

with the radar stations in the vicinity, were destroyed, and their staffs were ordered to Bandoeng on the 3rd March.

OPERATIONS BY NO. 205 (F.B.) SQUADRON—
1ST FEBRUARY TO 3RD MARCH.

557. No. 205 (F.B.) Squadron during the whole of its stay in Java operated as a unit of the Allied Reconnaissance Group which was responsible for all seaward reconnaissance throughout the S.W. Pacific Command. This Group, under Dutch Command, took its orders first from Abdair and then, after Abdair left Java, from General van Oyen, the Dutch A.O.C. Britair was responsible for administration only of 205 (F.B.) Squadron.

558. Based on Batavia and Oesthaven, 205 (B) Squadron carried out reconnaissances between Borneo and Sumatra, and also undertook anti-submarine patrols in the Sunda Straits.

559. When the Japanese descended upon the Batavia area on 1st March it was ordered to transfer its base to Tjilitjap, an unserviceable flying boat having to be destroyed when it left. The Squadron operated from Tjilitjap on anti-submarine patrols until 3rd March, by which time it could no longer be usefully employed. The squadron was then ordered out of the island, two boats going to Ceylon and one, with a damaged air-screw, to Australia.

FINAL AIR OPERATIONS—4TH MARCH TO
8TH MARCH 1942.

560. The position on the morning of 4th March was:—

- (a) H.Q. Britair—Bandoeng.
- (b) No. 1 (GR) Squadron, R.A.A.F., 7 Hudsons (3 serviceable)—Andir.
- (c) No. 232 (F) Squadron, 10 Hurricanes (all in dubious condition)—Andir.
- (d) No. 36 (T.B.) Squadron, 5 Vildebeestes (4 just serviceable)—Tjikamber.
- (e) About 450 armed R.A.F. personnel under Wing Commander Alexander operating as infantry with "Blackforce" in the Buitenzorg area.
- (f) About 1,900 unarmed personnel awaiting evacuation near the port of Tjilitjap, and a further 600 at Djojacarta; many other personnel now surplus to squadron requirements were under orders to move to the area as accommodation became available near the port.

561. The Army situation on 4th March was:—

Eastern Java: The enemy had made a successful landing on 1st March west of Sourabaya and was pressing the Dutch forces in two directions—those originally in the Sourabaya district towards the S.E. extremity of the island, and those in central Java westwards towards Poerwokerto.

Western Java: The enemy after landing at Eritanwetan had captured Kalidjati aerodrome, on which strong Japanese fighter forces were by now well established. The enemy had repulsed Dutch attempts on 2nd March to recapture Soebang (from the direction of which the enemy was by now pressing towards Bandoeng) and on 3rd March to recapture Kalidjati aerodrome.

The enemy force, which had landed in the Sunda Straits, had forced the evacuation of Batavia, and the Dutch garrison of extreme western Java was in the Buitenzorg-Soekaboemi vicinity, falling back on the final Bandoeng "stronghold."

562. No. 36 (T.B.) Squadron based at Tjikamber attacked Kalidjati aerodrome, now full of enemy aircraft, on the nights of 2nd-3rd and 3rd-4th March. On 4th March it was moved to Tasik Malaja because of reports (subsequently proved to be false) of landings in S.W. Java which threatened the aerodrome, and because the rapid advance, authentic, of the enemy towards Soekaboemi threatened to cut the only road available for withdrawal from it.

563. From Tasik Malaja the squadron continued attacks on Kalidjati during the nights of 4th-5th and 5th-6th March, doing two sorties per aircraft on the former night. Large fires were caused and considerable damage was done.

564. On 6th March, by which date an early capitulation had been forecast by General ter Poorten (See para. 577), two aircraft only remained serviceable, and orders were given for these to be flown north in an endeavour to reach Burma. They left on the 7th March but unfortunately both crashed in Sumatra and the crews were either killed or captured.

565. No. 1 (G.R.) Squadron, R.A.A.F., was ordered to fly its three remaining flyable Hudsons to Australia carrying operational records and as many spare aircrews as possible. The first left on the night 4th-5th, the others on the nights of 5th-6th and 6th-7th—all reaching Australia.

566. No. 232 (F) Squadron, now at Andir, was given the role of carrying out periodic offensive sweeps against Kalidjati aerodrome. It was instructed also to take advantage of any particularly favourable targets presented by the Japanese Army attacking Bandoeng from the north. For the latter purpose the squadron established a liaison officer at the Dutch H.Q. responsible for defences on that front.

567. By this time no warning of impending attack could be obtained, and the aerodrome was subjected to almost continuous attack throughout each day. The squadron was repeatedly in action and considerable success was achieved.

568. By the 7th March the squadron was reduced to 5 aircraft. On this day it was transferred to Tasik Malaja, and by the evening only two aircraft remained. These two carried out a tactical road reconnaissance on the morning of the 8th March, and on completion of this they were destroyed under orders from Britair.

Operations of No. 266 (F) Wing.

569. Whilst No. 266 (F) Wing was in action in Sumatra and Java it is believed to have inflicted the following losses on the enemy:—

In Sumatra, 2nd-16th February.

About 8 enemy aircraft were shot down. In co-operation with the bombers of No. 225 (B) Group, very heavy casualties were inflicted on troops in boats and barges moving up the Palembang river on 15th February.