

FIRST STRIKE! THE 10 MARCH ATTACK



*An E8N2 Dave floatplane in the foreground: two were lost after air combat on 10 March. In the background is an E7K2 Alf.*

*Below left: The bow of Tenyo Maru was visible off Lae for many years until it submerged during an earthquake in the mid-1980s.*



were made to repair it there, but it was realised it could make only ten knots and the engine sometimes ran intermittently. Ultimately a period in dry dock was needed, which forced *Kiyokawa Maru's* return to Japan. It arrived at Yokosuka on 8 April.

Otherwise, the Japanese had suffered the loss of two valuable naval

transports in *Kongo Maru* and *Tenyo Maru*, as well as the old IJA transport *Yokohama Maru*. The small auxiliary minesweeper *No. 2 Tama Maru* was the fourth vessel sunk. While six army and 126 naval personnel were killed in the attacks, this failed to have a material impact on the occupation of Lae or Salamaua. Certainly many of the naval personnel killed were crews of warships that were strafed or suffered near misses from bombs.

On the night of 12–13 March the Horie Battalion re-embarked on board *China Maru*, which sailed at 0200 and returned the soldiers back to Rabaul. The escort was probably provided by *Yubari*, which also departed Salamaua on 13 March and arrived in Rabaul the following day. Also returning to Rabaul at this time were three destroyers of Destroyer Squadron 29, two of which needed emergency repairs. All three had returned to Japan for repairs by 1 April.