

BATAVIA COMMUNIQUE

The following communique was issued today by the Headquarters of the Netherlands East Indies forces at Batavia:-

In the afternoon of February 27 a strong Japanese fleet which covered a convoy approaching from the north was attacked in the Java Sea by an Allied squadron. In the course of the fighting which continued after darkness had fallen, losses were sustained on both sides. The extent of these losses is however not yet known because complete records have not yet been received. For the same reason no review of the naval action can yet be given. The reports received indicate however that the convoy which consisted of several tons of ships, retreated to the north in the course of the battle.

Yesterday the enemy carried out raids on the harbour of Tandjong Priok, and on an airfield in West Java. The first attack on Tandjong Priok took place at noon and was carried out by one group of five and one group of six bombers which altogether dropped about thirteen bombs. Damage to material was small. Four dockyard labourers were killed and five wounded. Our planes shot down one bomber and probably damaged another. The second attack took place at 4.30 p.m. by two groups of six bombers each. All bombs dropped into the sea. Four bombers were shot down. No one was killed and no damage was done.

The raid on the aerodrome in West Java was carried out by twelve bombers. About fifty bombs were dropped in fields, some buildings and a few planes were damaged on the ground. There were no casualties.

Surabaya had several alerts as enemy aircraft approached the town. Each time they were driven off by our anti-aircraft fire before having been able to drop any bombs.

Fierce fighting continues unabated in South Celebes. One of our possessions was attacked by greatly superior numbers. The attack was repulsed with machine-gun fire. Many Japanese were killed.

In another area our troops launched an attack on enemy positions. In Central Sumatra our troops have made contact with the enemy near BANGKO (West DJANBI). On Timor our troops inflicted serious losses on the enemy. The fighting there continues.

At 1 p.m. Java time no Japanese landings had taken place on Java.

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NETHERLANDS GOVERNMENT INFORMATION BUREAU