



Balikpapan up in smoke after our raid. (Dick Dakeyne Collection.)



Official photograph of John Dennis' crew who participated in the bombing mission over Balikpapan, Borneo, flying a B-24 Liberator as part of the 530th Bomb Squadron, 380th Bomb Group, at Fenton Field, Australia, 30th August 1943.

Standing: Captain John S. Dennis of Richmond, Virginia (Pilot); Lt. R.H. Kunz of Minneapolis, Minnesota (Bombardier); 2nd Lt. P.C. Hebner of Warren, Ohio (Navigator); T/Sgt. Lyle R. Hastings of Milesburg, Pennsylvania (Engineer); S/Sgt. Jesse Estes of Montgomery, Alabama (Armorer-gunner).

Front row: T/Sgt. Charles W. Wilbert of Spokane, Washington (Radio Operator); S/Sgt. Chester W. Ostrowski of Toledo, Ohio (Assistant Engineer); S/Sgt. Richard Mather of Hamilton, New Jersey (Waist Gunner); F/Sgt. (RAAF) Richard B. Dakeyne of Sydney, Australia (Waist Gunner).

Three days later I was on the 380th's first trip to **Pomelaa**, a nickel mine in South Celebes. I flew in *Juarez Whistle* as both RCM Operator and belly gunner, but with **Captain Gus Connery's** crew.

We happened to arrive over the target at the same time as a Japanese transport plane, a Nakajima L2D code-named *Tabby*. Our B-24 bomber rapidly converted to a fighter and our top turret gunner, **John ("Jack") Tackett**, shot the transport down. The photograph of the stricken plane with smoke belching from its engines became famous. I have to confess, I felt a bit sorry for the Japs in that plane. How unlucky were they?

North-Western Sector

BORNEO.

Balikpapan: Our heavy units on reconnaissance, to assess the damage caused by our recent attack, bombed a 6,000-ton tanker in the harbour, setting it on fire. They also hit the oil storage tanks, rekindling the smouldering fires. Six enemy fighters intercepted over the target and were shot down, four being definitely destroyed, one probably destroyed and one damaged. Our planes returned safely.

Balik Papan Raided

In bad weather, Liberators flew the 2600-mile round trip to the Celebes to hammer the oil refineries at Balik Papan. Many fires were started and four large vessels were set on fire. All the Liberators returned safely to base. Our planes made their attack at night, at mast-head level and it is believed that considerable damage was done.