

## ***Massacres of POWs, Dutch East Indies, 1941-1942***

### **The tanker "Augustina" massacre, Western Java Sea, 1942**

The tanker *Augustina* (3110 tons) of the Nederlandsch Indische Tankstoomboot Mij. left Batavia (Tandjong Priok) on February 27, trying to break out through Sunda Strait enroute to Australia. The ship was under command of Captain A.J. Moerman, who had received orders to scuttle the ship when it was in danger of being captured. In the afternoon of March 1, the tanker was forced to stop after a Japanese destroyer fired a few rounds, after which the captain immediately ordered to prepare for scuttling. The seavalves were opened and large amounts of water began to enter the engine room and tanks. The crew then abandoned ship and went into the 2 lifeboats, which were then ordered to come alongside the destroyer. The captain and first engineer were ordered aboard and before they were questioned, they were sprayed with a disinfectionvapor! They returned soon afer, telling the others they were to be brought back to the tanker to prevent its loss. The whaleboats were taken under tow by the destroyer. The captain and first engineer soon returned from the stricken tanker, but they had been unable to close all the vents. The destroyer then signalled the lifeboats could row away, but soon after, fire was opened on them by a machine-gun and tommyguns. The boat with the captain and first engineer was driven back to the destroyer, where a Japanese sailor jumped aboard and started killing its passengers. Many of the crew had jumped over-board, and one of them, the 3rd Engineer L. Meyer dove under and swam away. When he returned to the surface, he was immediately fired upon. Meyer later saw the destroyer sail away, but no whaleboats or other survivors. As the tanker was still afloat, he decided to returned to the ship and find some clothes (he was completely naked). He found an undamaged boat and entered it, drifting away from the tanker. Then, in the night of March 3 and 4, he was picked up by another destroyer. He told the captain that he had remained aboard after the tanker was abandoned, and that he had been ill in bed. He heard water pooring in, and then also abandoned ship. His story was believed, and he was brought to Makassar on March 7, where he remained until October 15. He was then brought to Japan, to POW Camp Fukuoka No. 2. He was liberated on September 12, 1945, and he could prepare a statement about the loss of *Augustina* some three weeks later, in Manila, Philippines. A crew of 9 officers and 30 Chinese had been killed in this disaster, but two other Chinese apparently made it to shore. The name of the destroyer is unknown, and the same goes for the captain's name.

***Note* Please take notice that his overview is probably by far not complete. This is about all what could we find at this moment about the massacres in the Dutch East Indies 1941-1942. Please let me know by [e-mail](#) if you know for any massacres, which happened during this campaign and are not named on this list.**