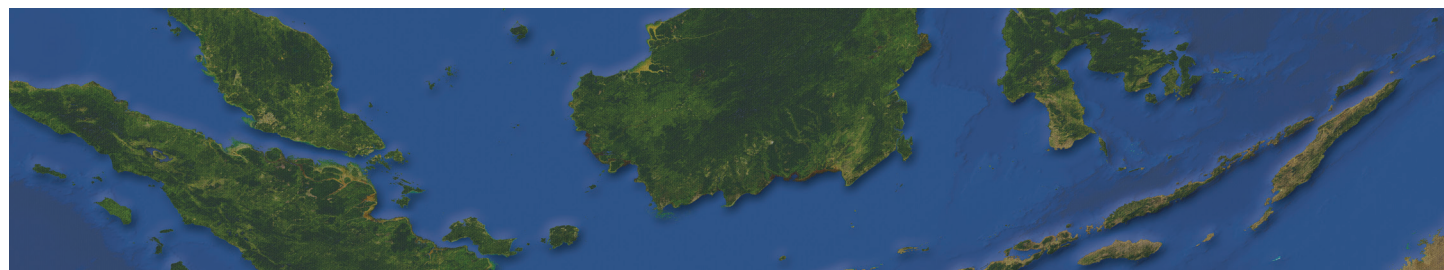


INTRODUCTION



Welcome to the 2012 Annual! This issue we proudly roll out Paul Rohrbaugh's *Forlorn Hopes*, his take on the Japanese conquest of the Dutch East Indies. Beyond his action-packed game, you'll find supporting articles and some game design and analysis pieces to boost your *Against the Odds* playing experience. Don't forget that *ATO* is a bargain, and a better bargain when you subscribe. Thanks for buying this issue and prepare to dive into battle!

Andy

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FORLORN HOPES

The Campaign for the East Indies, 1942

by Paul Rohrbaugh, with maps by Terry Leeds

"It is better to die standing than live on our knees."
-Dutch General Hein ter Poorten

Great Britain's and the United States' decision to impose an economic blockade on Japan in response to that nation's escalating war in China and the military occupation of French Indochina was the "tipping point" for the Imperial High Command's decision to enter into the global war. Two key choices were made early-on by the Japanese military as planning for the war began in earnest; one was to enter into a military alliance with Germany and Italy to become a third member of the Axis Powers. The other was to suspend military preparations against the Soviet Union (the "Northern Option") and instead launch offensives against the Allied powers. The Japanese devoted planning and resources to: a) seize and hold the rest of Indochina and Burma to prevent overland supplies and weaponry from reaching the Nationalist Chinese, b) launch a pre-emptive attack to destroy the US Pacific Fleet, c) occupy the Philippines, and d) take control of the oil and mineral rich East Indies. Control of the East Indies was key to Japan's ability to sustain its military operations and existence as a modern, industrialized nation.

The imposition of a blockade on Japan was seen as the ultimate step in getting that nation to back down from its expansionist militarism of the past four years. Few Allied leaders believed that Japan, scarcely larger than California and dependent upon importing nearly all of her petroleum and industrial raw materials, could or would enter into an even larger conflict with the US and Great Britain. However, both nations underestimated the resolve and increasing desperation of Japan's military that totally dominated the civilian government. Likewise, most of the Japanese military leaders also underestimated the abilities of the US and Great Britain to resist and strike back once war broke out. These plans and assumptions, for good and ill, would come to the forefront in the East Indies campaign.

THEATER OF OPERATIONS

"The enemy must know well that Java is doomed by our capture of Bali, the paradise of the world, only 22km away."
-February 4, 1942 journal entry by Admiral Matome Ugaki

The East Indies, now Indonesia, is a collection of islands making up the world's largest archipelago. Most of the islands were under the control of the Dutch Government in exile (the Netherlands was overrun during the May 1940 German invasion, but most of the government, including the Royal family, escaped) while other islands were governed by Great Britain (northwestern Borneo) and Portugal (neutral in the war). The region is divided into three areas, the Greater Sunda Islands (Sumatra, Java, Borneo), New Guinea, of which the western section was the scene of some fighting during the campaign, and the Lesser Sunda islands (Moluccas, Celebes, Timor).

The islands were the focus of intense European colonization for over three centuries, but much of the region was still undeveloped. Mountainous interiors, many with active volcanoes, poor infrastructure, and native populations that were under tenuous governmental control were common. Over 70 million lived on the islands, with more than 50 million concentrated on Java and Madura. The vast majority of the people were Indonesian with slightly less than a quarter million Dutch ruling over them. The Dutch who were born and lived there were called *blijers* (stayers), while those who traveled to and from the Netherlands were called *trekkers* (travelers).