

Chapter VI The Launch of the Dutch East Indies Operation

1. The Policy of the [Japanese] Government Towards the Netherlands

On 1 December, the government decided to go to war with the United States and Great Britain, and at the same time also with the Netherlands. However, with respect to the Netherlands, it was decided that until the first military actions against the Netherlands were launched (i.e. the landings in Tarakan and Menado in the Dutch East Indies, scheduled to take place about one month after the opening of hostilities), Japanese initiatives to enter into a state of war should be avoided. More precisely, on 4 December, the following decisions were made on how to deal with the Netherlands:⁽³⁾

The Treatment of the Netherlands

1. Until a state of war with the Netherlands [actually] breaks out, the Netherlands will be treated as a quasi-enemy country; the [Dutch] minister and his staff shall be put under close watch and protection [within their embassy] and the use of codes shall be prohibited. (Consequently, also all communications with the enemy countries shall be absolutely forbidden.)
2. In the event war is declared by the Netherlands, Japan shall announce its entry into a state of war with the Netherlands. Also, in the event a state of war with the Netherlands breaks out before the latter declares war, Japan shall announce its entry into a state of war with the Netherlands as specified above, and thereafter treat the country as an enemy country under international law.

As previously described, on 8 December, the Imperial Rescript on the Declaration of War was proclaimed, but the Netherlands was left out of the [list of] belligerent nations.

Right after the opening of hostilities, [Japan was] notified by the Dutch government on 10 December that “as Japan has opened hostilities with the United States and Great Britain, with both of whom the Netherlands maintains close and inseparable relations, the Netherlands considers that it is now in a state of war with Japan.” However, regardless of the previous decisions, the Japanese government ignored this [notification].⁽¹²⁾ Instead, against the background of better-than-expected military gains since the opening of hostilities, [the government] wished to effect as much as possible a so-called bloodless occupation of the Dutch East Indies. On 13 December, the following policy was decided upon at the Liaison Conference between IGHQ and the Government:⁽³⁾

Directives for War against the Dutch East Indies Following the Changes in the War Situation

With due regard to the developments of the situation, efforts shall be made based on the following points, so that the objectives of the occupation as determined according to the pre-arranged plan shall be attained as much as possible without resorting to force:

1. Efforts shall be made to conduct negotiations at an appropriate moment by the end of this year with the Government General of the Dutch East Indies by and large on the following conditions:
 - (1) The Dutch East Indies shall abandon all hostile acts against the Empire [of Japan], and implement measures to prevent disturbances as well as the destruction of infrastructure and resources following the occupation of vital areas of the Dutch East Indies by the Imperial Japanese Army.
 - (2) The Empire [of Japan] shall respect the existing Dutch East Indies administrative structure, and also strictly protect the life and property of all inhabitants.
2. Operations shall be executed based on the prearranged plan, regardless of a shift in the negotiations. Provided that the negotiations are successful, the occupation shall be carried out without resorting to force.
3. A declaration of entering into a state of war with the Netherlands shall not be made during negotiations.
4. The future territorial status of the Dutch East Indies and other matters shall not be touched upon during the negotiations.

These [diplomatic] maneuvers were conducted through the intermediary of Switzerland, but ended in failure. In fact, their chance of success had been considered extremely small from the very start.

As will be explained later, the Sakaguchi Detachment landed in Tarakan on 11 January, and on the same day landings and paratroop droppings of Navy units were also carried out in Menado. On the next day, the 12th, the [Japanese] government issued the following declaration:^(3, 13)

Declaration by the Imperial Japanese Government

Even though the Empire [of Japan] has recently opened hostilities with the United States and Great Britain, it has refrained from taking hostile measures against the Dutch East Indies out of consideration to spare the inhabitants as much as possible the ravages of war. Nevertheless, the Dutch Government has not only given notice to the Empire [of Japan] that it regarded the fact that Japan had opened hostilities with the United States and Britain, with both of whom the Netherlands maintains close and inseparable relations, had brought about a state of war between the Netherlands and Japan, but since then, its forces have also actually engaged in all forms of hostile acts against the [Japanese] Empire. Moreover, it has recently turned the Dutch East Indies into a base for U.S., British and Dutch forces to put up resistance against Japan.

Although the Empire [of Japan] feels no enmity towards the innocent civilians of the Dutch East Indies, the Imperial Army and Navy have finally come to open hostilities on 11 January against the Dutch forces in order to crush the Dutch hostile acts as well as to protect the lives and property of the Empire's subjects.

2. The Launch of the Dutch East Indies Operation

As already told, on 28 December, the [Navy] Dutch East Indies (Philippines) Unit Commander Vice Admiral Takahashi gave the following orders concerning the disposition of

forces and the immediate schedule: (On this day, Army Commander Imamura was still in Tokyo.)

Western Attack Unit (commander: commander in chief of the Third Fleet)

1st Escort Unit ([consisting of] the main force of the 4th Destroyer Squadron and the 2d Kure Special Landing Force as its core) in conjunction with the Sakaguchi Detachment: shall seize Tarakan, Balikpapan and Banjarmasin.

2d Base Unit ([consisting of] the main force of the 2d Base Force as its core): shall cooperate with the 1st Escort Unit.

1st Air Unit ([with] the auxiliary seaplane tenders the *San'yō-maru* and the *Sanuki-maru* as its core): shall cooperate with the 1st Escort Unit. [Editor's note: the Japanese text says "2d Air Unit," which is a misprint.]

Eastern Attack Unit (commander: commander of the 5th Cruiser Division)

2d Escort Unit ([consisting of] the main force of the 2d Destroyer Squadron, the Sasebo Combined Special Landing Force, and the 1st Kure Special Landing Force as its core): shall seize Menado, Kendari and Makassar.

1st Base Unit ([consisting of] the main force of the 1st Base Force): shall cooperate with the force above.

2d Air Unit ([consisting of] the 11th Seaplane Tender Division with the seaplane tenders the *Chitose* and the *Mizuho* as its core): shall also cooperate with the 2d Escort Unit.

Support Unit ([with] the 5th Cruiser Division as its core): shall support the Eastern Attack Unit's operations.

Main unit ([consisting of] the main force of the 16th Cruiser Division): shall support all operations and cover the Western Attack Unit.

Landings in Tarakan and Menado are scheduled for 10 January.

On 2 January, the main force of the 4th Destroyer Squadron (which had provided cover for the landing of the main force of the 48th Division around Lingayen) advanced into Davao, where its commander, Nishimura, immediately held a preliminary meeting with the commander of the Sakaguchi Detachment.⁽¹¹⁹⁾ On this day, Army Commander Imamura and his group made a stop at Taipei between 1100 and 1330 on their way from Shanghai to Guangdong, while the commander in chief [of the Navy Dutch East Indies Unit], Takahashi, left Gaoxiong with his main unit. On the previous day (1 January), the 65th Brigade had landed around Lingayen Gulf.⁽²³⁾ The 2d Destroyer Squadron, which would newly comprise [part of] the Eastern Attack Unit, and the 5th Cruiser Division, which would support that unit, had been charged with operations in Davao and Jolo, and thus remained in Davao.^(114, 117) Further on this day, the 2d, the commander in chief of the Eleventh Air Fleet, Tsukahara (stationed in Taiwan) implemented the phase-two disposition of forces, and directed the 1st Air Raid Unit (the 21st Air Flotilla) to carry out operations in the Celebes area from Davao, and the 2d Air Raid Unit (the 23d Air Flotilla) in the east coast area of Borneo from Jolo.^(117, 141) The Combined Fleet issued an order on the same day "to incorporate the 2d Carrier Division into the Southern Task Force on 7 January." The Southern Task Force and its air unit (the Eleventh Air Fleet) planned to use this [division] for support in seizing Ambon.^(107, 110) On this day (2 January), the Eleventh Air Fleet headquarters and the 23d Air Flotilla headquarters were still based in Takao. The air unit stationed 97 aircraft in Gaoxiong, 89 in Davao, 18 in Peleliu, 41 in Jolo and 9 in Legaspi.⁽¹⁴³⁾ [However,] the airfields of Davao and Jolo were in such an extremely poor condition that Commander in Chief Tsukahara had to send a

telegram to all parties concerned that “as for Jolo, a runway of 50 m wide and about 1000 m long is expected to be completed and ready for use by 5 January. Concerning the Davao land-base, a runway of 1200 m long is supposed to be completed by 6 January, however, due to soft soil and many squalls, the rolling and compaction work of the parking area has not progressed satisfactorily.”⁽¹¹⁷⁾ From 22 December, land-based aircraft had started to advance into Davao and on the 27th the 21st Air Flotilla had advanced its headquarters from Palau to Davao.⁽¹⁴³⁾ The air unit which had proceeded to Davao started reconnaissance of the Menado area from 24 December and began attacking its airfield from the 26th. Land-based aircraft had started to move into Jolo since the 26th and they delivered their first strike on Tarakan on 30 December.⁽¹⁰⁴⁾

On the next day, the 3d, the formation of the Third Southern Expeditionary Fleet (Philippines) was announced, which allowed Vice Admiral Takahashi to concentrate on the Dutch East Indies operation from that time onwards.⁽¹⁾ In the late afternoon of this day, Commander Imamura and his group arrived in Saigon.⁽³²⁾ Commander Takahashi’s flagship the *Ashigara* was on its way to Davao.⁽¹⁰³⁾

On the next day, the 4th, Commander Imamura received an explanation on bringing forward the schedule of the Java operation from the Southern Army in Saigon.⁽²⁴⁾ Also on this day, the 38th Division was incorporated into the order of battle of the Sixteenth Army,⁽¹⁾ while Vice Chief of Staff of the Southern Army Aoki Shigemasa, arrived at the Fourteenth Army headquarters and started negotiations for the transfer of the 48th Division,^(23, 80) while the rest of the Sakaguchi Detachment left Palau for Davao.⁽⁸⁸⁾

On January 5, the Southern Army gave Commander Imamura orders to prepare for capturing Java as well as to carry out the seizure of Bangka, Palembang, Ambon and Kupang.^(23, 24) [At this moment] Commander in Chief [of the Navy Dutch East Indies Unit] Takahashi was still on his way to Davao. [Also] on this day, the senior staff officer of the Third Fleet, Capt. Yamaki Akira (who left Gaoxiong on 2 January by air and arrived in Davao on the afternoon of the 4th), assembled the senior staff officers of each division, squadron and others on board the *Nachi*, the flagship of the 5th Cruiser Division, explained the order given on the 29th, and discussed the arrangements.⁽¹¹³⁾ After the meeting, the 4th Destroyer Squadron commander, R. Adm. Nishimura Shōji, made an operational arrangement with Detachment Commander Sakaguchi, and immediately on the same day (the 5th) the latter gave the order to capture Tarakan.⁽⁸⁸⁾ Rear Admiral Nishimura and the 2d Destroyer Squadron commander, R. Adm. Tanaka Raizō, respectively issued orders to the 1st Escort Unit to prepare for the capture of Tarakan,⁽¹¹⁹⁾ and to the 2d Escort Unit to prepare for the capture of Menado.⁽¹¹⁷⁾

On the next day, the 6th, Commander in Chief Takahashi (on board the heavy cruiser *Ashigara*) entered the port of Davao.⁽¹⁰³⁾ On the same day, the Eastern Support Unit of the Southern Task Force (the battleship *Haruna* and the heavy cruiser *Maya*) left Magong to head for the southeastern waters of Mindanao.⁽¹⁰³⁾ With the arrival of the reinforcements of the Sakaguchi Detachment on that day, now the entire force of the detachment (except its Matsmoto Detachment at Jolo) was completely assembled off Daliao (southwest of Davao).⁽⁸⁸⁾ While the headquarters of the 23d Air Flotilla had proceeded from Gaoxiong to Jolo on the 3d, the Eleventh Air Fleet headquarters was still stationed in Taiwan.⁽¹⁴³⁾ As already described, Commander in Chief Takahashi sent to Army Commander Imamura (in Saigon) on that day a telegram concerning the arrangements, and also requested that the start of the capture of Tarakan and other places be delayed by one day.

At 0030 on the following day, the 7th, Commander in Chief Takahashi sent the following order by telegram:⁽¹¹⁹⁾

The Dutch East Indies Unit Order No. 3, Classified, shall be revised as follows:

The [date of] capture of Menado and Tarakan shall be changed to 11 January and consequently the schedule of operations of each [relevant] unit shall roughly be delayed by one day.

On this day (the 7th), the Eleventh Air Fleet headquarters advanced from Gaoxiong to Davao.⁽¹⁴³⁾ Also on the same day, in accordance with the Combined Fleet order (dated 2 January), the Southern Task Force (based in Cam Ranh) ordered the incorporation of the 2d Carrier Division (with the aircraft carriers *Sōryū* and *Hiryū*) into the air unit (the Eleventh Air Fleet).⁽¹¹⁷⁾ After the operations at Hawaii and Wake Island, the 2d Carrier Division had returned to base in Kure on 29 December.⁽¹⁰³⁾ The commander of the [Navy] Dutch East Indies Unit reported on this day (the 7th) the following:⁽¹¹⁷⁾

1. With the arrival of the main unit on 6 January, which left Gaoxiong on 2 January, the assembly of the Dutch East Indies invasion unit at Davao is completed.
2. – 5. (Omitted by the author)
6. The airfields in both Legaspi and Jolo have been made ready for use and each base force is preparing for transfer. Public order has already been secured at Legaspi. Even though the Special Landing Force is preparing for transfer, except for one element to be left behind, the situation at Jolo still requires a considerable degree of caution. As for Davao, although the demands of the air unit have not yet been fulfilled due to poor airfield conditions and continuous hindrance by the weather, efforts are being made day and night to get it ready.
7. The Dutch East Indies invasion unit shall start its scheduled operations as of today.

The Sakaguchi Detachment had [originally] been scheduled to depart from Davao on the 6th, but, following the one-day postponement, the detachment left at 1100 on the 7th, and headed for Tarakan.⁽⁸⁸⁾ The 21st Air Flotilla had made a fierce attack on Ambon on the previous night.⁽¹⁰³⁾ Although the flotilla had been delivering strikes on Menado from 26 December onwards, and the 23d Air Flotilla on Tarakan from 30 December onwards, they hardly encountered enemy aircraft.⁽¹⁰³⁾ On that day (the 7th), the commander in chief of the Eleventh Air Fleet, Tsukahara, gave the 21st Air Flotilla commander [R. Adm. Tada Takeo] orders to raid and seize the air base of Menado on 11 January, employing the 1001st Unit (minus the 3d Yokosuka Naval District Special Landing Force; note: a paratroop unit) and the necessary air force.⁽¹¹⁷⁾

Note: As previously told, the [first] use of the paratroop unit of the Navy (the 1001st Unit) had been changed to Tarakan (or depending on the situation, Menado). On 31 December, its use was decided as follows:⁽¹¹⁰⁾

Employment of the 1001st Unit

1. In capturing Menado, about 300 men shall be dropped on the airfield on the day of landing of the invasion unit, and seize the airfield.
2. The unit shall not be used for the capture of Tarakan due to the bad condition of the Jolo Air Base.
3. Against Balikpapan, 600 men shall depart from Tarakan and be dropped on the airfield of Balikpapan in two groups one day prior to landing [of the invasion unit] in order to secure the airfield and provide support for the landing.

The air unit (the Eleventh Air Fleet) started operations with the following disposition of forces: 114 aircraft for the 1st Air Raid Unit ([consisting of] the 21st Air Flotilla) (for the Menado area), 105 aircraft for the 2d Air Raid Unit ([consisting of] the 23d Air Flotilla) (for the Tarakan area), and 18 aircraft (flying boats) for reconnaissance.⁽¹¹⁰⁾

3. The Capture of Tarakan *(See Illustration No. 17)*

Change in the Landing Plan

As already described, the arrangement between the commanders of the Navy Dutch East Indies Unit and the Sixteenth Army (drafted by the Dutch East Indies Unit) signed on 16 November, specified that the landing on Tarakan Island would be made on the strongly [fortified] front on both banks of the Karungan River. And as already told, Staff Officer Yano Tsuneo of the Sakaguchi Detachment had at that time insisted that he wanted “to execute the operation in a modified way regardless of the [original] plan.” When he received “no objections,” he began training for passing through the jungle as soon as the detachment had arrived in Palau. However, in the Detachment Order handed down on 17 November, and even in those handed down on 25 November and 12 December, which followed the additional assignment of tasks to capture Davao, the Sakaguchi Detachment still described its landing points as both banks of the Karungan River.⁽⁸⁸⁾ This came from the idea of deceiving your own forces [in order to deceive the enemy]. As a matter of fact, Chief of Staff [of the Sixteenth Army] Okazaki had found out about a certain Katsuyama, who had returned to Japan after twenty-odd years of doing business in Tarakan. Hearing that “there is a road from Tarakan City to the east coast through the jungle which Dutch forces also use during maneuvers,” he had sent this person immediately around the end of November from the homeland to the Sakaguchi Detachment (in Palau at the time) in order to serve as guide.⁽³⁶⁾ Thus the detachment commander’s intention to land on the east coast [of the island] became firmer and more resolute than ever.

Arrangements with the Navy

Upon the arrival of the 4th Destroyer Squadron in Davao on 2 January, Detachment Commander Sakaguchi on the same day made a preliminary arrangement with Squadron Commander Nishimura Shōji. On the following day, the 5th, they [officially] concluded an “Arrangement between the Navy 1st Escort Unit and the Army Sakaguchi Detachment,”⁽¹¹⁹⁾ which was in outline as follows:⁽⁸⁸⁾

Landing points: The main force of the Sakaguchi Detachment shall land on the east coast of Tarakan, one element of the detachment on the southeastern end of the island, and the 2d Kure Special Landing Force also on the east coast of the island.

Disposition of forces for the landing: (1) One and a half army battalion shall land in the central part of the east coast of Tarakan and seize the oil fields and Lingkas. (2) One army battalion shall land on the southeastern end of the island and, after seizing the battery at Mengacu, seize Lingkas. (3) One battalion of the [naval] 2d Kure Special Landing Force shall, after landing on the central part of the east coast of the island, seize the airfield.

No special reconnaissance of the landing points shall be conducted.

The transport convoy shall leave Daliao (note: 15 km southwest of Davao) at 1100 on 6 January, drop anchor at 1930 on 9 January at anchorage no. 1 and 0000 on 10 January at anchorage no. 2. The first landing shall be launched (from anchorage no. 1) at 2130 on the 9th and the second landing (from anchorage no. 2) at 0200 on the 10th.

Distribution of ships:

Right Wing Unit (the 1st Party): the *Tsuruga-maru*, the *Liverpool-maru* (with the right wing unit commander on board), the *Nisshō-maru* [*Hiteru-maru*], the *Hankow-maru*, the *Ehime-maru*, the *Kunikawa-maru* (with the 2d Kure Special Landing Force on board) and the *Kano-maru*.

Left Wing Unit (the 2d Party): the *Havana-maru* (with the left wing unit commander on board), the *Teiryū-maru* (with the detachment commander on board), the *Kuretake-maru*, the *Nichiai-maru*, the *Kagu-maru*, the *Kunitsu-maru*, and the *Rakutō-maru*.

Note: The *Kunikawa*, the *Kano*, the *Kagu*, the *Kunitsu* and the *Rakutō* belonged to the Navy.

Forces employed for the escort: One cruiser (the *Naka*), ten destroyers, three submarine chasers and three patrol boats under the command of 4th Destroyer Squadron Commander Rear Admiral Nishimura.

Forces employed for support: The auxiliary seaplane tenders the *San'yō-maru* and the *Sanuki-maru*, and one element of the 23d Air Flotilla.

The landings are to be made as surprise landings.

Covering fire for the landings shall be provided by the Navy warships [only] upon request by the commanders of the landing forces.

Transport ships shall move their anchorage one by one to the Lingkas anchorage when ordered after the landings.

When ordered, the *Kuretake-maru* shall sail to Jolo under the escort of a destroyer and return the Jolo operation unit of the Sakaguchi Detachment to [its parent unit] in Tarakan.

The Plan and Order for Capture

Based on the preliminary arrangements previously made (on the 2d), Detachment Commander Sakaguchi issued the following order:⁽¹¹⁹⁾

Sakaguchi Detachment Order

Daliao, 0800, 5 January

1. The Imperial Army has completed its occupation of Manila on 3 January, and is further engaged in destroying the defeated enemy. The key areas of Davao and vicinity are practically cleared; public order has largely been restored and the local Japanese nationals have for the most part returned to their present residences.
The Jolo Detachment, which is still stationed in Jolo Island, has largely completed the mopping up of the enemy there, and is now being relieved of its guard duty by the naval landing force. The Dutch East Indies government, which has foreseen our attacks and proclaimed total resistance, has had its warships and aircraft conduct repeated attacks on our forces.
2. The detachment shall leave the port of Davao at 1100 tomorrow on the 6th, go ashore at Tarakan on the night of the 9th, and capture the island to seize its airfield, as well as to secure the oil resources.
3. The 1st Field Antiaircraft Artillery Battery shall come under the command of Detachment B after the departure of the [Sakaguchi] Detachment from Davao. The command shall be transferred when Detachment B enters the port of Davao.
4. Both [left and right] wing units as well as the units under the direct control of the detachment shall be charged with the capture of Tarakan in conformity with Separate Volume No.1: Main points of the capture of Tarakan and Separate Volume No. 2: Tarakan Landing Plan of the Sakaguchi Detachment.

5. The particulars [of the operation] shall be given through the staff officers.
6. I am in Daliao and shall board the *Teiryū-maru* at 1000 tomorrow on the 6th.

Separate sheets: Distribution of Forces (note: excerpted by the author)

Right Wing Unit

Commander: Regimental Commander Col. Yamamoto Kyōhei
 146th Infantry Regiment (minus 2d Battalion, 3d Battalion (minus two companies), half of [both] regimental artillery and antitank gun units)
 1st Engineer Company (minus one platoon)
 Medical Unit (minus half of the unit), Radio [Unit]

Left Wing Unit

Commander: Battalion Commander Maj. Kanauji Ken'ichi
 2d Infantry Battalion (minus 6th Company), half of [both] regimental artillery and antitank gun units
 One engineer platoon, Radio [Unit]

Squad for Collecting Cast-off Articles

Commander: Capt. Tajima Toshitsugu

Units under the direct control [of the Detachment]

Detachment headquarters (minus three mark-3 radio squads), 6th Infantry Company, armored car unit, 1st Field Artillery Battalion (minus one platoon), 44th Field Antiaircraft Artillery Battalion (minus one battery), 2d Transport Company (minus one squad), half of the medical unit, 1st Field Hospital, 6th and 7th Independent Radio Platoon, 33d Fixed Radio Unit, 1st Independent Engineer Company (minus two platoons), one element of the 45th Anchorage headquarters, 16th Shipping Signal Platoon, attached military police unit (minus one element).

Separate Volume No. 1: Outline of the Capture of Tarakan

I. Mission

1. The detachment shall make surprise landings on the shore at Amal and on the shore at [Cape] Batu. Then taking advantage of the darkness of the night, it shall seize at a stroke the oil fields of Tarakan as well as the Lingkas area with its main force, and all batteries along the Karungan [River] with one element [of the detachment], after which it shall capture the airfield.
2. After the landing at Tarakan, the Jolo Detachment shall be brought back [from Jolo]. When the whole island [of Tarakan] has been cleared [of the enemy], the main force of the detachment shall turn over guard duty to the naval landing force and assemble in or near Tarakan to make preparations for the capture of Balikpapan.

II. Directives

3. The detachment shall leave the port of Davao on day $x + 30$. Escorted by Navy warships and aircraft, the detachment shall head straight for the island of Tarakan in Dutch Borneo, while closely guarding itself against [enemy] aircraft and submarines, and enter the waters south of the Adat Reef (note by the author: 25 km east of Tarakan) off Amal in the evening of day $x + 33$, for temporary anchoring.
4. The right wing unit shall swiftly transfer to [landing] boats in the waters south of the Adat Reef, carry out a surprise landing on the shore at Amal, catch and destroy the enemy surveillance units in and around Amal. Without waiting for the completion of the landing, the unit shall swiftly work its way through the swamps and jungle, carefully so as to keep its purpose hidden, launch a sudden attack on the Pamusian oil field and seize it. While having one element secure the site, the main force shall seize the river-head area, barracks, radio

- station, main plants and the Lingkas pier at one fell swoop, by which it shall crush the enemy's demolition plans, and catch and destroy the enemy forces by daybreak.
5. The transport ships of the left wing unit shall leave the waters south of the Adat Reef at the appropriate time and temporarily anchor east off [Cape] Batu. Before dawn on day $x + 34$, the unit shall land in or near Batu, and raid and seize all batteries east of the Pamusian River and secure them by daybreak.
 6. The Makiuchi Unit of the Naval Landing Force (which from the moment of landing till the clearing of the key areas of Tarakan shall be put under the command of Detachment Commander Sakaguchi during the operation) shall land in or near Amal before dawn following the right wing unit, get itself ready [for the operation], start toward the airfield via Tarakan, seize it, and secure the airfield and the Batu Dua oil field. Depending on the circumstances, the landing shall be made in the vicinity of the Lingkas Pier.
 7. The right wing unit shall have a unit, consisting of about two companies led by the battalion commander as its core, advance behind the naval landing force, and after the latter's seizure of the airfield and the Batu Dua oil field, secure both the Juwata and Gunung Cangkol oil fields, while staying in very close contact with the [naval] force and being particularly on the alert for aerial warnings.
 8. The armored car unit shall land in or near Batu and, as long as the situation permits, cooperate with the naval landing force in its attack on the airfield. Then the unit shall cooperate with the battalion assigned to capture the Juwata oil field in capturing the oil field, after which the unit shall be on standby at Tarakan. Depending on the circumstances, the landing shall be made in the vicinity of the Lingkas Pier.
 9. The detachment headquarters and the 6th Infantry Company shall land in or near Batu after dawn and go to the BPM office. Depending on the circumstances, the landing shall be made at or near the Lingkas Pier.
 10. The Squad for Collecting Cast-off Articles shall land along with the right wing unit, and from there on it shall accompany the right wing unit as it advances, to collect and sort weapons, ammunition and other matériel.
 11. The right wing unit shall have its engineer unit make efforts to find and remove the enemy's demolition devices as well as to prevent fires during the period of the capture [operation] of the whole island.
 12. When the capture of Tarakan Island makes progress, and as far as the situation permits, the *Kuretake-maru* shall be swiftly dispatched to Jolo for the return transport of the Jolo detachment.
 13. When the key areas of Tarakan Island have been cleared, guard duty shall be turned over to the Navy, and the main force shall be assembled in Tarakan and its vicinity to prepare for the capture of Balikpapan.
 14. During the capture of Tarakan Island, the Navy shall have its aircraft strike the enemy positions in Juwata at daybreak, and, along with its warships, cut off the enemy's retreat to the north from Juwata and vicinity.
 15. "*Yama*" [Mountain] and "*Kawa*" [River] have been set as nighttime passwords.

Advance, Landing and Capture

As already told, a "one-day postponement" was announced [past] midnight on 6 January, and at 0800 on the 7th, first of all a clearing unit (of seven destroyers) left Malalag Bay (note: southwest of Davao). [Then] the transport convoy ([consisting of] nine ships of the Sakaguchi Detachment, two ships of the 2d Kure Special Landing Force, three ships of the Construction and Defense Squads, two ships of the Eleventh Air Fleet, sixteen ships in total) left the anchorage of Daliao at 1100.⁽¹¹⁹⁾ One light cruiser (the *Naka*), ten destroyers, six minesweepers,

three submarine chasers, one converted auxiliary gunboat and other warships [for escort] and the sixteen transport ships comprised a total of forty ships; they sailed at a speed of 8.5 knots.⁽¹¹⁹⁾ It was calm on 7 January.⁽¹¹⁹⁾ On the 8th, there was a report of (an) allied submarine(s) but no attack was made.⁽¹¹⁹⁾ On the afternoon of the 9th, aircraft of the 23d Air Flotilla spotted one merchant vessel and one gunboat in the port of Lingkas; they bombed them and caused a fire.⁽¹¹⁹⁾ The convoy continued to sail calmly. Although it came under attack from three allied bombers and two allied fighter planes at 1750 on the 10th and again from three bombers at 1818, it sustained no loss and anchored at anchorage No. 1 at 1900.⁽⁸⁸⁾ [Another] report of submarine(s) came in the evening, but there was no attack. First of all, at 2130 the first landing unit of the right wing unit of the Sakaguchi Detachment, followed by troops of the 2d Kure Special Landing Force at 2200, left Anchorage No. 1 by their own landing boats.⁽¹¹⁹⁾ Just before that, at around 2100, fires broke out at two locations on Tarakan Island.⁽¹¹⁹⁾ The convoy of the left wing unit left Anchorage No. 1 at 0030 on the 11th, and reached anchorage No. 2 at 0110. At 0220 it completed changing to the landing craft and departed.⁽¹¹⁹⁾

The sky above Tarakan was burning red from the oil field fires set by the Dutch East Indies forces.⁽⁸⁷⁾ Although the [landing boats] were expected to sail in the dark night for about 15 nautical miles from Anchorage No. 1 to the shore, the silhouette of the island was clearly visible.⁽⁸⁷⁾ The right wing unit and the 2d Kure Special Landing Force successfully went ashore at 0000 and at 0030 on the 11th respectively.⁽¹¹⁹⁾ However, as they had mistaken the fire at the Gunung Cangkol oil field for that of the Lingkas oil field located to its south, they had landed four to six km north of their intended landing point, the mouth of the Amal River.⁽⁸⁷⁾ The commander of the right wing unit only noticed this after the landing craft had gone back for another transport.⁽⁸⁷⁾ They had no choice but to head south for the mouth of the Amal River on foot.⁽⁸⁷⁾ When they reached the mouth of the Amal River, the day had [already] broken.⁽⁸⁷⁾ The right wing unit made a sudden attack on the pillbox position(s) located there, defeated the guards, captured several of Indonesian soldiers and, by interrogating them, learned the rough disposition of the Dutch East Indies forces. Breaking through the jungle, the right wing unit advanced to the north side of the Tarakan oil field.⁽⁸⁷⁾ It was around 1100 on the 11th.⁽⁸⁷⁾ The moment the right wing unit advanced to the north side of the oil field, it came under fierce gunfire from a Dutch East Indies unit, which made it difficult to move forward.⁽⁸⁷⁾ When night fell, a counterattack was launched by the Dutch East Indies unit, whereupon [the Japanese troops] attempted a night assault. Although some elements successfully seized both barracks No. 1 and No. 2, [the attempt] was not an entire success, as the regimental headquarters and another element ended up [being pushed] back to their original position.⁽⁸⁷⁾

Meanwhile at 1700, Detachment Commander Sakaguchi (still on board) sent the Navy escort unit the following wire: (1) Although the right wing unit and the 2d Kure Special Landing Force have advanced as far as the highlands east of Tarakan, they are blocked by a strong enemy artillery position, and their advance is delayed. They intend to break through the position tonight by means of night raids. (2) The situation of the left wing unit is unknown. (3) Bombing is requested on the battery position to the east of the foreign residential area of the town of Tarakan as well as on the batteries of Juwata at the northern end of the island and on the little island of Sadau (at the high-angled gun artillery position). The air unit decided to carry out the bombing in the early morning of the 12th, as it was [already] too late for bombing on the 11th.⁽¹¹⁹⁾ However, after the start of attacks at daybreak on the 12th, a bearer of a flag of truce dispatched by the [Dutch] garrison commander [Lt. Col. S. de Waal] came

to announce the surrender.⁽⁸⁷⁾ The right wing unit commander, Colonel Yamamoto, sent a wire to Detachment Commander Sakaguchi, stating: "The [Dutch] commander and his men have announced surrender at 0820. Therefore, the prompt landing of the detachment commander by way of the Lingkas Pier is requested."⁽⁸⁸⁾

It was known that the left wing unit had departed from anchorage No. 2 at 0220 on the 11th and succeeded in landing at 0400, but as of 1700 on the 11th [the wire stated that] "the situation of the left wing unit is unknown." [Furthermore,] as of 2030 on the same day [it was said that] "the actions and the military gains of the left wing unit after landing are unknown, but [it is certain that] the Mengacu Battery is not yet seized because it occasionally fires at [our] boats operating near the port entrance."⁽¹¹⁹⁾ Nevertheless, Colonel Yamamoto's telegram asked for the landing [of the detachment commander] at the Lingkas Pier since the [Dutch] garrison commander and all his men had surrendered. At 1100, 4th Destroyer Squadron Commander Nishimura ordered the commander of the 2d Base Force to sweep the sea for mines.⁽¹¹⁹⁾ Four minesweepers promptly set out and approached the Mengacu Channel around 1200, when suddenly they came under fire from the battery at Karungan. By 1215, the first two ships had been sunk⁽¹¹⁹⁾ and so had one large-sized motorized [landing] craft of the Army.⁽⁸⁸⁾ At 1252, the 4th Destroyer Squadron commander ordered by telegram the remaining two sweepers to "stop firing and head back."⁽¹¹⁹⁾

What had happened to the left wing unit? And what did Detachment Commander Sakaguchi do? After completing its landing at the landing point at Cape Batu at 0400 on the 11th as scheduled, the left wing unit tried to advance in the jungle towards the rear of the western battery. However, due to the extremely dense vegetation and the steep terrain in the jungle, it was only able to move forward by about 100 meters per hour, and got disoriented again and again. When it [finally] reached the rear of the battery, it was about noon on the 12th.⁽⁸⁷⁾ Detachment Commander Sakaguchi, with no reports at all either from the left wing unit after its landing, or from his liaison officer dispatched to the left wing unit, had absolutely no clue about the situation [of the unit] until the night of the 11th. At midnight on the 11th, he had the 56th Field Artillery Regiment 1st Battalion Commander Lt. Col. Namekata Shōichi take command of one infantry company, go ashore at the point where the left wing unit had landed and, taking advantage of the darkness of the night, advance along the coast to seize the battery.⁽⁸⁷⁾ At 0430 on the 12th, the Namekata Unit went ashore on the coast to the south-east of the Mengacu Battery, and around daybreak reached the front of the battery. However, the terrain blocked its progress. Although the left wing unit reached the rear of the Karungan Battery by noon of the 12th as mentioned above, not knowing the [exact] position of the battery, and also due to the poor condition of communications and having a hard time to move, it [finally] seized the battery at 1710 on the following day the 13th.^(87, 119)

In the final analysis, because of the three [following] reasons, that is, (1) insufficient enforcement of the order of the Dutch East Indies garrison commander, (2) the left wing unit's delay in seizing the battery, and (3) hasty minesweeping, Minesweepers No. 13 and No. 14 and one army [landing] craft were sunk in broad daylight right in front of their fellow warships. The situation at that time was recorded as follows by the 44th Field Antiaircraft Artillery Battalion:⁽⁸⁸⁾

The brisk attack by the frontline unit of the right wing unit, carried out by means of night raids, finally made the enemy commander surrender on the morning of the following day, the 12th.

Our Navy immediately started minesweeping in the southern waters of Tarakan Island, after which it was intended that the detachment commander would land at the shore of Lingkas in front of Tarakan for a meeting of both commanders, when all of a sudden, by fierce fire of the enemy's coastal artillery, two of the Navy's minesweepers and one army large-sized motorized [landing] craft were sunk in the blink of an eye. The detachment commander had no choice but to enter the town of Tarakan from the direction of the mouth of Amal River from which the main force of the landing unit had [started] its advance, and accept the enemy's unconditional surrender. Thus, the firing of the above-mentioned coastal artillery was the result of the fact that the enemy's order had not been fully enforced.

Having changed plans and entering [the town of] Tarakan after landing at the mouth of Amal River, the Sakaguchi Detachment headquarters ([more precisely] Staff Officer Yano) sent a telegram at 2100 on the 12th with the following content: "(1) The detachment commander entered Tarakan at 1930 via Amal. (2) At 0830 the commander of the right wing unit ordered the enemy in talks to suspend hostilities in the area, [in particular] to cease hostile operations of the Karungan Battery, but when he tried to reach the battery, it opened fire on our ships which was extremely regrettable. (3) At present, all enemy troops as far [north] as the airfield (seized by the naval landing force) have been completely disarmed. Disarmament of enemy troops north of the airfield will be carried out tomorrow on the 13th. (4) The Karungan Battery will be dealt with tomorrow morning on the 13th. Accordingly, we will notify when [it will be safe enough to] start the minesweeping [operation] ... [omitted by the author]. (7) The Lingkas defense is heavily fortified; should we have attempted to carry out a landing at this location as in the army agreement, then the landing troops would have been totally destroyed."⁽¹¹⁹⁾ On the morning of the following day, the 13th, Detachment Commander Sakaguchi received a visit from the Dutch East Indies garrison commander, and officially accepted the latter's surrender.⁽⁸⁷⁾ The mopping up of the enemy on the whole island was completed on the same day.⁽⁸⁷⁾ Prior to this, on the 12th, the destroyer *Yamakaze* discovered a Dutch minelayer attempting to get away at night to the north of the Island, and together with patrol boat No. 38 sank the ship.⁽¹¹⁹⁾ Further, as soon as the *Kuretake-maru* had completed its handling of cargo at 2000 of the 11th, the destroyer *Suzukaze* escorted the *Kuretake-maru* to pick up the Matsumoto Detachment in Jolo.⁽¹¹⁹⁾

On the 14th the Sakaguchi Detachment turned over its guard duty [of the island] to the Navy.⁽¹¹⁹⁾

The strength of the Dutch East Indies Army at Tarakan Island at the opening of hostilities had been 1,400 men, including 800 infantry, 400 artillery and 70 engineers, which, with three 120-mm. guns and twelve field guns as the core, had [also] been well equipped with numerous machine guns. [After the battle,] 871 [men] were made prisoner of war.⁽¹⁰⁰⁾ The only loss sustained by the Sakaguchi Detachment was just seven men killed in action.⁽⁵³⁾ By contrast, the Navy sustained heavy casualties; 156 men were killed when two of its minesweepers were sunk, and 15 men were killed and 27 injured when they were bombed at the airfield on the 13th.⁽¹¹⁹⁾

The Sakaguchi Detachment suffered enemy air strikes from the 10th until the 13th; no more strikes were made after that.⁽⁸⁸⁾ The number of the [enemy] aircraft which came for strikes⁽⁸⁸⁾ and the military gains of the 44th Field Antiaircraft Artillery Battalion (consisting of two batteries) was reported as follows:⁽⁸⁸⁾

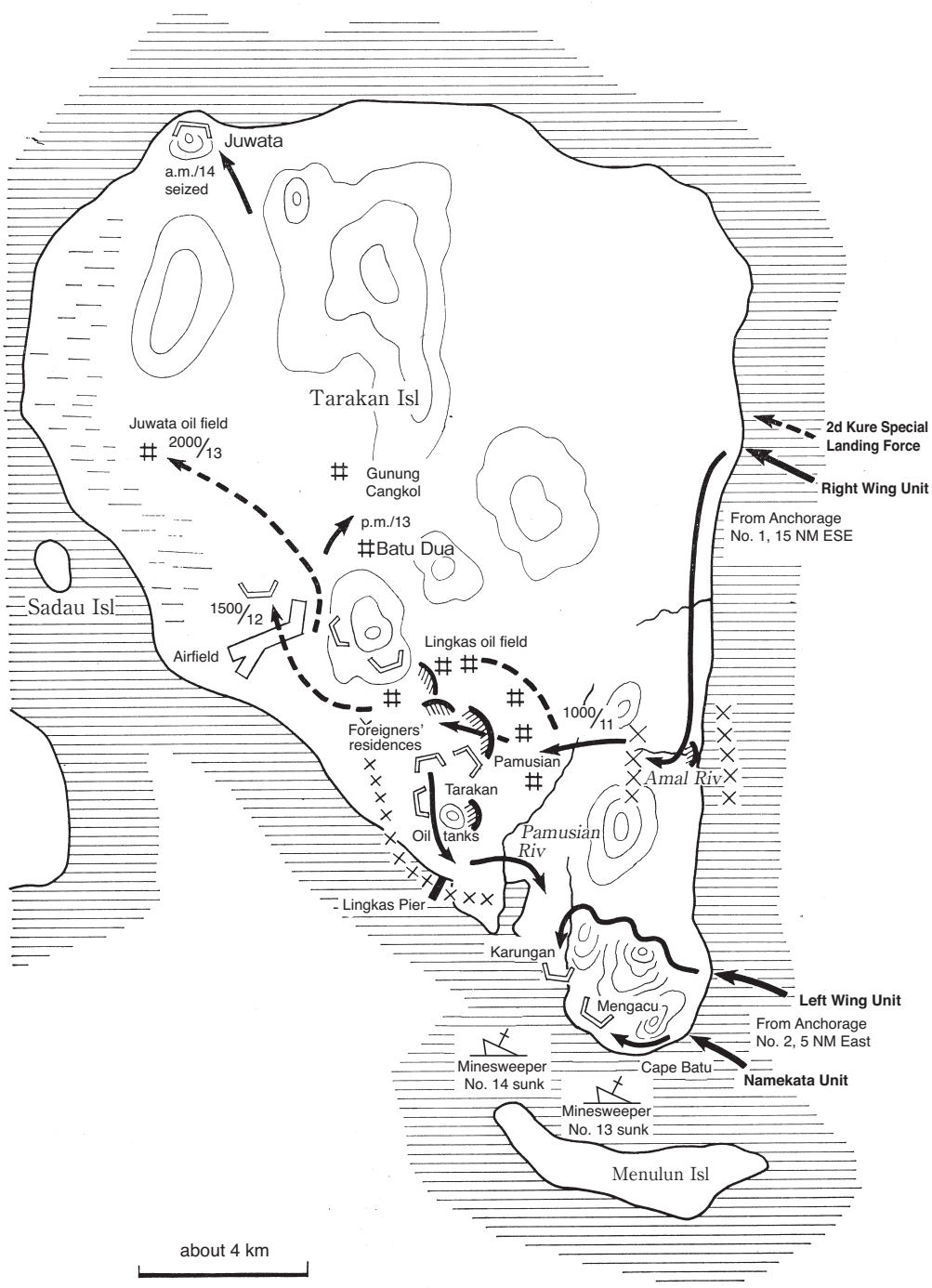


Illustration No. 17—The Capture of Tarakan



Right After the Capture of Tarakan

[January]

10th: 3 aircraft came flying in at 1740	6 bombs dropped	
4 aircraft came flying in at 1812	6 bombs dropped	1 aircraft downed
11th: 1 B-17 came flying in at 1255	3 bombs dropped	
12th: 3 aircraft came flying in at 1255	9 bombs dropped	
3 aircraft came flying in at 1832	9 bombs dropped	
13th: 3 aircraft came flying in at 1110	6 bombs dropped	2 aircraft downed
3 aircraft came flying in at 1400	5 bombs dropped	
Total number of fired [antiaircraft] shells: 339 shots; military gains: 3 aircraft brought down		
Note: The three aircraft reported to have been downed, apparently included planes shot down by Navy fighter planes.		

The oil facilities had been substantially destroyed. In Lingkas, oil had for a large part been consumed by fire, but there was [still] 12,300 tons of heavy oil left in the surviving tanks, and [also] 120 oil drums of heavy oil.⁽¹¹⁹⁾

Tarakan's airfield was much narrower than expected. A thirty meter wide and about seven-hundred meter long runway was finally ready for use on the 16th, and nine fighter planes and two land-based reconnaissance planes advanced from Jolo on the same day.⁽¹¹⁹⁾ [However,] it required considerable effort to get the facility ready for [the Navy land-based] medium-sized attack plane units to advance. As the Dutch East Indies forces had laid submarine mines all over the waterway, it was impossible for [the Japanese forces] to bring in matériel. The total number of swept mines had reached 77 by the 17th, and 173 by the 24th.⁽¹¹⁹⁾

4. The Capture of Menado (See Illustration No. 18)

On the day the Sakaguchi Detachment landed on Tarakan Island, the Navy carried out landings and parachute droppings in Menado. The force employed from the Dutch East Indies Unit and the tasks assigned to this operation were as follows:⁽¹¹⁴⁾

Eastern Attack Unit (commander: the 5th Cruiser Division commander)

Support Unit

Main force of the 5th Cruiser Division (heavy cruisers the *Haguro* and the *Nachi*; the *Myōko* was damaged on 4 January and sent back to the mainland for repair) as its core: shall support all operations.

2d Escort Unit

Main force of the 2d Destroyer Squadron (consisting of the light cruiser *Jintsū*, the 15th and the 16th Destroyer Division), and the Sasebo Combined Special Landing Force (minus two platoons) as its core: shall directly escort the convoy, capture Menado, secure its air base and make it ready for use.

1st Base Unit

1st Base Force as its core (with the light cruiser *Nagara* (which belongs to the 16th Cruiser Division), and others): shall support the 2d Escort Unit, defend the Bangka anchorage and protect the sea transport.

2d Air Unit

11th Seaplane Tender Division (with seaplane tenders the *Chitose* and the *Mizuho*) as its core: shall provide guard against submarines and support in the landing attacks.

The 2d Escort Unit commander laid down the course of action, in which he would have the main force of the Sasebo Combined Special Landing Force go ashore at the town of Menado on the west coast and an element at Kema on the east coast to carry out a pincer attack against the Dutch East Indies forces to seize the airfield in the Langoan area. On 5 January, he passed down his orders at Davao.⁽¹¹⁷⁾



Naval Paratroop Unit Drop at Menado

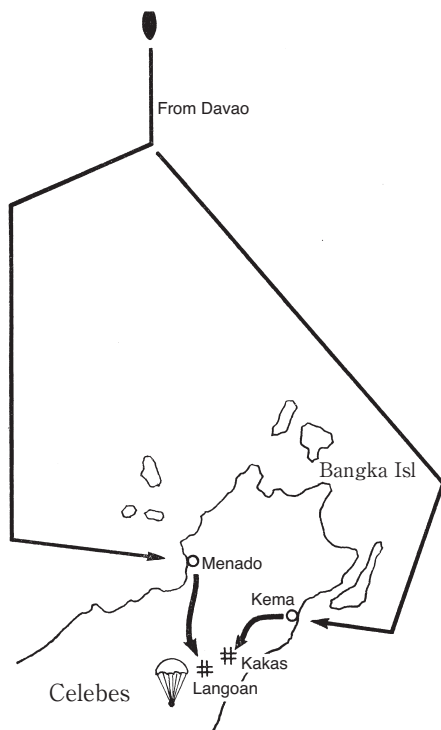


Illustration No. 18—The {Navy} Operation to Capture Manado

The 1001st Unit ([consisting of] the 1st Yokosuka Special Landing Force) under the command of the commander in chief of the Eleventh Air Fleet would carry out the paratroop drop. On 7 January, Commander in Chief [of the Fleet] Tsukahara ordered that “the unit be put under the command of the 1st Air Raid Unit (i.e. the 21st Air Flotilla) until the drop, which shall be executed on 11 January.”⁽¹⁴⁴⁾ It was decided that, in cooperation with the 1st Air Raid Unit, the 1001st Unit would drop two companies (334 men) on 11 January and one company (74 men) on 12 January at Langoan to seize the Langoan airfield and the Kakas Sea [plane] Base.⁽¹⁴⁴⁾

On 9 January, the convoy of ten ships and its escort ships sailed from Davao.⁽¹¹⁷⁾ On this day, an allied plane flew close to reconnoiter and another three heavy bombers came to drop bombs, but no damage was sustained¹ At 1400 on the 10th, the convoy separated into those heading for Manado and those for Kema.⁽¹¹⁷⁾ At 1830, three flying boats came and dropped bombs but no damage was sustained¹ No allied surface vessels appeared ei-

ther. On the following day, the 11th, the Manado unit (about 1,800 men) and the Kema Unit (about 1,400 men) successfully landed at 0400 and 0420 respectively. Repulsing a small number of Dutch East Indies troops, the units headed for the airfield.⁽¹¹⁷⁾ Six enemy planes came to attack and dropped bombs [on the Japanese troops] in Manado at 0635, followed by six planes at 0650, and three planes at 1540; four planes came to attack in Kema at 0620, followed by three planes at 0700, five planes at 1430 and four planes at 1628, but no major damage was sustained in either area.⁽¹¹⁷⁾

On this day, two companies commanded by the 1001st Unit’s battalion commander, consisting of 334 men in total, had boarded twenty-eight planes and left Davao at 0630. At 0952 they parachuted in, and completely seized the Langoan airfield at 1130 and the Kakas Sea [plane] Base at 1800.⁽¹⁴⁴⁾

On the following day, the 12th, one company of reinforcements (74 men) also parachuted in at 0952, and the paratroop unit, the Manado landing unit and the Kema landing unit each succeeded in making contact.⁽¹⁴⁴⁾ On this day eight [enemy] planes flew in to drop bombs [on the Japanese troops] in Kema at 0815, followed by three planes at 0835, and also four planes flew in to drop bombs in Manado at 1030, which caused little damage.⁽¹¹⁷⁾ On this afternoon, ten fighter planes and one reconnaissance plane of the 21st Air Flotilla advanced into Kakas Airfield.⁽¹³⁴⁾ From then on, no more air raids by allied planes were seen.

This paratroop operation at Manado was the first ever paratroop operation carried out by Japanese forces. The Army, which was planning to employ the 1st [Paratroop] Raiding

Group for a surprise attack on Palembang, requested [the Navy] to delay the announcement about the paratroop operation at Menado. The Navy approved this request, and delayed its announcement until the droppings at Palembang. Thus on 15 February the following communiqués were released:⁽¹³⁾

IGHQ Communiqué (1700 on 15 February)

The Imperial Navy Paratroop Unit took part in the battle to capture Celebes on 11 January and achieved splendid results.

IGHQ Communiqué (1710 on 15 February)

The powerful Imperial Army Paratroop Unit succeeded in executing a surprise dropping at Palembang on Sumatra, the largest oil field area in the Dutch East Indies, at 1126 on 14 February, and while destroying the enemy and securing the airfield and other vital locations, it is further expanding military gains.