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NETHERLANDS
EAST INDIES

VOLUME I

NAVAL INTELLIGENCE DIVISION

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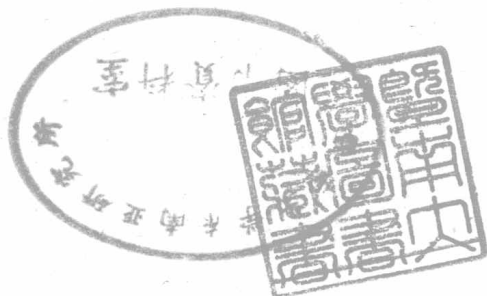
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NETHERLANDS EAST INDIES

VOLUME I

April 1944

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NAVAL INTELLIGENCE DIVISION

PREFACE

IN 1915 a Geographical Section was formed in the Naval Intelligence Division of the Admiralty to write Geographical Handbooks on various parts of the world. The purpose of these handbooks was to supply, by scientific research and skilled arrangement, material for the discussion of naval, military, and political problems, as distinct from the examination of the problems themselves. Many distinguished collaborators assisted in their production, and by the end of 1918 upwards of fifty volumes had been produced in Handbook and Manual form, as well as numerous short-term geographical reports. The demand for these books increased rapidly with each new issue; and they acquired a high reputation for accuracy and impartiality. They are now to be found in Service Establishments and Embassies throughout the world, and in the early years after the last war were much used by the League of Nations.

The old Handbooks have been extensively used in the present war, and experience has disclosed both their value and their limitations. On the one hand they have proved, beyond all question, how greatly the work of the fighting services and of Government Departments is facilitated if countries of strategic or political importance are covered by handbooks which deal, in a convenient and easily digested form, with their geography, ethnology, administration, and resources. On the other hand, it has become apparent that something more is needed to meet present-day requirements. The old series does not cover many of the countries closely affected by the present war (e.g. Germany, France, Poland, Spain, Portugal, to name only a few); its books are somewhat uneven in quality, and they are inadequately equipped with maps, diagrams, and photographic illustrations.

The present series of Handbooks, while owing its inspiration largely to the former series, is in no sense an attempt to revise or re-edit that series. It is an entirely new set of books, produced in the Naval Intelligence Division by trained geographers drawn largely from the Universities, and working at sub-centres established at Oxford and Cambridge. The books follow, in general, a uniform scheme, though minor modifications will be found in particular cases; and they are illustrated by numerous maps and photographs.

The purpose of the books is primarily naval. They are designed first to provide, for the use of Commanding Officers, information in a

comprehensive and convenient form about countries which they may be called upon to visit, not only in war but in peace-time; secondly, to maintain the high standard of education in the Navy and, by supplying officers with material for lectures to naval personnel ashore and afloat, to ensure for all ranks that visits to a new country shall be both interesting and profitable.

Their contents are, however, by no means confined to matters of purely naval interest. For many purposes (e.g. history, administration, resources, communications, etc.) countries must necessarily be treated as a whole, and no attempt is made to limit their treatment exclusively to coastal zones. It is hoped therefore that the Army, the Royal Air Force and other Government Departments (many of whom have given great assistance in the production of the series) will find these Handbooks even more valuable than their predecessors proved to be both during and after the last war.

J. H. GODFREY,

Director of Naval Intelligence

1942

The foregoing preface has appeared from the beginning of this series of Geographical Handbooks. It describes so effectively their origin and purpose that I have decided to retain it in its original form.

This volume has been prepared for the Naval Intelligence Division at the Cambridge sub-centre (General Editor, Dr. H. C. Darby). It has been largely written by Mr. S. H. Beaver with contributions by Professor A. A. Miller, Mr. F. J. Monkhouse, Mr. P. O'Driscoll, Dr. P. W. Richards, Mr. J. C. Stuttard, Mr. T. G. Tutin, and Dr. Charles Wilcocks. The maps and diagrams have been drawn by Miss Margaret Alexander, Miss K. S. A. Froggatt, Miss M. Garside, Mrs. Gwen Raverat and Miss J. D. I. Tyson. The volume has been edited by Mr. S. H. Beaver and Mr. T. G. Tutin.

E. G. N. RUSHBROOKE,

Director of Naval Intelligence

April, 1944

SUMMARY OF CONTENTS OF HANDBOOK ON THE NETHERLANDS EAST INDIES

VOLUME I.

Geology and Physical features; Sumatra; Islands Adjacent to Sumatra; Java and Madoera; Borneo; Celebes; The Lesser Soenda Islands; The Moluccas; Dutch New Guinea; Climate; Soils; Vegetation; Medical Services and Health Conditions.

VOLUME II.

Peoples; History; Government, Administration and Law; Growth and Distribution of Population; Agriculture and Fisheries; Forestry; Mining and Industry; Labour; Commerce and Finance; Ports; Communications.

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Chapter I

GEOLOGY AND PHYSICAL FEATURES

Introduction: The Indonesian Archipelago: General sketch of Geological background: The Volcanoes: Coasts: Bibliographical Note.

INTRODUCTION

Netherlands-India, the Netherlands Indies and the Dutch East Indies are names alternatively applied to the Dutch possessions in the Malay Archipelago, which the Dutch call *Nederlandsch Oost-Indië*. The whole Malay Archipelago, variously known as Malaysia, the East Indies, Indonesia, etc., is the vast congeries of islands—numbering over 2,000—which lie between south-eastern Asia and northern Australia. Some parts of the area belong to other powers, e.g. north-west Borneo and eastern New Guinea are parts of the British Empire, the Philippines belong to U.S.A., and Portugal possesses the eastern half of Timor. Dutch territory extends from 95° E, at the north-western corner of Sumatra, to 141° E on the frontier of British New Guinea, a greater longitudinal extent than that of the continent of Europe, representing a distance of some 5,000 km., and from latitude 6° N at We island, north of Sumatra, to 11° S at Roti island, south-west of Timor, a latitudinal distance of almost 2,000 km., roughly equivalent to that from Edinburgh to Madrid. (Fig. 1). Considerably more land lies to the south than to the north of the equator, which passes through the middle of Sumatra and Borneo, through the northern peninsula of Celebes and just north of the 'Bird's Head' peninsula of New Guinea. (Fig. 2.)

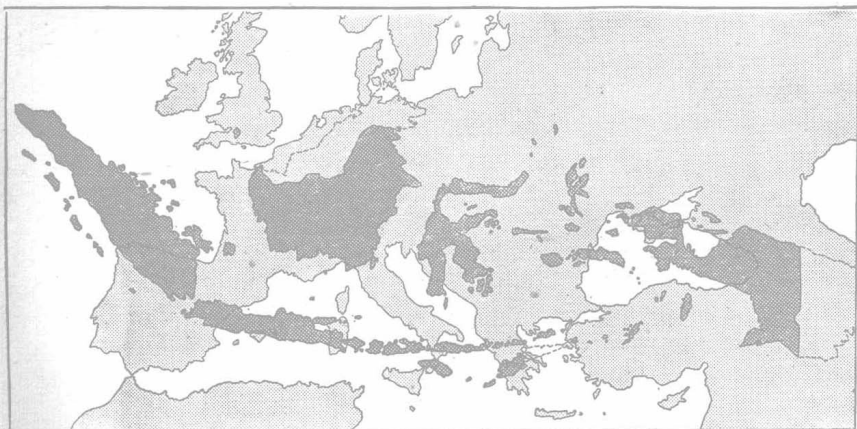


Fig. 1. The East Indies and Europe compared

The largest islands are Sumatra, Java (with Madoera), Borneo and Celebes—together known as the Great Soenda islands—and New Guinea. Between these are situated groups or lines of smaller islands: the Lesser Soenda islands extending from Java to Timor, the Moluccas, between Celebes and New Guinea, and many others located for the most part between and around the shores of the larger islands. The total area amounts to almost two million sq. km., fifty-six times the area of the mother country, Holland.

The following table presents a statistical summary of the chief territorial divisions and their populations:

Division	Area (thous. sq. km.)	Roughly equivalent to	Popul. 1930 (thous.)	Pop. per sq. km.
Java and Madoera	132.2	Greece	41,718	316
Sumatra	425.1	} Sweden	7,678	18
Bangka, Billiton	16.8		279	17
Riouw-Lingga Arch.	31.7		298	9
Borneo	539.5	France	2,169	4
Celebes	189.0		4,232	22
Molucca Is.	83.7	Scotland	579	7
New Guinea	412.8	Romania and Bulgaria	314	0.8
Timor Arch.	63.3	Eire	1,657	26
Bali and Lombok	10.3		1,802	175
Total N-I	1,904.3		60,727	32

Java, though by no means the largest island, is by far the most densely peopled, and is economically the most important. Moreover, it contains Batavia, capital and administrative centre of the Indies. As a result, the Dutch make a broad division of their territories into (a) Java (with the contiguous island of Madoera), and (b) the Outer Provinces (Buitengewesten).

THE INDONESIAN ARCHIPELAGO

The islands of the archipelago vary in size from Borneo, Sumatra and New Guinea, which are amongst the world's largest islands, to uninhabited islets, barren rocks and coral-reefs that are only exposed at low tide. They can be divided into three natural groups:

(1) Extending a long way from Indo-China, Siam (Thailand) and Lower Burma towards the south and south-east is a submerged platform known as the Soenda Shelf, on which stands the long peninsula of Malaya (known to the Dutch as Malaka). Towards the outer edge of this platform the large islands of Sumatra, Java and

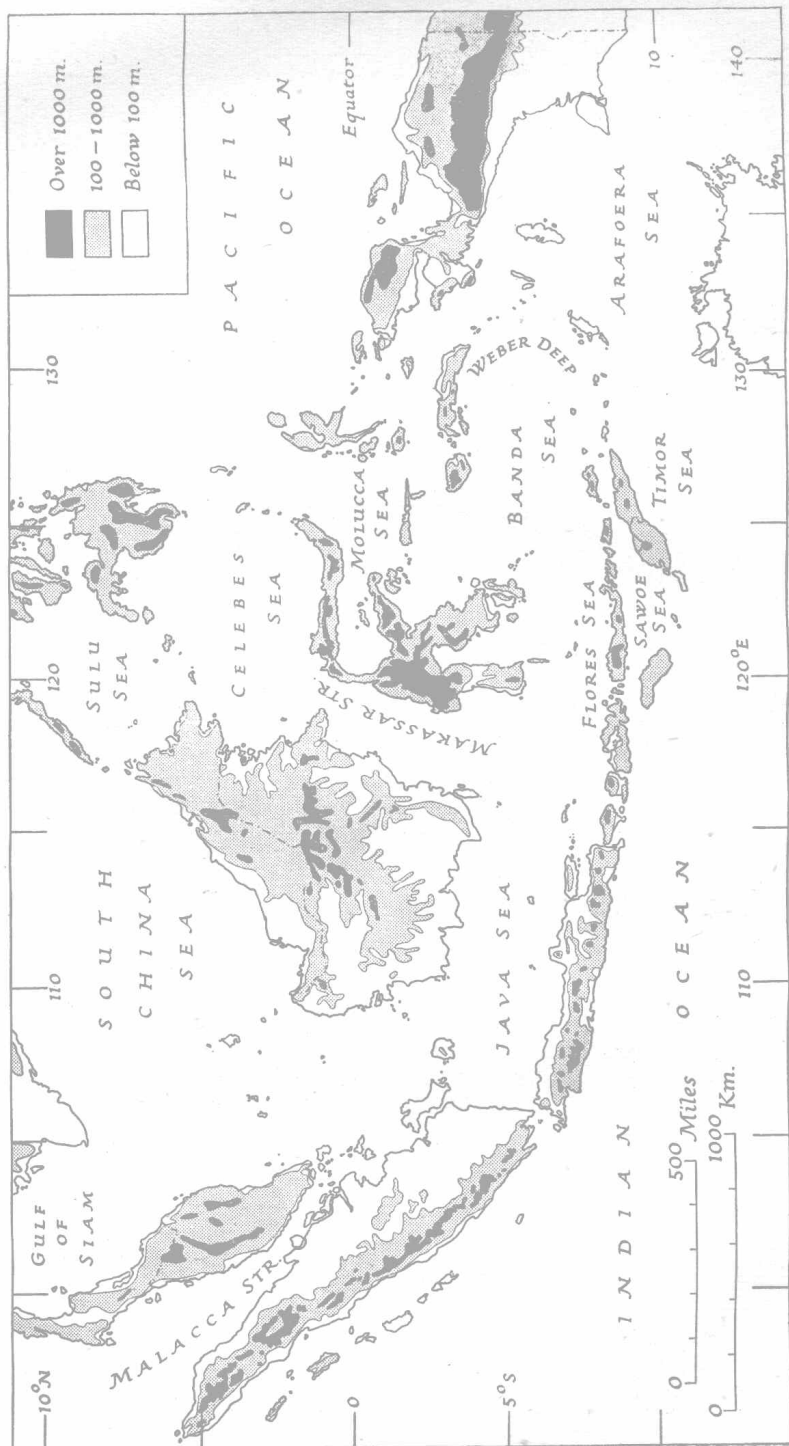


Fig. 3. The East Indies: Orographical

Source: *Atlas van Tropisch Nederland*, plate 3 (Batavia, 1938).