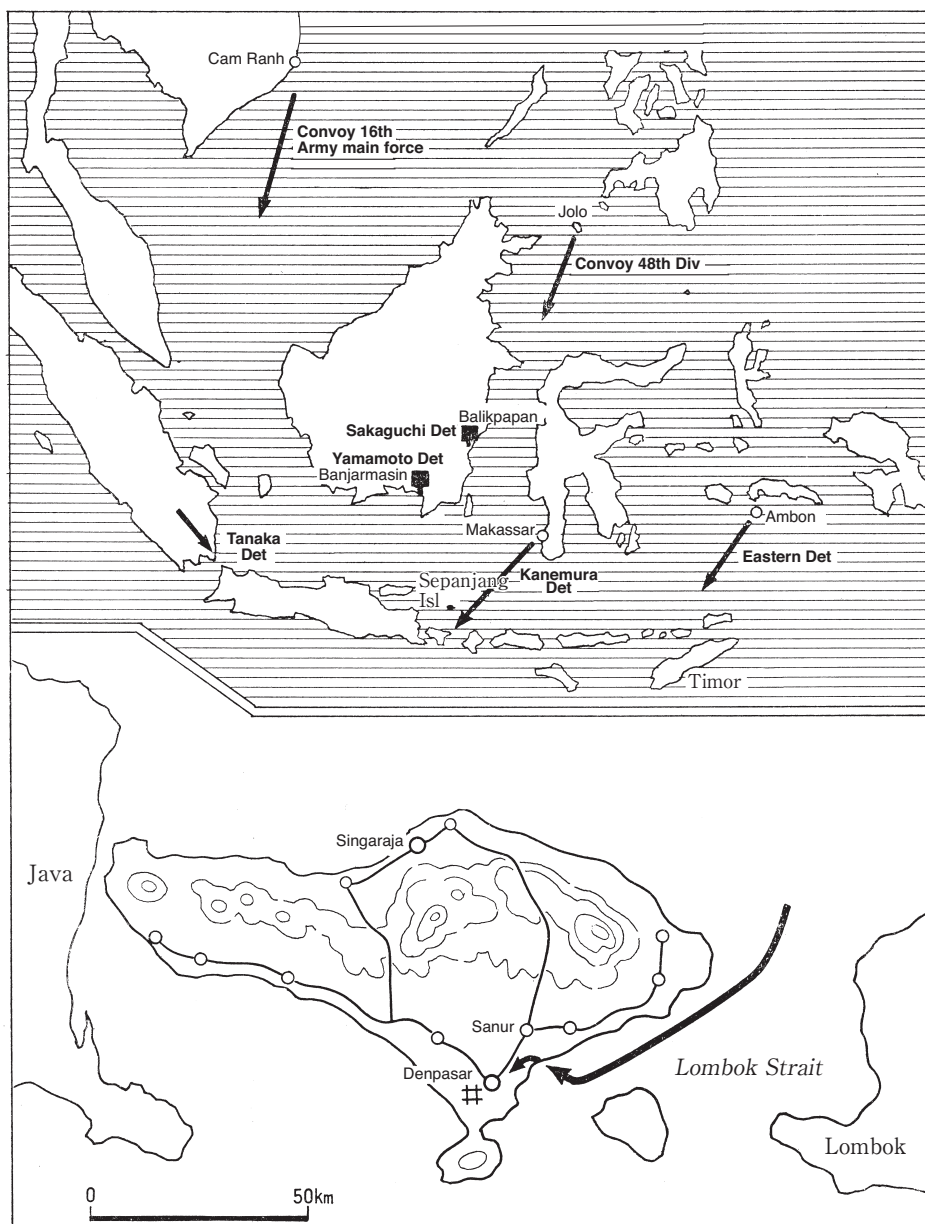


Illustration No. 39 — The Situation at the Time of the Operation to Capture Bali
The Operation to Capture Bali

Later in the engagement, the 2d Section (the *Michishio* and the *Arashio*) came across allied naval vessels at the east end of the [Badung] strait and for an instant fought with them. In the fight, the *Michishio* was hit in the engine room and got stalled at sea.⁽¹¹⁷⁾

The light cruiser *Nagara* and the 21st Destroyer Division (the *Wakaba*, the *Nenohi* and the *Hatsushimo*), which were standing by for support on the sea east of Sepanjang Island, hurried to the battle area, but the allied naval vessels had already gone. Also the main unit of the Dutch East Indies Unit ([consisting of] the heavy cruiser *Ashigara* and the destroyers *Kawakaze*

and *Yamakaze*, which had left Jolo on the 17th and advanced to Balikpapan on the 18th) learned about the emergency, left Balikpapan at 0300 on the 20th, and sailed southward at full speed, but as a matter of course they were too late. The *Nagara*, the 21st and the 8th Destroyer Division (of which the *Michishio* was towed by the *Arashio*) headed back, beating off attacks by allied aircraft, and returned to Makassar on the night of the 21st. The main unit of the Dutch East Indies Unit left for Staring Bay.^(102, 117)

After seizing the Kuta airfield and while guarding and making it ready for use, the Kanemura Detachment [also] seized Singaraja on the 27th.⁽⁸⁵⁾

Considering the situation during the first [phase] of the raiding operation, the Dutch East Indies Unit commander revised the former order concerning the transport and landing operations in the second [phase].⁽¹¹⁷⁾ On the 23d, five transport ships carrying personnel and matériel related to the [naval] air [units] left Makassar and debarked them at Bali on the night of the 24th [editor's note: actually the morning of the 25th, see Vol. 26, pp. 335-337] under escort of the *Nagara* and the 8th Destroyer Division (the *Asashio* and the *Arashio*) and the 21st Destroyer Division (the *Wakaba*, the *Nenohi* and the *Hatsushimo*).⁽¹⁰²⁾ The main unit of the Dutch East Indies Unit (the heavy cruiser *Ashigara* and the destroyers *Kawakaze* and *Yamakaze*) left Staring Bay on the 23d to support the above [operation].⁽¹⁰³⁾ At that time, the 48th Division, which was to land on eastern Java (and had left Jolo on 19 February), was in the southern part of the Makassar Strait.

Thirty aircraft of the 23d Air Flotilla advanced to the Denpasar (Kuta) airfield as early as on the 20th, the day when the Kanemura Detachment had seized it, and the 23d Air Flotilla headquarters also advanced to Bali from Balikpapan on the 26th.⁽¹⁰³⁾

The landing on Java, which had been scheduled for 26 February, was changed on the 23d to the 28th and again changed on the 27th to 1 March and carried out on that day.

(5) The Capture of Timor (See Illustrations No. 40 and No. 41)

Preparations for the Operation

We have seen that in the plan before the opening of hostilities, Kupang was to be seized by the South Seas Detachment at the first opportunity; that after the opening of hostilities the desire grew to take advantage of the general war situation and concretely plan operations in the Banda Sea area, which led to the additional dispatch of the 2d Carrier Division; that on 1 January it was agreed that the Eastern Detachment would seize Kupang on 11 February in the wake of the capture of Ambon; that on 5 January the Southern Army issued an order to seize Kupang, while proposing IGHQ to seize Dili; that on 28 January the date [to carry out the operation to] seize Kupang was postponed to 20 February; that the Southern Army, which had received no reply about Dili from IGHQ yet, suddenly received instead a telegram on 5 February from the Southern Task Force proposing [an operation against Dili], and after referring the matter to IGHQ, [finally] received the IGHQ Army Department Order of 7 February [approving the operation against Portuguese Timor]; and that on the next day, the 8th, the Southern Army gave an order to seize Dili as well, turning down the view of the Sixteenth Army [which wanted to concentrate on Kupang].

The order passed down by the Southern Army on 8 February was as follows:⁽²³⁾

Southern Army Operation Order A, No. 54

Southern Army Order

Saigon, 8 February

1. The Sixteenth Army commander shall conduct operations against Portuguese Timor in conjunction with the Navy for the purpose of facilitating the Dutch Timor operation. The agreement between the Southern Army and the Second Fleet is as shown on the separate sheet.
2. If Portugal does not take hostile action or ceases such action at the time of the above operations [of ours], its sovereignty shall be respected as much as possible unless it affects the operations. In such a case, the measures which we will demand Portugal takes in defending Timor shall be given in a separate order. However, matters urgently required in terms of the operations can be demanded from Portugal, according to circumstances.

Separate Sheet

In view of the current situation where Australian and Dutch East Indies troops have occupied Portuguese Timor, one element of the Itō Detachment shall land in Dili when invading Timor (under the escort of the Navy) and seize the airfield in the vicinity almost simultaneously with the landing in Kupang.

As mentioned previously, the Southern Army had on 5 February received a telegram from the Second Fleet proposing the aforementioned agreement and wired back its approval on the 7th upon receiving the IGHQ Army Department Instructions.⁽²³⁾

[Meanwhile,] the Navy Department of IGHQ gave directions to the Combined Fleet on the same day as the Army (on the 7th) with IGHQ Navy Department Order No. 14 and IGHQ Navy Department Instructions No. 51 that "operations can be conducted in Portuguese Timor." At 1120 on the same day (the 7th), the Dutch East Indies Unit (i.e. the Third Fleet) wired the Sixteenth Army the following proposal:⁽¹¹⁷⁾

Based on the instructions of central command and the commander of the Southern Task Force, we would like to discuss the following items regarding the operation to capture Timor:

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 (note by the author: presumably the Penfui airfield, which will be mentioned later) and make it ready for use.

Details shall be decided after consultation between Detachment Commander Itō and the 2d Destroyer Squadron commander.

In response to the telegram, the Sixteenth Army wired back on 11 February that it had no objections.⁽¹¹⁴⁾ On the same day (the 11th), the Dutch East Indies Unit ordered the commanders of the 5th Cruiser Division and the 2d Destroyer Squadron to make arrangements with Detachment Commander Itō and the 21st Air Flotilla commander, and carry out the Dili and Kupang landing operations before daybreak on the 20th.⁽¹¹⁴⁾

On 13 February, Detachment Commander Itō discussed the arrangements with the Navy side in Ambon and concluded them on 14 February.⁽¹¹⁷⁾ He decided to have a force [consisting of] one battalion as the core led by Col. Doi Sadashichi, commander of the 228th Infantry Regiment, land in Dili, while he himself would land in Kupang leading the remaining forces.⁽⁷⁸⁾

Around that time, the Navy side was dealing with the following problems:

First of all, there was the issue of [a shortage of] destroyers. The destroyer divisions, which the Eastern Attack Unit was able to employ in the operation to seize Kendari, were the 8th, the 15th and the 16th Destroyer Divisions. The Combined Fleet and the Southern Task Force took various measures to help the Dutch East Indies Unit, which was suffering from a shortage of destroyers. The Combined Fleet added the 21st Destroyer Division, which the Dutch East Indies Unit and the Eastern Attack Unit employed for the Kendari [operation]. As the Eastern Attack Unit had to carry out in an extremely short period of time the operations to seize Kendari (on 24 January), then Ambon, then Makassar, and then again Timor, the Southern Task Force landed the carrier aircraft of the 2d Carrier Division (with the carriers *Sōryū* and *Hiryū*), which had returned to Davao on the 27th [according to Vol. 26, p. 231, the 25th] after conducting air strikes on Ambon on 24 January, onto land bases (in Kendari and Balikpapan), suspended the carrier operations, and added the 7th Destroyer Division, which had been attached to the 2d Carrier Division, to the Dutch East Indies Unit. It was decided that the 21st Destroyer Division would prepare for [the operation to] seize Makassar while operating off eastern Celebes; whereas the 8th, the 15th, the 16th and the 7th Destroyer Divisions would take part in [the operation to] capture Ambon (on 31 January). [Meanwhile] on 28 January, [the operation to] capture Bali was newly included. [Accordingly,] the Eastern Attack Unit assigned the 21st Destroyer Division in Celebes to the operations to seize Makassar, and then Bali, from Kendari. It also arranged that among the destroyer divisions which had participated in the Ambon [operation], the 8th Destroyer Division would [further] take part in [the operation to] seize Makassar and then Bali, that the 15th Destroyer Division would reverse course [for the operation to] capture Timor after taking part in the Makassar [operation], and that the 7th and the 16th Destroyer Divisions would prepare in Ambon for [the operation to] capture Timor. However, the Southern Task Force decided to have the 2d Carrier Division (with aircraft carriers) conduct an air strike on Port Darwin prior to [the operation to] capture Timor, and issued an order on 5 February that the 7th Destroyer Division should return to the 2d Carrier Division.⁽¹¹²⁾ The Eastern Attack Unit was perplexed; it immediately wired [to the Southern Task Force] the request to let it continuously employ the 7th Destroyer Division.⁽¹¹²⁾ Just at that time (on 7 February), the unit was ordered to further [carry out the operation to] seize Dili as well, which made the situation even more serious. The Eastern Attack Unit and the Dutch East Indies Unit repeatedly wired requests [to the Southern Task Force to keep the 7th Destroyer Division]. On 12 February, the Southern Task Force sent a reply that the employment [of the 7th destroyer division] could be continued.⁽¹¹²⁾ [It was because] before that, on 9 February, the Southern Task Force had dropped the idea of carrying out the air strike on Port Darwin solely with the 2d Carrier Division, and issued an order to have the 2d Carrier Division return to the Carrier Task Force.

The second problem was the order of the Combined Fleet to additionally deploy the Carrier Task Force (the First Air Fleet) [to the southern operation]. On 31 January, the Combined Fleet had issued an order to transfer the entire force of the Carrier Task Force [to the Southern Task Force] but revised it on 8 February so that the 5th Carrier Division was excluded.^(116, 123) [As such] it was helpful for the Timor invasion units that the Carrier Task Force would attack the Port Darwin area. However, it meant that the 5th Cruiser Division got the additional task of cooperating in the operations of the Carrier Task Force, as mentioned previously.

The third problem was [the deployment of] the seaplane tenders *Chitose* and *Mizuho*. Both had participated in the operation to seize Makassar after the Ambon operation, and the for-

mer had headed for Jolo to escort the 48th Division, while the latter was in Staring Bay, anticipating possible participation in the eastern Java operation. The units concerned [now] requested the participation of the *Mizuho* [in the operations against Timor], insisting it would be necessary to have a seaplane tender to accompany and escort the convoy. [As a result,] on 16 February the Dutch East Indies Unit issued an order to have the *Mizuho* join in [the operation to capture] Timor.^(114, 117)

The fourth problem was the deployment of the 21st Air Flotilla. Its deployment was affected by that of the 2d Carrier Division and of the Carrier Task Force, the cancellation of [the operation to] capture Banjarmasin by sea [by the Navy in conjunction with the Army], and other [factors]. The 21st Air Flotilla commander, who had his headquarters in Kendari, was positioned in Ambon between 12 to 17 February and while directing air operations against this area, made arrangements for the Timor operation.⁽¹⁴³⁾

The fifth problem was the [issue of] naval units to be employed for ground operations. It was decided not to use them for Dili, because the strength of the landing force would not be sufficient. [Instead,] it was decided that the main force of the 3d Yokosuka Special Landing Force (a paratrooper unit), whose paradrop operation on Balikpapan had been called off, would conduct a parachuting operation in the Kupang area, and the [remaining] element of the force and two platoons of the Sasebo Combined Special Landing Force ([stationed in] Makassar) would conduct landing operations against Kupang along with the Itō Detachment.^(114, 117)

[Sorting out] these problems, the Navy made decisions on the major issues by 16 February, and its plan was in outline as follows.^(113, 117) At that time, the 1st Base Force was preparing for [the operation to] capture Bali along with the light cruiser *Nagara* and the 8th and the 21st Destroyer Divisions, in conjunction with the [Army] Kanemura Detachment, as already described. Meanwhile, the Carrier Task Force, which had left Palau the day before (on the 15th), was sailing southward to attack Port Darwin. In the western [theater of the Dutch East Indies operation], the Bangka and Palembang landing operations were conducted on the 15th.

The Support Unit, [of the Dutch East Indies Unit, consisting of] the 5th Cruiser Division (the heavy cruisers *Haguro* and *Nachi*) and the destroyers *Akebono* and *Ikazuchi* (the former from the 7th Destroyer Division and the latter from the 6th) shall support [the operation to] capture Timor as well as to cooperate with the Carrier Task Force, by leaving Staring Bay on the 17th (the 18th for the *Ikazuchi*) and sailing southeastward.

The 2d Escort Unit (led by the 2d Destroyer Squadron commander)

The Main Force, [consisting of] the light cruiser *Jintsū* and the destroyer *Hatsukaze*, shall leave Ambon for the Kupang area on the 17th and support all operations.

The Cover Unit, [consisting of] the 15th Destroyer Division (the *Kuroshio*, the *Hayashio* and the *Asashio* [*Oyashio?*]), shall leave Ambon on the 17th and cover the Kupang area.

The 1st Detachment, [consisting of] the 16th Destroyer Division (minus the *Hatsukaze*, that is, the *Yukikaze*, the *Tokitsukaze* and the *Amatsukaze*), is to leave Ambon on the 17th and escort the Kupang landing units.

The 2d Detachment ([consisting of] the 1st section (the *Ushio* and the *Sazanami*) of the 7th Destroyer Division) shall leave Ambon on the 18th and escort the unit for seizing Dili.

Two platoons of the Sasebo Combined Special Landing Force shall be assigned to the Kupang area.

The *Mizuho* (seaplane tender) shall move to the Kupang area, leaving Staring Bay on the 17th.

The 3d Yokosuka Special Landing Force (under the command of the 21st Air Flotilla) shall parachute down in the Kupang area on the 20th and the 21st.

It was decided that the main force of the Eastern Detachment, directly led by Detachment Commander Major General Itō, would leave Ambon on the 17th, and one element of the detachment, led by Regimental Commander Doi, would leave Ambon on the 18th, and land in Kupang and Dili respectively before daybreak on the 20th.⁽⁷⁶⁾ The [information on] the situation obtained before departure and the operation plan will be described later.

The Carrier Task Force's Air Strike on Port Darwin

As already mentioned, the commander of the Southern Task Force (he had been positioned in Palau since 18 January) received on 8 February the Combined Fleet's order concerning the transfer of the Carrier Task Force to his command and on the same day issued his orders regarding the advance of the Carrier Task Force to Palau, the 2d Carrier Division's return to the Carrier Task Force (from Davao, from the command of the Eleventh Air Fleet), and others. On the next day, the 9th, he [also] gave orders regarding the first carrier operation (the attack on Port Darwin just before the landing [operation] on Timor), and the second carrier operation (the operations in the Indian Ocean at the time of the Java landing operations). On that day (the 9th), the enemy position was judged to be as follows:⁽¹¹⁷⁾

Through our air raids at the beginning of February, the enemy based on Java has lost most of its air and naval forces, and as our invasion operations progress, it is highly likely that the remaining forces will attempt to escape to Australia, India and South Africa; it is also quite likely that British, U.S., Dutch and Australian naval forces will appear in the eastern part of the Indian Ocean to pick them up. Further, it seems that part of the enemy forces have already escaped to Port Darwin and vicinity; there is information that part of the U.S. air reinforcements have been operating in concert with part of British and Australian forces, using [Port Darwin] as a base.

The plan was that the Carrier Task Force (commander, V. Adm. Nagumo Chūichi, commander in chief of the First Air Fleet) would depart from Palau on 15 February, return to Staring Bay after the first carrier operation, and [then] launch the second carrier operation; the main unit of the Southern Task Force would leave Palau on 18 February, advance into Staring Bay, and launch the second carrier operation. The forces, which had assembled in Palau by the 15th, were in outline as follows:^(103, 116, 123)

The aircraft carriers *Akagi* and *Kaga* of the 1st Carrier Division.

The aircraft carriers *Sōryū* and *Hiryū* of the 2d Carrier Division.

The battleships *Hiei*, *Kirishima*, *Kongō* and *Haruna* of the 3d Battleship Division.

The heavy cruisers *Maya*, *Takao* and *Atago* of the 4th Cruiser Division (note: the *Atago* was the flagship of the Southern Task Force, and the *Chōkai* of this division was the flagship of the Malaya Unit).

The heavy cruisers *Tone* and *Chikuma* of the 8th Cruiser Division.

The light cruiser *Abukuma*, the 17th Destroyer Division, and the 2d Section of the 27th Destroyer Division of the 1st Destroyer Squadron.

The 4th Destroyer Division (of the 4th Destroyer Squadron), the 18th Destroyer Division (minus two destroyers), and the *Akigumo*.

Of the above, the *Atago*, the 3d Battleship Division and the 4th Destroyer Division (the *Arashi*, the *Nowaki*, the *Hagikaze* and the *Maikaze*) were to leave Palau for Staring Bay on the 18th as the main force of the Southern Task Force, while the others left Palau on that day (the 15th) as the Strike Force for the attack on Port Darwin.^(103, 116, 123) In the western [theater of the Dutch East Indies operation], the Bangka and Palembang landing operations were carried out on the same day, while the Malaya Unit was engaging an allied fleet that [attempted] a counterattack in a sea battle.



Commander in Chief of
the First Air Fleet V.
Adm. Nagumo Chūichi

On the 19th (the day before the Timor landing operations), the Carrier Task Force reached the waters about 220 nautical miles north-northwest of Port Darwin and launched an attack on Port Darwin with the full force of its aircraft (namely, thirty-six fighter planes, seventy-one carrier-based bombers, and eighty-one carrier-based attack planes). On that day, in concert [with this attack], the 21st Air Flotilla, [then] based in Kendari and Ambon, also attacked Port Darwin with the full force of its land-based attack planes. They reported the military gain of bringing down ten small and one large [enemy] aircraft in the air and sinking two destroyers and ten transport ships at sea, and that the allied forces in Port Darwin were wiped out.^(103, 116, 123)

The Seizure of Kupang

On the same day, the Eastern Detachment was approaching Kupang and Dili.

That is, the *Miike-maru* (with Detachment Commander Itō on board), the *Africa-maru*, the *Ryōyō-maru*, and the *Zen'yō-maru* carrying the main force of the Eastern Detachment, which had left Ambon at 0500 on the 17th and had passed through the Alor Strait on the night of the 18th, were making a detour at sea west of Timor on that day [the 19th] to sail toward the south of Kupang. Meanwhile, the *Yamaura-maru* carrying Regimental Commander Doi and his men, who were to [conduct the operation to] seize Dili, had left Ambon at 0230 on the 18th and was approaching Dili on that day [the 19th]. The Navy was escorting the convoys, operating as in the previously described plan.

The Eastern Detachment commander was only provided with maps on a scale of 1:2,000,000 for Timor and aerial photographs of Kupang and the vicinity. He understood that some 3,000 troops were stationed near Kupang and some 1,000 near Dili. He had also heard that there were entrenched positions and gun batteries near Kupang, that mines were laid in the coastal waters, and that most of the allied aircraft in Kupang had been destroyed.⁽⁷⁸⁾

As for the Kupang area, the Eastern Detachment planned to seize the city from the south after landing on the south coast, where the defenses were considered weak. At this time, one element of the force was to advance northeastward to cut off the road that ran eastward from Kupang; another element of the force was to cooperate with the naval paratrooper unit in seizing the Penfui airfield, and yet another element of the force was to seize the coastal batteries.⁽⁷⁸⁾ The Navy planned to have some 300 paratroopers of the 3d Yokosuka Special Landing Force, carried by twenty-eight transport aircraft, seize the Penfui airfield by parachuting at 1030 on the 20th onto a pasture four kilometers northeast of Babau, [then] to have reinforcements parachute in on the 21st in the same way as on the 20th, and to have the remaining 118 men of the landing force and two platoons of the Sasebo Combined Special Landing Force

go ashore with the main force of the Eastern Detachment and advance toward the Penfui airfield.^(102, 103)

The Eastern Detachment, assuming that the main force would land in the Kupang area and one element of the force in the Dili area before daybreak on the 20th, planned its operations as follows:^(76, 78)

1. Main force of the detachment

Right Attack Unit [consisting of] the 2d Company, one machine gun platoon, a battalion gun platoon (with one gun), one radio squad, and one element of the medical unit, led by the 2d Company Commander 1st Lt. Kambe Masaji, after landing on the coast east of Cape Benini, shall promptly advance to Oesau and vicinity by way of the road connecting Baun – Oekahiti – Oesau and while defeating the enemy along [the road], it shall secure the neighborhood of the location and cut off the escape route of the enemy. During the advance up to Baun, it shall generally position itself behind the advance company of the center attack unit.

Center Attack Unit [consisting of] the 3d Battalion, one antitank gun company, and one mountain artillery battery (minus one section) as the core, led by the 3d Battalion Commander Maj. Nishiyama Haruka, shall land on the coast between Cape Benini and Cape Mali, advance from Baun to the area southeast of Kupang by way of the road connecting Highland 385 – Kupang and while defeating the enemy along [the road], prepare for the subsequent attack on Kupang. It shall seize the Penfui airfield with one element of its force.

Left Attack Unit [consisting of] the 1st Battalion (minus two companies, one machine gun platoon, and the main force of the battalion artillery), a light-armored car company, one antitank gun platoon and one mountain artillery battery as the core, led by 1st Battalion Commander Maj. Hayakawa Kikuo, shall land on the coast northwest of Cape Mali, promptly seize the battery near Oilalus, advance into the area south of Kupang by way of the road connecting Cape Mali – Oilalus – Kupang, and while defeating the enemy along [the road], prepare for the subsequent attack on Kupang.

Artillery Unit [consisting of] the 2d Battalion of the 38th Mountain Artillery Regiment (minus two batteries), shall land on the coast east of Cape Mali, follow the rear of the center attack unit, and cooperate in the operations of the latter as needed.

Reserve Unit [consisting of] one company of the 1st Battalion, shall land on the east coast of Cape Mali following the main units and operate along with the detachment headquarters.

The detachment headquarters shall land on the coast east of Cape Mali and proceed at the rear of the center attack unit.

2. Dili attack unit [consisting of] the 2d Battalion as the core, led by 228th Infantry Regiment Commander Col. Doi Sadashichi, shall land on the coast west of Dili and promptly seize the airfield.

The unit for seizing Kupang sailed without being attacked by allied air or naval forces. Its right, center and left attack units went ashore on the coast east and west of Cape Mali between 0235 and 0315 on the 20th and immediately started their advance. On that day, while the right and center attack units advanced to Highland 363 and Highland 385 respectively, the left attack unit rushed into Kupang as early as at 1900. [Also] on that day, the commander of the Yokosuka Special Landing Force and his men, a total of 308 paratroopers, parachuted down onto a pasture four kilometers northeast of Babau at 1045 meeting with no resistance and seized Babau by evening.^(76, 103)

On the next day, the 21st, the right attack unit advanced into Oesau at 1730, eliminating weak resistance, and set about occupying the position so as to cut off the eastward escape route of the allied units. On that day, the center attack unit entered Kupang at 0900, elimi-

nating weak resistance. The 9th Company of the center attack unit had separated [from the main unit] at Highland 385, seized the Penfui airfield at 1400 on that day and handed over [the airfield] to the already-mentioned navy unit that had landed east of Cape Mali and followed [the army units]. At 1015 on that day, 323 men of the 2d Paratroop Unit of the Yokosuka Special Landing Force parachuted down onto the aforementioned pasture. The unit which had parachuted down the day before was not yet able to reach the Penfui airfield on that day due to destroyed bridges and obstruction by allied units. [In the meantime,] the detachment headquarters entered Kupang at 1700.^(76, 103)

On the next day, the 22d, the paratrooper unit of the Yokosuka Special Landing Force [finally] got to the Penfui airfield at 0600.^(102, 103)

On that day (the 22d), Detachment Commander Itō, who was [positioned] in the city of Kupang, learned around 1030 that the right attack unit in Oesau had come under attack of some 1,000 allied troops trying to envelop them from the west with more than a dozen guns and armored cars. The detachment commander immediately dispatched the Murase Unit (a unit [consisting of] the 9th Company, the main force of the machine gun company, and one antitank gun platoon as the core, led by Capt. Murase Jishichirō, commander of the 3d Machine Gun Company) from Pasir Panjang (about twenty-two kilometers west-southwest of Oesau) and requested the cooperation of naval aircraft. [Editor's note: The text has "Keshiru," which could not be identified. Based on the location, it was most likely Pasir (Panjang).] Then he [also] sent the Hayakawa Unit ([consisting of] the main force of the 1st Battalion of the 228th Infantry Regiment, two batteries and a light-armored car company, led by 1st Battalion Commander Maj. Hayakawa Kikuo). The Murase Unit left Pasir Panjang at 1200, and the Hayakawa Unit left Kupang by motor vehicles at 1430. The main force of the 3d Battalion was assigned to guard the Kupang area.^(76, 14)

Since around 0700 on that day, the right attack unit, led by First Lieutenant Kambe (a total of 206 men at the Oesau position; see the previous description for its formation) had been under attack from the above-mentioned allied unit. By 1430, the ammunition of its grenade launchers ran out and only ten shells were left for the battalion gun. Losses were incurred one after another, and First Lieutenant Kambe also got injured at 1600. However, around 1700 a naval aircraft unit in a nine-plane formation dropped bombs at the rear of the allied unit, and around 1800 artillery was [also] heard from the rear of the allied unit. [It was] the Murase Unit, which had arrived there and started attacking the enemy from the rear. Then, the Hayakawa Unit [also] arrived and launched attacks, taking the Murase Unit under its command. The allied unit fiercely intensified its attacks, trying to break through the position of the Kambe Unit and escape eastward. By around 1830, the platoon positions in the right front line (north of the main road) and in the left rear were overrun, and only the position in the left front line remained. The ammunition ran out. The allied unit picked up the dead and the injured, broke through the [road] blocks at the east end of Oesau, and left eastward in over a hundred motor trucks. It was judged that their total strength was 1,500 troops and the number of casualties 500. As for the Kambe Unit, sixty-seven men were killed, and thirty-four were wounded in the battle. Seeing the allied unit retreat, First Lieutenant Kambe followed, leading the remaining troops from the platoon positions in the left front line and in the left rear, but they constituted only nine men.^(76, 14)

After that, Major Hayakawa, bringing the right attack unit under his command as well, started pursuing the enemy, caught them in the area east of Naibonak at daybreak of the 23d,



Landing in Kupang in the face of the enemy (20 February)

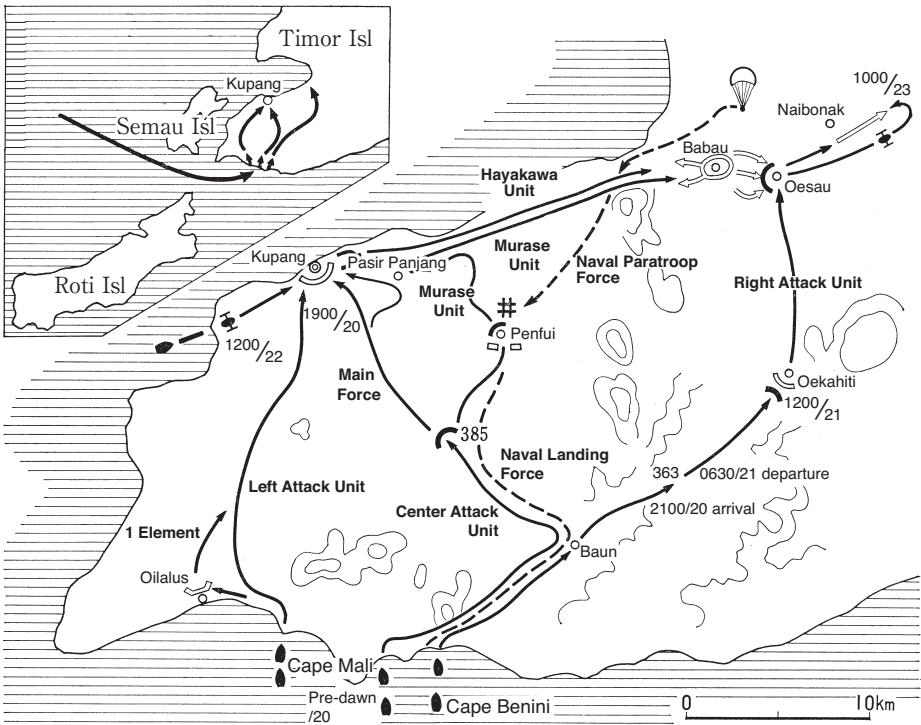


Illustration No. 40 — The Operation to Seize Kupang

and at 1000 on the same day, he finally made some 1,000 troops (with about 100 light-armored cars and other vehicles) surrender.^(76, 14)

According to a later study by the Eastern Detachment, the main force of the allied unit, which was positioned near Kupang at the beginning, started its retreat eastward before the advance of the main force of the Eastern Detachment into Kupang and [further] retreated by breaking through the positions of the right attack unit in Oesau. The [allied] force, which fought with the Eastern Detachment in the Kupang area consisted of about 1,940 troops (some 1,500 Australian troops (including some 150 British), some 240 Dutch East Indies troops and some 200 indigenous troops); 296 abandoned bodies were confirmed, and 1,136 men (179 British, 934 Australian and 23 Dutch) were taken prisoner.

The detachment sustained a loss of sixty-seven men killed and fifty-six wounded in action. However, it seized seven tanks, five armored cars, two 15-cm. cannon (with 287 shells), eight mortars (with 3,000 shells), four antitank guns, six 37-mm. antiaircraft automatic guns (with 3,282 shells), eighteen 13-mm. antiaircraft machine guns, forty-five heavy machine guns (with 47,100 bullets), thirty-six [semi-]automatic rifles (with 4,400 bullets), 756 rifles (379,760 bullets), and others.⁽⁷⁶⁾

[Later] on 10 May, [Sixteenth] Army Commander Imamura conferred a citation of merit on the 2d Company of the 228th Infantry Regiment and the units attached to it, led by the company commander, First Lieutenant Kambe, and proclaimed their distinguished military service to the entire army. It read: "You landed in the face of the enemy on the coast at the southwestern end of Timor on 20 February, forced your way through mountains and the jungle and while everywhere destroying the enemy, advanced into Oesau and vicinity on the 21st and cut off the escape route of the enemy in Kupang and vicinity. Then on the next day, the 22d, at the attack of over 1,000 enemy troops with mechanized units, you first fought back the relentlessly repeated attacks by a group of tanks, held your position well with a small force by charging again and again toward all fronts against the enemy, which stormed into your position with tanks at the head while gradually enveloping [the position], and finally enabled the main force of the detachment to catch the enemy on the next day, the 23d."⁽¹⁴⁾

Eleven aircraft of the 21st Air Flotilla advanced into the Kupang (Penfui) airfield as early as on the 23d.⁽¹⁰³⁾

Minesweeping of the sea near Kupang was relatively easy. Transport ships changed their anchorage [first] to one in the northwest, another in the north, and then another in the east [approaching Kupang], and disembarked most of the munitions at the city of Kupang.⁽¹¹⁷⁾

As mentioned previously, although no allied fleets were seen in Timor, strong fleet(s) still remained in the Surabaya area. [Consequently,] the 5th Cruiser Division's cooperation in the second carrier operation was canceled. It was decided that only the 15th Destroyer Division would take part in the second carrier operation, and that all the other ships would hurry westward to cooperate in the eastern Java landing operation of the 48th Division and the Sakaguchi Detachment.

The Seizure of Dili (*See Illustration No. 41*)

The strength of the unit to seize Dili consisted of the 228th Infantry Regiment (minus the 1st and the 3d Battalions and the main force of the signal company), one independent engineer

platoon (minus two squads), and one element from each of the divisional signal, transport, and medical and other units, led by Regimental Commander Colonel Doi.⁽⁷⁶⁾

The mission of the unit to seize Dili was to go ashore in the area west of Dili, advance eastward and seize the Dili airfield.^(76, 77, 78)

The situation in Dili and vicinity was almost unknown. There were many issues to be considered, such as the whereabouts of some 1,000 British, Australian and Dutch troops, which had reportedly entered Portuguese territory, whether [the unit] should also attack Portuguese forces if they should put up resistance, and how to identify friend or foe in the darkness after the night landing.⁽⁷⁷⁾

The time of the landing of the unit was set for 0000 on the 20th. It entered the anchorage (one kilometer northwest of Dili) under escort of the *Ushio* and the *Sazanami* ([of] the 7th Destroyer Division) and started shifting to [landing] craft, when it came under the fierce fire of artillery and machine guns. [In response to] the inquiry from the *Ushio* about whether to provide cover fire, Regimental Commander Doi requested to give it. The *Ushio* and the *Sazanami* opened fire. Avoiding the gunfire, the unit moved the craft westward and went ashore at the mouth of the Comoro River at 0218.^(77, 117)

The unit headed eastward, groping in the dark and being obstructed in places by walls of cactuses as high as the height of the troops, it made an attack on a position, [guarded] with a couple of lines of barbed wire entanglements and landmines. After that, it seized the airfield and the city of Dili by around 1300 and rescued thirty Japanese [residents] kept in confinement.⁽⁷⁷⁾

The number of the allied troops who put up resistance was about 1,300 men (some 300 Australian, some 400 Dutch East Indies and some 600 indigenous troops). Most of them escaped into the mountains except thirty-three who were captured. The loss sustained [by the Japanese] was seven men killed in action. The unit seized thirteen mountain guns (with 348 shells), one machine gun (with 5,000 bullets), 1,804 rifles (with 3,000 bullets) and others.⁽⁷⁶⁾

The airfield had been destroyed to such a degree that ten days of restoration work was required before it could hold about twenty fighter planes.⁽¹¹⁷⁾ Only the Australian troops had offered resistance when the unit to seize Dili landed in the Dili area, whereas the Portuguese troops had not resisted. Furthermore, the Portuguese authorities had not evacuated [from Dili] and were [still] stationed in the city. The unit that seized Dili carefully respected [Portuguese] sovereignty by using the barracks of the Australian troops.⁽¹¹⁷⁾

After that, the Eastern Detachment gradually expanded the area to mop up the enemy from both Kupang and Dili and completed clearing almost the entire island in mid-April.⁽⁷⁶⁾

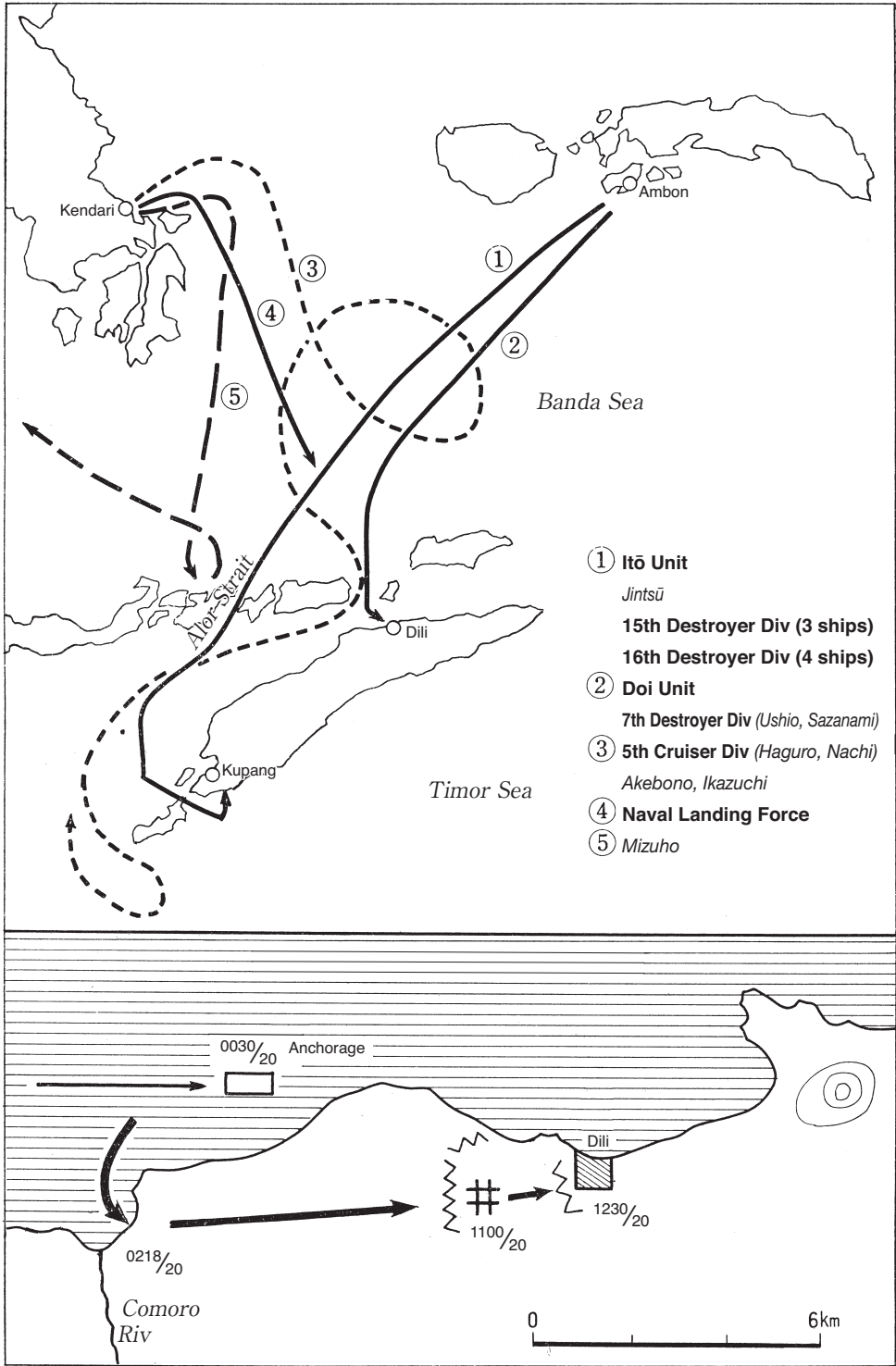
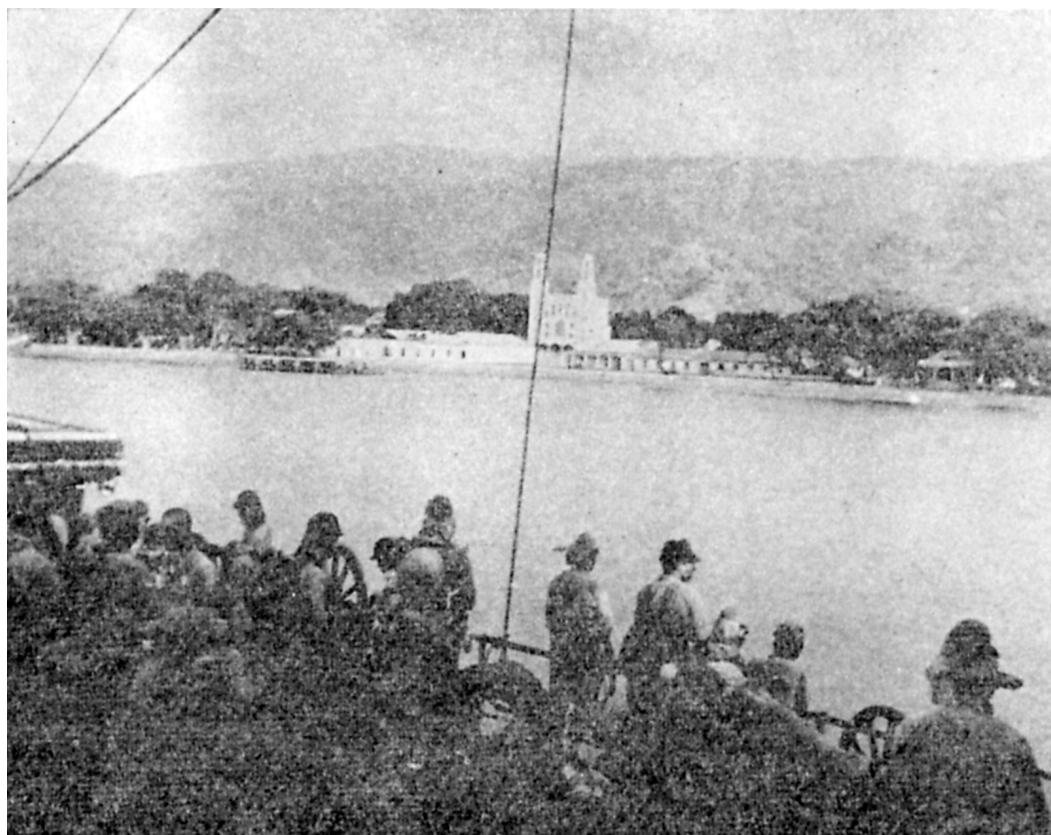


Illustration No. 41 — Overview of the Timor Invasion Operations
Overview of the Operation to Seize Dili



Viewing the City of Dili