

# DUTCH EAST INDIES

## 1941

**1 December** The Military Aviation Service of the Royal Netherlands East Indies Army (R.N.E.I.A.) is mobilised.

**7-8<sup>th</sup> December** Japanese attacks launched on the United States Navy base at Pearl Harbour and the British colony of Hong Kong. Simultaneously Japanese forces invade Malaya and the Philippines.

**8 December** The Netherlands declare war on Japan and starts a partial mobilisation of its forces on Java, Madura, Bali and Lombok.

**9 December** The R.E.N.I.A transfers an Aircraft Group to Singapore to help in its defence.

**10 December** Destruction of Force Z of the Malayan coast, HMS Prince of Wales and Repulse are sunk.

**11 December** Full general mobilisation of the R.N.E.I. Army.

**14 December** Japanese transport vessels with a strong naval escort leaves Cam Ranh Bay in South Vietnam sails for British Borneo arriving there on the 16 December.

**12 December** Sparrow Force, mainly Australian but with British and American contingents, is landed to defend Timor.

**16 December** Japanese troops land and capture the oil fields at Miti and Seria in British Borneo intact along with a further oil refinery at Lutong. The Allies now issue general orders that all oil facilities are to be destroyed if they cannot be defended.

**17 December** Gull Force, made of Australian troops, is landed at Ambon in the Moluccas Islands. Ambon was strategically important to the defence of the Dutch East Indies due to its all weather airfield and associated infrastructure. The Australians also considered it to critical to the defence of Australia itself. Dutch and Australian troops were also landed at Dilly in Portuguese Timor.

**22 December** A Japanese invasion force leaves Miri (Sarawak) for Kuching (British Borneo).

**24 December** Japanese forces land at Kuching, British Borneo and capture the airfield in the late afternoon of Christmas day. British forces retreat to Singawang 11 airfield in Dutch Borneo where they come under Dutch command. Civilian refugees are sent to the coast at Pontianak to await evacuation.

**27 December** The Dutch loses its first territory as the Tambelan islands are occupied by the Japanese.

**29 December** The United States Army Air Force (U.S.A.A.F.) transfers the 19<sup>th</sup> Bombardment Group from Australia to Malang in Java.

**30 December** The Royal Air Force (R.A.F) drops supplies to help the defence of Singkawang 11 airfield. Pontianak occupied by the Japanese.

## **1942**

**7 January** A Japanese invasion force leaves the Davao (Philippines) for Tarakan a major oil producing centre on the north east coast of Dutch Borneo.

**11 January** The Japanese Empire declares war on the Netherlands and attacks Tarakan.

**12 January** After the oil production facilities and some 700 oil wells are destroyed the Dutch surrender Tarakan.

**15 January** The Allies activate a new command structure called the America-British -Dutch-Australia Command (A.B.D.A. Com) to coordinate a response to the Japanese attacks. The Japanese execute Dutch prisoners in retaliation for the destruction of Tarakan's oil wells.

**18 January** The R.A.F. transfers 225 (Bomber) Squadron from Singapore to Palembang in Sumatra. The Dutch prepare to destroy the oil production facilities at Balikpapan in Dutch East Borneo.

**19 January** Japanese forces land at Sandakan in British North Borneo.

**21 January** Japanese invasion force leaves Tarakan for Balikpapan. Allied naval forces leave Koepang in Dutch Timor in an attempt to intercept the invasion force.

**23 -25 January** Although suffering losses from Allied naval and air attacks the Japanese land at Balikpapan and in Kendari in Sualwesi. Both locations were important to the Japanese campaign, the former because of its oil production facilities and the gateway to the oil fields in the interior, and the latter for an excellent airfield with three runways and a superb infrastructure. The civilians who had left Singkawang II at the end of December 1941 were finally evacuated from Pontianak.

**27 January** The airfield at Singkawang II is finally captured by the Japanese as is Pontianak.

**31 January** Japanese invade the Dutch island of Ambon in the Moluccas archipelago and capture Ambon City.

## **February**

**2 February** The Royal Artillery 6<sup>th</sup> Heavy Anti-Aircraft Regiment together with 78<sup>th</sup> Battery 35<sup>th</sup> Light Anti-Aircraft Battery take up positions around Palembang in Sumatra.

**3 February** Gull Force surrenders on Ambon. The Japanese choose 300 Australian and Dutch prisoners of war (P.O.W's) at random and execute them. Most of the remaining POW's would die in captivity. In 1946 Several Japanese Officers connected with the atrocity would be tried and executed.

**4 February** British 77<sup>th</sup> Heavy Anti-Aircraft Regiment together with the 21<sup>st</sup> and 48<sup>th</sup> Light Anti-Aircraft Regiments and Headquarters 16<sup>th</sup> Anti-Aircraft Brigade land at Jakarta.

**4-5 February** An ABDA Naval force fails in its attempt to intercept a Japanese invasion convoy heading for the cities of Makassar (Sulawesi) and Banjarmasin (capital of Dutch Borneo).

**7 February** Japanese occupy Samarinda (East Borneo).

**9 February** Japanese take Makassar.

**10 February** Japanese take Bandjarmasin.

**14 February** Japanese paratroops land at the airfield Palembang I and take it.

**15 February** Japanese land on Bangka Island just off the coast of Sumatra. The town of Palembang is occupied by the Japanese. ABDA Command orders the evacuation of southern Sumatra. Singapore falls.

**19 February** ABDA Command sends a naval force to attack a Japanese invasion force heading towards Bali, it is defeated and the Japanese take Bali and its very important airfield. The Dutch offer no resistance. In the Timor Sea 188 Japanese naval aircraft take off from Aircraft Carriers and launch a devastating attack on the port of Darwin in northern Australia. Elements of the Australian 7<sup>th</sup> Division land at Jakarta.

**20 February** Japanese forces land in Timor and occupy the towns of Kupang and Dilly. More Dutch prisoners were executed at Balikpapan in reprisal for the destruction of the town's oil production facilities.

**22 February** USAAF withdraws its units from Java.

Sparrow Force surrenders on Timor. ABDA Command is dissolved.

**27 February** USS Langley is sunk whilst ferrying much needed fighters to Java.

**27-28 February** Battle of Java Sea. In an attempt to intercept yet another Japanese invasion force heading to Java the Allies cobble together another ships to form the Eastern Strike Force. Led by the Dutch Admiral Karel Doorman the fleet was itself intercepted and largely destroyed. Those vessels that survived were hunted down by the Japanese over the next few days. Allied naval resistance was over.

**28 February – 1<sup>st</sup> March** Japanese forces land at multiple locations on Java. On 1<sup>st</sup> March Japanese light tanks advance on Kalijati airfield which is quickly taken. Dutch counter attacks fail.

**5 March** RNEI Army abandons Jakarta. Surabaya and its naval base is taken.

**9 March** RNEI command surrenders Java to the Japanese after brief negotiations.

**12 March** Allied ground forces on Java surrender. Japanese Guards Division lands in northern Sumatra and the RNEI based in northern and central Sumatra surrenders.

Japan would continue to occupy the Dutch East Indies until its surrender in 1945.

---