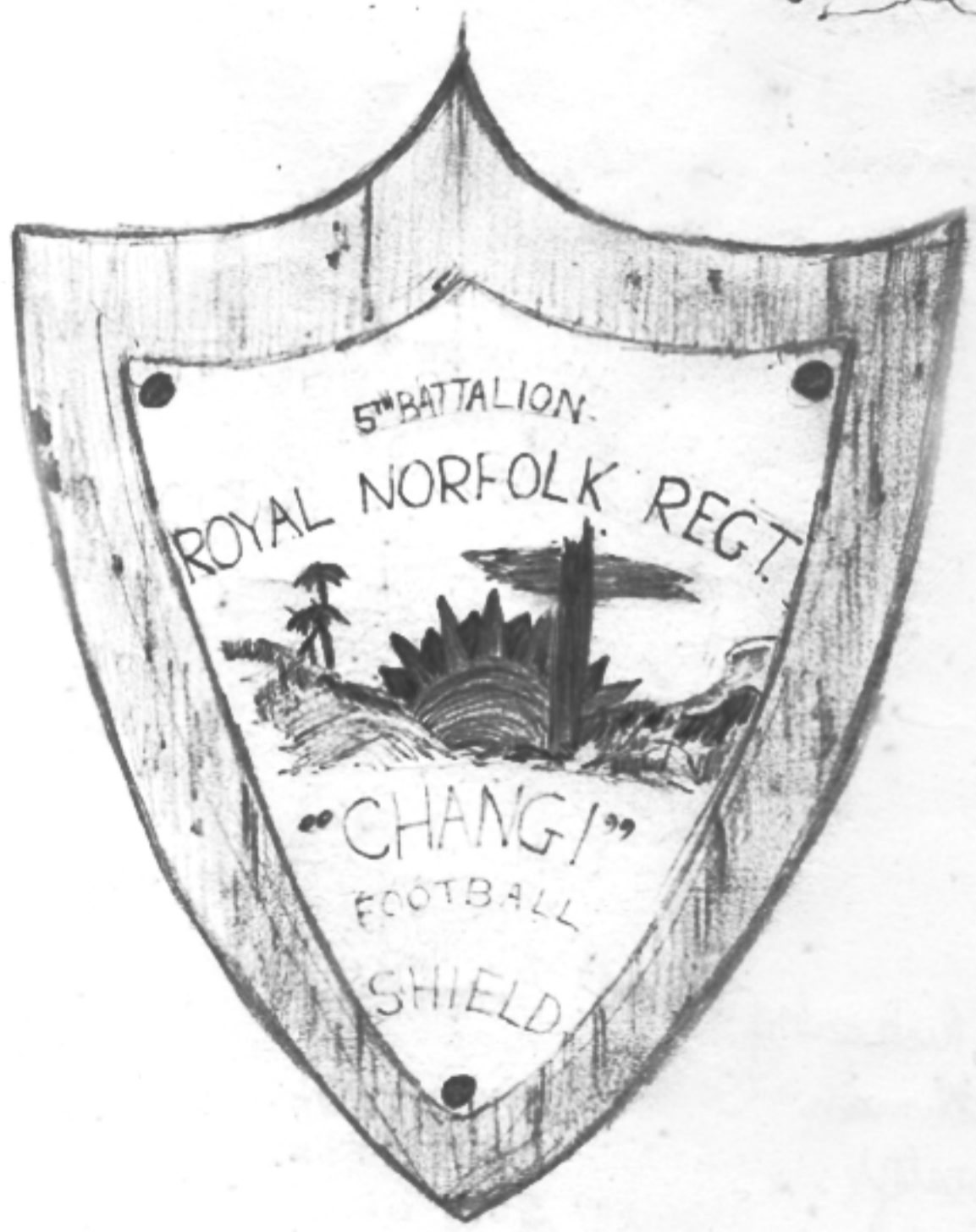


# THE BATTLE FOR SINGAPORE.



*In loving memory of Avril Burrows - Rickarby*



Copy of top copy (Typed by my father)

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my father  
handwriting

->

IMPERIAL RESCRIPT

We, by the grace of heaven, Emperor of Japan, seated on the Throne of a line unbroken for ages eternal, enjoin upon ye, Our loyal and brave subjects:

We hereby declare war on the United States of America and the British Empire. The men and Officers of our Army and Navy shall do their utmost in prosecuting the war, Our public servants of various departments shall perform faithfully and diligently their appointed tasks, and all other subjects of Ours shall pursue their respective duties; the entire nation with a united will shall mobilize their total strength so that nothing shall miscarry in the attainment of our war aims.

To ensure the stability of East Asia and to contribute to world peace is the far sighted policy which was formulated by Our Great Illustrious Imperial Grandsire and Our Great Imperial Sire succeeding Him, and which We lay constantly to heart. To cultivate friendship among nations and to enjoy prosperity in common with all nations has always been the guiding principle of Our Empire's foreign policy. It has been truly unavoidable and far from our wishes that Our Empire has been brought to cross swords with America and Britain. More than four years have passed since China, failing to comprehend the true intentions of Our Empire, and recklessly courting trouble, disturbed the peace of East Asia and compelled Our Empire to take up arms. Although there has been re-established the National Government of China with which Japan has effected neighborly intercourse and co-operation, the regime which has survived at Chungking, relying upon American and British protection, still continues its fratricidal opposition. Eager for the realization of their inordinate ambition to dominate the Orient, both America and Britain, giving support to the Chungking regime, have aggravated the disturbances in East Asia. Moreover, these two powers inducing other countries to follow suit, increased military preparations on all sides of Our Empire to challenge us. They have obstructed by every means our peaceful commerce, and finally resorted to a direct severance of economic relations menacing gravely the existence of Our Empire. Patiently We have waited and long We have endured, in the hope that our Government might retrieve the situation in peace. But our adversaries, showing not the least spirit of conciliation, have unduly delayed a settlement; and in the meantime, they have intensified the economic and political pressure to compel thereby Our Empire to submission. This trend of affairs would, if left unchecked, not only nullify Our Empire's great efforts for many years for the sake of the stabilization of East Asia, but also endanger the very existence of Our Nation. The situation being as it is, Our Empire for its existence and self-defense has no other recourse but to appeal to arms and to crush every obstacle in its path.

The Hallowed spirits of Our Imperial Ancestors guarding us from above, We rely upon the loyalty and courage of Our subjects in Our confident expectation that the task bequeathed by Our forefathers will be carried forward, and that the sources of evil will be speedily eradicated and an enduring peace immutably established in East Asia, preserving thereby the glory of Our Empire.

(Imperial Sign Manual)

(Imperial Seal)

The 8th day of the 12th Month  
of the 16th year of Showa .

-X-

Note:-

The above Imperial Rescript was taken from the War Anniversary Number of the Japan Times Advertiser, Tokyo, of Tuesday December 8th 1942, (the 17th year of Showa).

COPY  
The following is a letter received at H.Q. Malaya Command  
on February 10th, 1942.

Lieut-General TOMOYUKI YAMASHITA  
 High Com Nippon Army  
 Feb. 10th. 1942.

To:- The High Com of the British Army in Malaya.

Your Excellency,

I, the High Com of the Nippon Army based on the spirit of Japanese chivalry have the honour of presenting the note to your Excellency advising you to surrender the whole force in Malaya .

My sincere respects are due to your army which true to the traditional spirit of Great Britain is bravely, defending Singapore, which now stands isolated and unaided.

Many fierce and gallant fights have been fought by your gallant men and Officers, to the honour of British warriorship.

But the developments of the general war situation has already sealed the fate of Singapore and continuation of futile resistance would not only serve to inflict direct harm and injuries to thousands of non-combatants in the City, throwing them into further miseries and horrors of war, but also would not certainly add anything to the honour of your army.

I expect that your excellency accepting my advice will give up this meaningless and desperate resistance and promptly order the entire front to, cease hostilities and will dispatch at the same time your parlementaire according to the procedure shown at the end of this advice. If on the contrary your excellency should reject my advice and the present resistance continue, I shall be obliged though reluctantly from humanitarian considerations to order my army to make an annihilating attack on Singapore.

In closing this note of advise I pay again my sincere respects to your excellency.

Signed. Tomoyuki Yamashita.

1. The Parlementaire should proceed to Bukit Timah Rd.
2. The Parlementaire should bear a white flag and the Union Jack.

-X-

ADMONITION

PART 3

I have the honour of presenting to you this Admonition of Peace from the standpoint of the Nippon Sumurai Spirit, Nippon Navy, Army and Air Force have conquered the Phillipine Islands and Hong Kong and annihilated the British Extreme Oriental Fleet in the Southern Seas. The command of the Pacific Ocean and the Indian Ocean as well as the Aviation power in the Southern ~~Sea~~ and Western Asian continents is now under the control of the Nippon Forces. India has risen in rebellion. Thai and Malays have been subjected to Nippon without any remarkable resistance. The war has almost been settled already and Malay is under Nippon Power. Since the 18th century Singapore has been the starting point of the development of your country and the important juncture of the civilization of the West and East. Our Army cannot suffer as well as you to see this district burn to ashes by the War. Traditionally when Nippon is at war, when she takes her arms she's always based upon the loyalty and breaking wrong and helping right and she does not and never aim at the conquest of other nations nor the expansion of her territories.

The War cause, at this time, as you ~~will~~ are well aware originated from this loyalty. We want to establish new order and some of mutual ~~prosperity~~ prosperity in the Eastern Orient. You cannot deny at the bottom of your impartial hearts that this is divine will and humanity to give happiness to millions of East Orientals mourning under the exploitation and persecution. Consequently, The Nippon Army, basing upon this great loyalty, attacks without reserve those who resist them, but not only the innocent people but also the surrendered to them will be treated kindly according their ~~Samuraism~~ Samuraism. When I imagine the state of mind of you who have so well done your duty, isolated and without rescuer, and now surrounded by our Armes how much more could I not sincerely sympathize with you. This is why I'dare advise you to make peace and give you a friendly hand to co-operate for the settlement of the Oriental Peace. Many thousands of wives and children of your Officers and Soldiers are heartily waiting in their native land to the coming home of their husbands and fathers and many hundreds of thousands of innocent people are also passionately wishing to avoid the calamities of War.

I expect you to consider upon the eternal honour of British Tradition and you, be persuaded by this Admonition. Upon my word we wont kill you, treat you as officers and soldiers if you come to us. But if you resist us we will gibe swords.

(sgd) Nippon Army.

Singapore  
13 Feb 42.

CONVERSATION BETWEEN  
LIEUT. GENERAL PERCIVAL AND THE JAPANESE  
REGARDING SURRENDER TERMS.

PART 4

-X-

YAMASHITA. We have just received your reply.  
The Imperial Japanese Army will consider nothing but  
unconditional surrender.

PERCIVAL. It is 9.15 p.m. Japanese time. I fear we shall not  
be able to submit our final reply before nightfall.

Y. (Loudly) Reply to us only whether our terms are acceptable  
to you or not. Things have to be done swiftly as we are ready  
to resume firing in the evening.

P. Would you please wait until you formally file into  
Singapore?

Y. It is impossible. In the first place why not disarm all the  
British troops here leaving only about 1000 armed gendarmes for  
maintaining peace?

In the second place, under no circumstances can we tolerate  
further British resistance.

P. One of your terms handed to us demanded that we turn over  
certain representatives of the Chungking regime to you. Their  
names are not clear to us.

Y. By that we mean that you arrest and turn over to us Ching  
Kam Ming one of the Chinese liaison men.

P. I ask that the Nippon Army reciprocate with us in  
discontinuing attack.

Y. Agreed. What has become of the Nippon citizens in  
Singapore?

P. They have all been transferred to India. We do not know  
exactly where. The British Troops would like to cease fire at  
1130 p.m.

Y. That is too late. By 1100 p.m. we shall place part of our  
army in Singapore proper.

P. Unless you allow us to 11:30 p.m. I fear that I shall not  
be able to transmit the order to all my troops.

Y. Then 11.30 p.m. will do.



P. Please do not allow the Nippon Army to enter Singapore until tomorrow.

Y. Why not assemble all your arms immediately in the heart of Singapore so that our Army can check them ?

P. Why not let us arrange that tomorrow morning ?

Y. It is a matter we can arrange as a side issue.

P. Even 11.00 p.m. is a little late for all troops to cease fire. Why not let them cease hostilities in their present positions. ?

Y. In that case we shall continue firing until 11.30 p.m. I would advise you to order cessation of hostilities immediately.

P. I shall see that they cease firing immediately I return to my H.Q., and see that firing ceases by 11.30 p.m.. In the city area the firing will cease immediately and in the distant areas not later than 11.30 p.m.

Y. As proof of your good faith we shall hold the Highest British Commanders and the Governor of the Straits Settlements in custody at our Headquarters. ( A look of amazement was noticed on General Percival's face)

P. Cannot the Nippon Army remain in its present positions so that we may resume negotiations again tomorrow at 7.00 a.m. ?

Y.

What! I want the hostilities to cease tonight and I want to remind you that the question is strictly a matter of this. If you can discontinue resistance by 11.30 p.m. we shall hold the Highest Commander and the Governor of the Straits Settlements in our custody. If you cannot do it, the Highest Commander and the Governor must come to our H.Q. by 10.00 p.m.

P. We shall discontinue firing at 10.00 p.m. Nippon Time, had we better remain in our present positions tonight ?

Y. Speaking on the whole see that your troops remain in their positions and assemble tonight, disarm, at the prescribed places. I approve of the cessation of hostilities at 10.00 p.m. After we have finished firing all the British troops should disarm themselves save 1,000 men whom we shall permit to carry arms to maintain order. You have agreed to the terms, but you have not yet made yourself clear as to whether you have agreed to unconditional surrender or not.

( General Percival with bowed head and in a faint voice gave his consent. It was 7.40 p.m.)

Y. If you have accepted our terms I would like to hear them from your own lips once more.

P. The British troops will cease hostilities not later than 10.00 p.m. Nippon Time.

Y. The British troops shall disarm themselves completely, except 1,000 men whom the Imperial Army will allow to carry arms in order to obtain peace and order. If your troops infringe upon these terms the Imperial Japanese Army will resume hostilities immediately.

P. I agree. I have a request to make. Will the Imperial Army protect the women and children and the British civilians, men, women and children?

Y. We shall see to it. Please sign this truce agreement.

The Commander of the surrendered British Garrison affixed his signature at 7.50 p.m., on the 15th February, 1942.

-X-



Commander 3rd Ind Corps,  
A.I.F.  
Southern Area.

I attach a copy of an order which I have received from the C in C South Western Pacific Command. General Sir Archibald P. Wavell, CCB, CMG, MC.

The gist of the order is to be conveyed to all Ranks through the medium of the Commanding Officer. In some units the troops have not shown the fighting spirit which is expected of men of the British Empire. It will be a lasting disgrace if we are defeated by an Army of clever gangsters, many times inferior to our own in numbers. The spirit of aggression and determination to stick it out must be inculcated in all ranks. There must be no thought of withdrawal without orders.

There are too many fighting men moving about in back areas. Every available man who is not doing essential work must be used to stop these invaders.

(Signed) A.E. Percival. Lieut-Gen.  
Commanding Officer Cndg Malaya.

Advance HQ.  
Malaya Command.  
11. Feb. 42.

COPIES OF  
SPECIAL ORDERS OF THE  
DAY

~~-X-X-X-X-X-X-X-X-X-X-X-~~

1. General A.P.W. Wavell, Commander in Chief  
South Western Pacific.
2. Lieut. General A.E. Percival, General Officer  
Commanding, Malaya Command.
3. Major General F. Keith Simmons, General Officer  
Commanding, Southern Area.
4. Major General M.B. Beckwith Smith, General  
Officer Commanding, 18th Division.
- 5.
- 6.
- 7.
- 8.

~~-X-X-X-X-X-X-X-X-X-X-X-X-X-X-X-X-X-~~

Commander 5 Indian Corps.  
Commander, A.I.F.  
Commander, Southern Area.  
"A", "Q", C.A.A.D. B.R.A. C.E. C.S.O. D.D.S.T.  
D.D.M.S. D.D.O.S. D.P.M.

G.5.

You have done well. I leave the  
decision to unit Commanders.

(Signed) A.P.W. Wavell.

General.  
Commander in Chief, South Western Pacific.

15. Feb. 42.

*Further  
writing  
←  
doubtful as to conclusion*

IMMEDIATE.

Cmd. 3 Indian Corps.	B.R.A.
Cmd. Southern Area.	C.E.
Cmd. A.I.F.	C.S.O.
"A"	D.D.S.T.
"Q"	D.D.M.S.
C.A.A.D.	D.D.O.S.
D.P.M.	G (1)
Staff Message Control.	

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It has been necessary to give up the struggle but I want the reason explained to all ranks. The forward troops continue to hold their ground but the essentials of war have run short. In a few days we shall have neither petrol or food. Many types of ammunition are short and the water supply, on which the vast civilian population~~xxx~~ and many of the fighting troops are dependant, threatens to fail. This situation has been brought about partly by hostile air and artillery action and partly by being driven off our dumps. Without these sinews of war we cannot carry on.

I thank all Ranks for their efforts throughout this campaign.

'Signed) A.E. Percival.

Lieut. General.  
General Officer Commanding, Malaya Command.

"G" (Ops)  
15. Feb. 42.

To:-	
C.F.D.	OC SA Signals.
1 MIB.	Cmdt SSVF.
2 MIB.	OC RASC (SA).
12 IIB.	ADMS. (SA).
OC 122 Army Fd Rgt.	ADOS. (SA)
OC 16 Def Regt RA.	DAPM.
OC SA RE.	GA Fort Canning.

From:- H.Q. Southern Area. 0.9. 15. Feb.

After weeks of anxious and steadfast watching you have taken your turn in the fighting on Singapore Island. Some of you have previously done your part most gallantly on the mainland. Throughout the operations on Singapore Island, I can only thank you for your gallant efforts to stem the attack. You have had little support from the air, you have been outnumbered and out-gunned. Notwithstanding this you have borne yourselves magnificently. Remember this, in your hour of trial, you have done your part, your best, and have no need to blame yourselves. Keep your spirit up. Good times will come again.

(Signed) F. Keith Simmons.  
Major General.  
Commander, Southern Area.



CRA.	18 Bn Recce. Corps.
CRE.	CRASC.
18. Div Signals.	ADMS.
53 Inf Bde.	ADOS.
54 " "	Pro.
55 " "	FSS.
9 RNF.	Postal.

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No Commander has lead a happier and more loyal team into a battle. The Division was sent into a theatre of war for which it was neither trained or equiped, to fight a cunning and clever enemy who was on the crest of the wave. It was sent to fight a battle which was already lost and had to pass through troops whose morale had been badly shaken. It had to endure long periods of hardship without food or rest, yet it fought with great courage and tenacity, inflicting heavy losses on the enemy. Every man can, and I know he will rightly hold his head high, knowing that he has upheld the best traditions of the British Army.

During the 18 months I have been privileged to command the Division, at home and overseas, it has carried out every varied and exacting task it has been called upon to undertake, and now I can only dedicate the rest of my life to help in every way the Officers, W.Os and Men of the 18th Division.

God Bless you all and bring you safely home when victory is finally ours, with the knowledge that you have played your part in its achievement.

(Signed) Beckwith Smith.  
G.O.C. 18th Division.

15. Feb. 1942.

Special Order of the Day by

Lt. Gen. Sir Lewis M. Heath. K.B.E. C.B. C.I.E. D.S.O. M.C.  
Commander, 3rd, Indian Corps.

-X-

3rd. Ind. Cps. Signals is now to be disbanded after two months of most active and strenuous operations during the course of which all ranks of Cps Sigs., have had to face peculiarly great difficulties which they have never failed to surmount.

I wish to place on record my high appreciation of the manner in which all ranks of the R. Cps. Sigs., with H.Q. 3rd Ind. Cps., have responded to the heavy demands and to congratulate them upon the skilful and cheerful manner in which they have performed their multifarious tasks.

Officers and other ranks will now be employed in other spheres of activity and will, I know, continue to render the same unremitting unselfish service.

Good luck to you all.

(Signed) L.M. Heath. Lt. Gen.  
3rd Ind. Corps.

9. Feb. 42.

-X-

Special Order of The Day By.

Maj-Gen. Keys.

Commanding 11 th Indian Division.

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This one of the last messages I shall have the privilege of addressing to Units of the 11th Ind. Div.

The Division has been thro' an ordeal such as few if any of the formations of the British and Indian Armies have ever faced.

After two and a half months of heavy and incessant fighting without relief or rest , the Division has maintained its part intact in the final Battle of Singapore.

During this period our casualties have been heavy but on all occasions Units have responded to the repeated demands made on them with the finest spirit. You are all faced with a very difficult and trying period.

I am confident that your bearing and discipline in the time to come will be worthy of the best traditions of the units you represent.

(Signed)

Keys. Maj. Gen.  
Commanding, 11th Ind Division.

Malaya.  
15. Feb. 42.

-X-X-X-X-X-X-X-X-X-X-X-X-X-X-X-X-X-X-X-

COPY OF AN ADDRESS  
GIVEN BY

MAJOR-GENERAL SHIMPEYE FUKUE

NIPPON COMMANDER OF

NO.1. PRISONER OF WAR CAMP, MALAYA.

-X-X-X-X-X-X-X-X-X-X-X-X-X-X-

I am the General Officer Commanding this P.O.W. Camp. I proclaim from this day forward I am going to treat you according to the Regulations for Prisoners of War laid down by the Great Japanese Empire and the Great Japanese Army.

I think I will be kind and generous to you as far as regulations permit. I hope every one of you will be faithfully obedient to what is given to you by the Staff of my office and all in charge of it.

July 42.

SPECIAL SELERANG ORDER  
BY  
COL. E.B. HOLMES.

Commander, British and A.I.F. Troops, Changi,  
P.O.W. CAMP.

-X-X-X-X-X-X-X-X-X-X-X-X-X-X-X-

The Commander, British and A.I.F. Troops, Changi P.O.W. Camp, congratulates all Officers and Men of the Forces now here, on the splendid manner in which yesterdays difficult move was carried out, and the cheerfulness and the good discipline being shown by all ranks in our present difficult circumstances.

The Commander, Changi, wishes everyone to realise that he is making continuous efforts to obtain an honourable settlement with the Japanese, by which the present conditions can be brought to an end. Meanwhile he knows that he can rely on all ranks to continue to display the fine example shown yesterday.

Changi  
3. Sept. 42.

H.Q. Malaya Command.

COPY.

S E L E R A N G  
S P E C I A L O R D E R. No.1.  
by  
Colonel E.B. Holmes. M.C.

-X-X-X-X-X-X-X-X-X-X-X-X-X-

1. The requirement by the Imperial Japanese Army, issued under their order No.17 dated 31 August 1942 that all ranks of the P.O.W. Camp, Changi, should be given the opportunity to sign a Certificate of promise not to escape, has now been amended in a revised Imperial Japanese Army Order No.17. dated 2nd September, 1942, to a definite order that all Officers, N.C.Os and Men of the P.O.W. Camp shall sign this undertaking.
2. I therefore now order that these certificates will be signed by all ranks, and handed by Area Commanders to Command Headquarters by 1100 hrs on the 5th September, 1942.
3. The circumstances in which I have been compelled to issue this order will be made the subject of Selerang Special Order No. 3. which will be issued later.

(Signed)

E.B. Holmes.

Colonel.

Selerang.

4. Sep. 42.

Commanding British and Australian Troops.

SELERANG SPECIAL ORDER No. 3.

4th Sept. 42.

-X-X-X-X-X-X-X-X-X-X-X-X-X-X-X-X-X-

1. On the 30th August 1942, I, together with my Area Commanders was summoned to the Conference House Changi Gaol, where I was informed by the representative of Major General Shimpei Fukuye, G.O.C. Prisoner of War Camps, Malaya, that all Prisoners of War in Changi Camp were to be given forms of promise not to escape and that all were to be given an opportunity to sign this form.
2. By the Laws and Usages of war, a prisoner of war cannot be required by the power holding him to give his parole, and in our Army, those who have become prisoners of war are not permitted to give their parole. I pointed out this position to the Japanese authorities.
3. I informed the representative of Major General Shimpei Fukuye that I was not prepared to sign the form and that I did not consider that any Officers or Men in the Changi Camp would be prepared to sign. In accordance with the orders of the Japanese Authorities, all prisoners of war were given an opportunity to sign. The result of that opportunity is well known.
4. On the 31st August I was informed by the Japanese Authorities that those personnel who refused to sign the Certificate would be subjected to "measures of severity" and that a refusal to sign would be regarded as a direct refusal to obey a regulation which the Imperial Japanese Army considered it necessary to enforce.
5. Later, on the night of 1st, 2nd, I was warned that on the 2nd September all prisoners of war persisting in refusal to sign were to be moved by 1800 hrs to Selarang Barrack Square. I confirmed both on my own behalf, and in the name of the prisoners of war, our refusal to sign.
6. The move to Selarang Barrack Square was successfully accomplished on the same afternoon.
7. I and the Area Commanders have been in constant conference with the Japanese Authorities and have endeavoured by negotiation to have the form either abolished or at least modified.

Copy of Selarang Order 11/A dated 4th September 1942.

Reference SELERANG Special Order No.3. Dated  
4. Sep. 1942.

My attention has been drawn to some concern which is being felt that there may be adverse financial consequences on individuals as the result of the signing of the non-escape certificates.

It is obviously impossible for me to give a ruling in this matter, which must rest in other hands than mine. I wish, however, all ranks to be informed that this point had my full consideration at the time of the decision, and I am convinced that no such ~~xxx~~ adverse consequences on pay, pension or allowances will result to any individual. It will naturally be my first endeavour, also, to ensure on release that the position is made clear to His Majesty's Government.

(Signed) E.B. HOLMES. COLONEL.  
Commanding British and Australian Troops Changi.

Changi.  
4th Sep. 1942.



THE FOLLOWING IS AN EXACT COPY  
OF THE "NON-ESCAPE" FORM WHICH  
THE I.J.A. EXPECTED ALL P.O.Ws  
TO SIGN AND WHICH LED UP TO  
THE " SELERANG INCIDENT"

-X-X-X-X-X-X-X-X-X-X-X-X-X-X-X-

No.....I, the undersigned, hereby solemnly  
swear on my honour that I will not,  
under any circumstances attempt  
escape.

NATIONALITY.....

RANK.....

SIGNED.....

DATED.....AT.....

XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX

## "THE SELERANG INCIDENT".

On the 30th August, 1942, information was given to all ranks in the P.O.W. Camp that the I.J.A. had issued a non-escape certificate, and had ordered that all should sign it. The Commander, British and Australian Forces, P.O.W. Camp, Lt. Col. E. B. Holmes, M.C. stated that on behalf of himself and all officers and men, he had refused to sign. The I.J.A. then demanded that all ranks be given the opportunity to sign and intimated that those who did not, would be subjected to measures of severity: the forms duly signed were to be given to them by 1200 hours 31st August.

This information was conveyed to all ranks with the result that four private soldiers signed in the face of this threat, out of a total of 19,023 all ranks in the Camp. A warning was received from the I.J.A. that those who persisted in refusing to sign would move by 1800 hours 2nd September to Selarang Square. The warning was made known to the troops but all decided to follow the Commander and again refused to sign.

At 1200 hours Wednesday 2nd September, the four signed forms were duly handed to the I.J.A. at the Supervising Office with the result that the Commander was told that all P.O.W. in the Camp, less Hospital Patients and Staff and the four men who had signed, were to move to Selarang Square by 1800 hours that day. This order was given to the Area Commanders and the trek began at 1400 hours.

Southern Area which was the most distant from Selarang, had to go approximately two miles which included two very steep hills. 18 Div. and 11th Div. Areas were closer whilst the Australians were accommodated in the Selarang Area and were thus actually on the spot. The only persons left were the four who had signed.

Two first class metalled roads connected the Areas with Selarang these were soon covered with troops on the move whilst teams were pulling and pushing trailers, handcarts, wheelbarrows and other forms of conveyance, which were piled tremendously and dangerously high with rations, cooking stoves, wood fuel, utensils and bedding. It was pathetic to see the lads just managing to get along, lads who were Beri-Beri cases; amputation cases struggling along on crutches, and others who for various reasons could only just walk, but all determined to get there somehow. Many men took four hours to cover 1-2 miles.

The spirit of all was wonderful, men straining to get heavily laden trailers to the top of a hill, would simply laugh and joke when at the top, others helping comrades along and all smiling and cracking jokes like 'Off to Brighton for the Week-end'.

It must be remembered that nobody knew what the Japanese intended to do with us when they had us concentrated, and thus the willingness of all ranks, healthy and sick, to follow the lead of the Commander, was a remarkable faith in the leader and of good discipline in extremely adverse circumstances.

The Barracks in which we were to be concentrated were completed in 1838 and were designed to accommodate one Battalion of British Infantry. The 2nd Bn. The Gordon Highlanders occupied the Barracks from 1938 - 1941.

There were seven Barrack Blocks and a big Central Cookhouse. Each Block was of three floors with a flat roof, the ground floor of each being used as offices and storerooms etc., or mess rooms. Each floor used as sleeping quarters accommodated forty four men making a total of 88 for each block. Each block was large and airy with the usual toilet facilities and showers on each floor, the ground measurement of each block being 150 ft. X 60 ft. which included the verandahs, staircases etc., The whole area of the barrack site, the concentration area, was 230 yds X 163 yds. Bounding the barrack area was a road but in front of this was a storm drain measuring about 3 ft across and about 3 ft. deep. It was absolutely forbidden for any rank to step across this drain.

All had to be in the area by 1800 hours and by this hour all had managed to arrive and squeeze in, a total of 15019 souls. The blocks and square had been divided according to the numbers of the various areas. The square itself was an amazing sight, as it was estimated that 60% of the total would have to live on it. Each block had to accommodate 1,800 and these used every available inch of space including the flat roofs, stairways, verandahs etc. A space, approximately 60 yds X 10 yds, was left in the centre of the square, this being for the use of latrines. The toilets in the blocks could not be used as the water had been cut off. In fact throughout our enforced stay, the water situation was very acute, only three points being provided of one tap each until the third day when another point was added, making a total of four taps for 15,000 men. The use of water for washing and shaving was strictly forbidden, but the men managed to wash and shave somehow. The average ration was less than one gallon per man per day which was all needed in the preparation and cooking of food and for tea.

As the various groups and units entered the square the trailers were off loaded and the cooks became busy putting up their stoves and making preparations for the evening meal. This consisted of just plain boiled rice, practically the only food we got during our incarceration.

Men were busy trying to make themselves little shelters against the sun whilst others were starting to work, digging the latrines. This work did not cease but was carried out night and day, first owing to the extreme urgency and second, to the terribly tough ground. The asphalt had first to be picked away and under this was 'Laterite' a type of rock which was very hard to remove with the inadequate tools available. Coupled with this, the ground itself was extremely unsuitable for latrines (no seepage) and shortly after being used and awful was with us for good. Imagine food being cooked and men living within a few yards of this?.

Yet nothing daunted the ~~spirit~~ spirits of the men and all were very cheerful, a fact which greatly encouraged our Commander during his continuous with the I.J.A. As darkness fell on the first night, an impromptu was arranged on the square, a brave effort which included community singing of many old favourites and patriotic songs, and finished with the National Anthem.

PART. 11.

## PART I.

### The period of tension with Japan and our preparations for war.

The period of tension goes back for a great number of years. In 1921 we decided to sever our relations with Japan and from this time tension became acute. The aims Britain and Japan particularly concerning China had become antagonistic. Our aims coincided with those of America and Canada. In 1922 the Washington Treaty laid down the Naval Ratio of 5.5.3. for capital ships. Japan signed this treaty, but was clever enough to insert a clause denying America and Great Britain the privilege of making a first class Naval Base within striking distance of Japan. The result of this clause placed Hong-Kong and the Philippines at the mercy of Japan. In the following year, 1923, we decided to build at Singapore a first class Naval Base. It is not unlikely that from that very time Japan had her eye on the prospect of securing Malaya and Singapore. In many quarters doubts then existed as to the wisdom of the choice of our number one Naval Base in the Pacific at the Gateway to the Indian and Pacific Oceans; everything appeared to depend upon the mainland of Malaya remaining in our hands. Nevertheless vast sums of money were voted to make its defenses impregnable. Work on the construction of this base ceased during the Labour Government's term of office in 1930-31 as a token of good faith to encourage peace among all nations and naturally enough at Japan's special request. In another clause of the Washington Treaty which was signed by the nine powers, all agreed to desist from aggression in China. For nine years following the Washington Conference Japan had remained quiet, but had produced a very fast mercantile fleet. In 1931 Japan took advantage of the world-wide crisis to walk into Manchuria to strengthen her position vis-a-vis Russia. In 1934 when Hitler was coming into power, she abrogated the Washington Treaty when she expanded her navy and started to build capital ships of 43,000 tons. Later, in 1936, she decided on further expansion into Mongolia to sever North China. About that time we learned that there was a very strong feeling in the Japanese Admiralty that the southern expansion policy was going to pay Japan more than any other. At the same time it was clear to our Admiralty that although we had gone a long way in the building of our Naval Base in Singapore, we were not going to have naval parity there if we were involved in a war in Europe and Japan invariably chose to embark upon a policy of aggression when her victims were engaged elsewhere. It was, in fact, obvious that if we were engaged elsewhere, only a very small fleet would be available for the Pacific and the defense of Malaya and Singapore would devolve upon the Royal Air Force.

In 1938 therefore, but not before, the Air Officer Commanding Far East, was told to submit plans for the defense of Malaya by the R.A.F. This he did without reference to and contrary to the wishes of the Army authorities. There was already an existing landing ground at Kota Bahru and it was decided to make it into a first class aerodrome and to construct another at Gong Kedah at a third at Maching. There was also an aerodrome at Aloa Star which was not up to the requirements of modern aircraft, another at Sungei Patani and a sixth at Butterworth. We also decided to build three aerodromes across the North of Johore at Kahang, Kluang and Batu Pahat, and another at Kuantan on the east coast of Pahang.

It was decided to improve the existing the civil aerodromes in Taiping, Ipoh and Kuala Lumpur. There was an aerodrome in Penang: in Singapore there were three; the civil airport, Tengah and Sembawang. In addition we had an aircraft and seaplane at Seletar near the Naval Base :

It was obviously undesirable to have aerodromes in vulnerable places within five or six miles of the East and West coasts of Malaya and fairly close to the Thai Border. It was also obvious that the Army would have to defend these aerodromes and this proposed siting would inevitably effect wide dispersal of ground troops for their defense. Nevertheless the Air Ministry recommendations were accepted and the R.A.F. firmly believed that war with Japan could be won by independent air action. Their appreciation was not only wrong, but the dispersion of the aerodromes complicated their defense by fighter aircraft because a wing of fighters was unable to protect a group of aerodromes.

At that time, 1938, the Military forces in Malaya consisted of three British Battalions, one Indian Infantry Battalion, four Battalions of the F.M.S.V.F. (Selangor, Perak, Pahang and Negri Sembilan) and the Atraits Settlements Battalions consisting of the Singapore V.F., the Malacca V.F. and the Penang and Province Wellesley V.F. To these must be added the Johore Volunteer Engineers, the Kedah V.F. and the Kelantan V.F. of the unfederated Malay States. There were also two regular Battalions of the Malay Regiment and the Johore Military Forces. Military reinforcements began to arrive in August 1939, with Force "EMU" a Brigade and attached Troops from India. In August 1940, troops were evacuated from Shanghai, the Seaforths and the East Surreys disembarking at Singapore. The former left soon after for an unknown destination. During October and November 1940, the 11th Infantry Division (of only two Brigades) arrived from India. This division was followed in the spring of 1941 by the 9th Infantry Indian Division, (of two Brigades) and an Australian Division also of only two Brigades. At the same time 3rd Corps was established ~~xxx~~ at Kuala Lumpur. Sir Robert Brooke Popham had taken over the Far East Command at the end of 1940, but it was not an executive command. Burma was at this time in a more parlous state than Malaya. General Wavell was horrified at what he found in Burma, which he considered most important from an Empire point of view, that he was anxious to get that country back under his command in India. General Wavell said that he had been given many a 'baby to hold' but never before quadruplets.

The Dutch realised that they stood or fell with us and promised us four air squadrons provided that they were not engaged elsewhere. America declared her willingness to help but said that she could not afford to send any capital ships.

When General Percival took over the appointment of G.O.C. Malaya in 1941, he immediately allotted areas of responsibility. 3rd Corps were allotted the defense of Malaya north of Johore and Malacca: the defense of Johore was allotted to the Australians. The fortress of Singapore was defended by two Brigades and the Singapore Volunteer Corps. At Penang the Penang Battalion of the Volunteers and one Indian Battalion comprised the garrison for the defense of the entire Island.

The two Indian Divisions were now disposed as follows:- 9 Div was made responsible for the defense of North East Malaya. In Kelantan at Kota Bahru, the 8th Brigade was allotted 60 miles of front, of which 30 miles was made up of coast line of 10 miles of river bank.

Later this Brigade received an additional Battalion at the expense of the 22nd Brigade at Kuantan, who were then left with only two Battalions. The Kuantan seafront was also very long and with river front behind made a very heavy call upon the two Battalions available for its defense. There was also the threat of the enemy approaching through Trengganu from the North and enveloping the main defenses of this Theatre. The 11st Div: was concentrated in Kedah. On war being declared with Japan, the plan was that this division should advance into Thailand and seize Singora and Patani in accordance with a plan known by the coded name of "matador", with alternative of holding the Jitra line in Kedah which was 17 miles wide and sited in padi, rubber and jungle country. It was assumed that we would have air superiority which was a great miscalculation.

In planning for the conquest of Malaya the Japanese bore in mind that Malaya was a very long way from the shores of Japan. The distance in round figures are 3,000 miles from Japan and 2,000 from Formosa. They realised the necessity of an intermediate stopping place and therefore selected Indo-China. They also realised from the outset that to give their forces success the provision of adequate air support was absolutely necessary. They were able to produce fighter aircraft which could fly over the width of the China Sea and still be 100% effective over Malaya. This was rendered possible by means of the "Belly" tank which was merely a subsidiary fuel tank for the use by the aircraft on the outward journey. On arrival over Malaya, by pressing a button the "Belly" tank was discarded as soon as the plane was called upon for action, thereby lightening the load and making it more manoeuvrable. This was one of the first of many Japanese surprises in the Malayan Campaign. On the other hand these fighter aircraft so equipped were unable to make the return journey to Indo-China bases. They therefore decided that they must have landing grounds in Thailand. They then entered into a secret alliance with Thailand and that secret was a great element of surprise. This element of surprise played a big part in the success of the Japanese, they are naturally secretive and naturally suspicious.

The Japanese solved the problem of their lines of communications back to Japan by forcing the Thais to make war on French Indo-China in order to capture a 50 mile gap in the railway system between Bangkok, and Mongkolboori. This would provide the Japanese, when the time was ripe, with a land route from Malaya to Saigon and thence over the sea to Japan instead of having to rely entirely upon sea communications between different parts of the East Coast of Malaya.

In 1941, Japan, in July, having made her preparations sort to provide herself with forward bases in French Indo-China. This country which Japan had selected as a half-way house between Japan and Malaya, was at this time rendered particularly vulnerable to outside pressure or attack by the collapse of France. Here the Japanese ~~the~~ quickly embarked upon a programme of aerodrome construction and the modernising of existing aerodromes.

Right up to the outbreak of war with Japan, those in authority had not believed that Japan's southward expansion policy would materialize. Even when Japan invaded Indo China there was a strong school of thought that she was only endeavouring to improve her position vis-a-vis General Chiang Kai Chek in China. It was however a very serious threat to Malaya.

The Malayan position was therefore again reviewed and before the end of July a demand was sent to the War Office for the following troops. It was required that 3rd Corps should be brought up to 9 Bdes instead of the existing 4, the Australians to be brought up to a full Div of 3 Bdes ( instead of the existing 2) and Singapore Fortress to have 3 Bdes ( instead of the existing 2). One additional Div of 3 Bdes was also required to be available as the Command Reserve. In addition, and, this was most important, was the demand for a Tank Regiment. In view of the inability of so many bridges in Malaya to withstand the weight of the "L" Tank, Medium tanks were asked for and a limitation of 14 tons had to be imposed. These reinforcements were not received in time and the artillery for the 9th and 11th Divs, together with the 3rd Bde of the 11th Div only arrived at the end of November 1941. The R.A.F. had just over half of their requirements and 50% of these were either obsolete or obsolescent types such as Wildebeestes, Wirraways and Swordfish. We had a small number of the American Buffalo fighters of which much was expected, but it had not the speed of the Hurricane. A defect in the cannon of the Buffalo fighter which was subject to jamming, must have been very unnerving to our pilots. The original and minimum figure of requirements was 368 first aircraft. The R.A.F. were always very confident and optimistic concerning the damage they could inflict on any enemy convoy approaching the coasts of Malaya; they put the estimate as high as 40%. Actually when the time came, they did not sink 1/80th of the ships that approached Malayan shores within the first ten days of the war. One ship was set on fire and sunk off Kota Bahru, but this ship was also claimed by the Mountain Battery which was operating close to the beaches.

PART 11.

The Narrative of Events in the Malayan Campaign.

At the end of November 1941, tension with the Japanese became acute. It was then that the Japanese made their intentions very clear. Shortly before war broke out, several reports were received of Japanese aircraft making reconnaissance flights of 20,000 feet or more over the Malayan-Thailand border. During one of these reconnaissance flights a portion of a Japanese camera fell out of a plane on to the Taiping aerodrome. On December 1st Malaya woke up to the fact that war was imminent and on the same day the Volunteer Forces were mobilised. On that date too, an air reconnaissance of six aircraft flying 15 miles apart flew to Cape Cambodia., a rather thin reconnaissance. On Dec. 6th this reconnaissance spotted a convoy and escort ships South East of Cambodia consisting of 40 transports, a battleship, cruisers and destroyers. Behind the convoy was another smaller one. It was heading for Singora in Thailand, but had not rounded Cape Cambodia.



This did not however, give the Home Government grounds for thinking that the neutrality of Thailand was going to be violated and plan ~~XXX~~ "Matador" was still held in obedience. The next day two Catalonia Flying Boats went out to shadow the convoy but never returned.

From 5 Dec 41, 11 Div was at four hours notice to occupy Singgora. The British Government had laid down that entry into Thailand was only to be made if (1) Thailand requested it, or, (2) Thai neutrality had first been violated by the Japanese. These conditions meant that we were forced to wait until Dec 8 when the Japanese struck, by which time it was too late. There had been a strong feeling that the Thais would be our Allies and both the British Minister at Bangkok and the Naval representative at GHQ had been very optimistic. Gen. Heath himself never for one moment believed that the Thais would invite us to enter Thailand nor that the Thais would even remain neutral.

First shots were exchanged at 3 am. on 8 Dec 41 off Kota Bahru. The Japanese also landed at Singgora and Patani in Thailand. It was now too late to put our original plan into operation and the 11 Div was ordered to occupy the Jitga position. At 4 am. the same day the treacherous raid on Pearl Harbour and on Honolulu commenced.

At Kota Bahru the beaches were held by two bns and one coy of a third bn in pillboxes, one thousand yards apart. Various streams divided the beach into ~~five~~ five mile sections. The Japanese landed where a creek led up to the aerodrome and it appears that they were guided by lights sent up by a Chinese smuggler. This man had been suspected for some time and the military had asked the civil police to remove him but the civil authorities claimed that there was insufficient evidence for them to take action. By 3 hrs after dawn, two pillboxes had been captured. Our arty had unfortunately only arrived in Kelantan on Dec 6 and all we had there was a bty of 4.5 howitzers. A few 18 pounders and a mountain bty. When daylight came there was only one ship to be seen and that one was on fire, the others having taken shelter behind a group of islands where the RAF apparently failed to locate them. A remarkable feature of the attack was the high degree of air support. Our plans had not catered for shore based bombers protected by fighters from French Indo China which were fitted with belly tanks, making them 100% effective over Malaya. Kota Bahru aerodrome was vacated by the RAF on the afternoon of Dec 8. We had very few aircraft in Gong Kedah and the third aerodrome at Maching was not yet in use. By Dec 11 the enem had captured two of our aerodromes making it useless to attempt to save the third. 8th. Bde was therefore withdrawn by stages from Kelantan by the rly which runs from Kuala Krai to Kuala Lippis, this, in the absence of any road, being the only means of egress from the State. The evacuation was carried out without incurring heavy losses in men vehicles and stores, which under the circumstances was a remarkable achievement. The withdrawal was completed by Dec 19.

Things did not go well in Kelantan and we had our first taste of the skilful way in which the Japanese can fight in the jungle country. From daylight enemy aircraft were amazingly active and accurate in their bombing. Their fighters were infinitely superior to anything that we had expected.

At 1530 hrs on 8 Dec, the order was given for one bn (5/16 Punjab) to adv across the Thai border from Kroh and seize a position known as the "Ledge" which formed part of the original plan "Matador". The Ledge was a stretch of road winding along the Patani River the demolition of which would have delayed the enemy for a number of days. Shortly after crossing the frontier one of our leading scouts was shot dead by a Thai sentry, and resistance was offered by about 50 Thai gendarmes armed with LMGs. This resistance had obviously been inspired by Japanese leadership. By 1900 hrs our tps had adv nearly five kilos into Thailand. On the following day resistance stiffened but later it ceased altogether and white flags were in evidence. The bn was therefore embussed in lorries of an Aust. MT unit and conveyed towards Patani. Near the 53rd kilometre, beyond the Kampong of Bwtong, the Japanese were encountered and at the 57th kilometre, having sent the MT back, the bn ran into a col of medium tanks. The Japanese adv from Patani had been very rapid indeed. Our tps let the tanks pass thro' and then attacked the MT following behind. Unfortunately, there were more tanks behind the MT and out of the coy of our men engaged only 1 eight got away. A second coy later became surrounded and only 12 men of this coy escaped. This bn therefore fell back on Kroh, passing thro' the 5/14 Punjab, and supported by a mountain bty which had been sent up to assist the retirement. A small col consisting of half a bn with some A/Tk guns set off along the Singgora Road on Dec 8 for delaying action. They only got as far as Ban Sadao by nightfall. There on the dark road they encountered 35 pairs of headlights and in the action which followed succeeded in knocking out 3 tanks with their anti tank guns. This col got back to Chang Lun in good order, blowing bridges on the way. They delayed the Japanese 24 hrs in the adv to the frontier. The tps took a position S of the bridge at Chang Lun but failed to blow it. Later when they wanted to blow it the bridge did not go up. Others went off gloriously when not wanted to. On the 11 Dec 41 the Japanese put in attack with 16 tanks as a result of a bridge demolition failure and these were quickly backed up with infantry which had a demoralizing effect on our tired tps. The Battle of Jitra began on 12 Dec 41. The Japanese displayed great thoroughness in this battle. They attacked the right where the wiring had not been completed. The position had not been wired before the outbreak of war in order to avoid indicating the defences to enemy agents, the military's request for the removal of all Japanese subjects having been turned down by the Civilian authorities. We were well defeated at Jitra because we failed to take proper precautions, when we knew the enemy to have tanks.

General Murray-Lyon would have it that his troops were all keyed up for the Matador operation in Thailand and his troops were therefore unprepared for this withdrawal operation. At 2030 hours on the 12th he was given discretionary powers to fall back on to the Gurun position. During this withdrawal there many mishaps. There had been troops on the Frontier at Padang Besar and in Perlis. When these troops arrived 13 kilometres from Alor Star they found an important bridge had been blown against them. They were cut off with anti-tank guns and all their transport, and moreover, they were fired on by our troops. The Jitra position extended down the coastline and west of the main road, the only lines of withdrawal being by the railway and the very difficult route along the coast. When withdrawal was ordered, the troops west of the road found that a large railway bridge had been demolished and the nature of the obstacle and the flooded condition of the country was such that the only possible lines of withdrawal were along the canal banks running to the coast. On reaching the coast the more fortunate found sampans and paddled down the coast to Penang or Prai. Others had no choice but to flounder along through the coastal swamps for 40 or more miles before they reached good going. The full details of the battle cover many hours of talking and it will be an interesting battle to study in the future. The outcome of it was that General Murray-Lyon got back to Gurun with only half of his Division.

The Gurun position had not been prepared. We had hoped, when we pulled out of Jitra, that the enemy would not be able to come to grips with us within 24 hours. We had not calculated on the skill of the Japanese Engineers. They made it possible for the tanks to cross a gap only four hours after a bridge had been blown and one or two bridges were over one hundred yards in length.

A certain demolition failed while another exploded prematurely. By evening of the 14th our guns were engaging the enemy tanks north of Gurun. The Japanese attacked the Gurun position on December 15th and in the evening of this day a party of their forward elements infiltrated through the lines to the H.Q. of the 6th Bde where a conference was in progress. Of all the Officers and other ranks present at the conference, only the Brigadier escaped. Things did not go well at Gurun and 6th Bde suffered heavily in casualties. We had already lost Kroh and ~~through~~ though the eastern flank of 11th Div was for the moment secure (the 12th Bde, Malaya Command Reserve) having just reinforced and absorbed the little force which had advanced into Thailand along the Patani road on December 8th) there were no grounds for complacency as to the adequacy of measures to safeguard the Kula I Kangsar bottle neck for the Japanese had already overcome the difficulties of the road and had arrived at Grik. General Murray-Lyon was therefore ordered to withdraw to the Krian River. This meant that Penang would become isolated and orders for the evacuation of Penang on the night 16/17 December were therefore issued.

The Japanese airforce meanwhile had been far from idle. They were able to operate from 4 aerodromes in southern Thailand which had been improved in late November and early December. The attacks were usually carried out by 27 aircraft protected by at least 27 fighters above them. Alor Star was raided on the 8th and 9th. At Sungei Patani which was also raided twice 9 Buffalos and 6 Blenheims were left derelict and this is a fair estimate of the destruction wrought on our

aircraft at other ~~xxxxxxxx~~ aerodromes. Penang and Butterworth aerodromes were also bombed. Jitra and the Kodiang road junction were also dealt likewise with. By the evening of the 12th we had no aircraft north of Ipoh. We had lost 57 of our original 45 aircraft north of Singapore, mostly on the ground. These aerodromes which had forced us into this undesirable country had all gone. On the North-East front the enemy were in great force and they continued to pester our troops in the Kota Bahru area, whereas in the North-West corner they concentrated entirely on aerodromes.

At Penang there was concentrated bombing on Georgetown and other targets. The Penang Harbour Board, Municipal services Police etc were all brought to a standstill. Evacuation was well carried out with one notable exception. It appears that 24 motor craft and also large number of tongkams were left behind in working order.

By 18th December we were back on the line of the Krian River. The enemy in the meantime had started being a nuisance up at Grik. By the 19th it was necessary to reinforce the coy of the Argylls and the armoured cars which were operating South of Kroh. 12 Bde was therefore ordered up, operating from Kuala Kangsar, and Brigadier Paris was given the role of stopping the threat to the Taiping-Ipoh road. The main enemy thrust thereafter came down this road. They never pressed us hard elsewhere. Nevertheless the Japanese captured Grik and came the road towards Kuala Kangsar and also down the Perak River on rafts. The bridges across the Perak River were demolished. As the road running parallel with the river was on the north bank, we retired across the river Perak by Imas. Reconnaissance parties were sent back looking for positions and a line at Kampar was decided upon. This line was in many ways the strongest in the country. It lay in the midst of tin mining and dredging country on the western side of a mountain running to 4000ft. It had, however, one grave weakness. There was a road which ran around and by-passed the position through the valley on the other side of the mountain. This entailed splitting the forces. Another weakness was foreseen, that the enemy might drift up the Perak river in boats or on rafts and come in from the direction of Telok Anson. The enemy had by this time gained command of the straits of Malacca as well as the China Sea, and with a vastly superior air force, their chances of turning the Corps position was doubled,

The Kampar line was manned by two Bdes which had two days preparations before the first brush with the enemy. Here heavy casualties were inflicted on the enemy and the British Bn of East Surreys and Leicesters combined, fought well. Within 24 hours of the bridges over the Perak river being blown, the enemy were again across with tanks and A.Vs. It was hoped to use our mobility and armoured cars in this country but the enemy produced bullets which penetrated our armoured cars and rendered ineffective our armoured mobility.

On January 4th the Kampar line was outflanked by sea and Bidor was threatened. With the use of the 24 motor boats and the large number of Chinese junks which had been left behind at Panang, the Japanese were able to come down the coast to Telok Anson where they seriously threatened our position at Kampar. 12th Bde was sent along the Telok Anson road but failed to hold the enemy in such indefensible country. We were forced to retire to Bidor. Between Trolok and the Slim river a defensive position was taken up where

road and railway passed through the narrow corridors which had been cut away in the jungle.

On January 5th the enemy were twice successfully ambushed by the Argylls, but on the 6th the Japanese surprised a platoon covering a light anti-tank obstacle, broke through and unfortunately caught one Bn moving back and another moving up and split both of them in two. The moral effect of this tank blitz was severe. there was terrible confusion and the tanks, 16 medium and some light ones burst right through the Bns of both 12th and 28th Bdes and cut off the line of withdrawal of those in the jungle defile. On reaching the Slim river they were finally held up by one 4.5" howitzer which opened fire on the leading tank at 200-300 yards range; this tank then blocked the bridge it was crossing at the time. Practically the whole of the 12 Bde was wpped out and the 28 Bde suffered almost as severely. The lessons of Jitra had not been assimilated.

A threat from the sea now developed at Kuala Selangor and reconnaissance went back as far as Segamat in search of a defensive position. It was now decided to form a line on the Muar River. 3 Corps hoped to have 6 Bdes for holding this line, including the newly arrived 45 Bde from India, but the losses at Slim had been so heavy that the Corps Commander could no longer consider either the 12th or 28th Bdes as a fighting concern, furthermore, it was vitally necessary that 11th Div should be given a rest and time for re-organization.

At this junction General Wavell paid us a visit as he always did when things were really bad. As a result of his visit a re-arrangement involving the Australians with a certain amount of risk from the Mersing Endau area on the East coast was made, and the 27th Australian Bde under the Command of Brigadier Maxwell was brought across to the Muar River.

On the East Coast, Kuantan did not receive a direct attack from the sea, the enemy coming down the beaches in lorries collected at Kelantan. This attack from the North was opposed East of the line of the river Kuantan, but the enemy then veered inland, crossing the river unopposed well to the north of our defences. They then came in behind Kuantan on to the aerodrome and on to the only line of communications, the one isolated roadway through Pahang from Kuantan to Jerantut. The enemy attacked the aerodrome on January 3rd and caught our troops as they were embussing. A very gallant show was put up by Lt.Col Cumming who was recommended for the V.C. Our forces in this area were then withdrawn through Jarantut.

Returning to the West Coast, 11 Div then withdrew to the Muar River line on January 8th. 45th Bde newly arrived in this country from India, was sent to the Muar area.

This line was manned by one Bde of Australians (27th), 2 Bdes of 9th Div (8th and 22nd) and the 45th Bde. The whole force to be known as "Westforce" came under the command of Major General Gordon Bennett. These forces were disposed on both sides of the river. General Gordon Bennett's plan was to ambush the enemy on the right flank near Gemas and this ambush which took place near the Gemenohah river was very successful., the Japanese suffering 500 casualties in addition to 25 cyclist troops who were blown up on a bridge. 7 tanks were also put out of action in this affair.

At this junction a Japanese Gds Div was brought into the battle. Previously only two Japanese Divs had been recognised, the 16th and the 5th. In a Japanese Div there are 12 Infantry Bns as opposed to our 9. On the 17th January these new troops attacked the 45th Bde. There was heavy fighting in the streets of Muar. Our reserves were not available as they were being used as coast pickets as far back as Batu Pahat. We tried earlier in the operations to get the Navy to stop all this nonsense of small craft coming down the coast and landing behind us. After great delays the Navy acquired and fitted out 11 small craft (Fairmiles) which were a good little craft, and very fast. To give an idea of the extent of the enemy's air command, of those 11 only 4 fetched up at Port Swettenham. The remainder were either beached or sunk en route by low flying dive bombers; and so the enemy continued to exert command of the Western seaboard as well as the Eastern. The 45 Bde had been completely surrounded and scarcely a man came back, very few of them were even taken prisoner. Two Australian Bns were brought across from the East coast to counter-attack and put up a very good show, knocking out several enemy tanks, but finally these troops too became cut off. 11 Div was withdrawn to Rengam area while a newly arrived Bde of the 18 Div, which had only arrived in Singapore on January 13th from Great Britain, provided replacements. The Loyals were brought up from Singapore and put in an attack to extricate the two surrounded Australian Bns, and the 11th Div which had so fully earned a respite and which ~~was~~ so badly needed a few days' for reorganization, was again taking an active part from Batu Pahat to Pontian Kechil. We now fell back to the line of the necklace of Johore aerodromes. As far back as Dec 12, Gen Heath had represented to GHQ an appreciation for the defence of Singapore, in which he recommended concentrating everything we had on defending this necklace of aerodromes across the north of Johore. The proposal had been turned down on the grounds that the labour required to construct adequate defences was not available since they were needed for the 100% production of tin and rubber.

The Gurkha Bde went to the Pontian Kechil area while other troops. 2Bns of the 55rd Bde and the combined Bn of Surreys and Leicesters held Batu Pahat. 9th Div and 1 Australian Bde were ordered to withdraw to the line from Yong Peng to Kluang.



The position on the coast south of Batu Pahat was taken up on 24th January but the enemy again outflanked by sea and also attacked down the creeks from the North in large numbers using sampans. Pressure on Batu Pahat was so severe that the 6/15 Bn was withdrawn from that town but failed to force the road to the South, the enemy being already astride this road on which they had erected blocks. They had also cut the Ayer Hitam - Batu Pahat road. This Bde therefore made its way to the coast where the Navy took ~~them~~ off near Senggerang the 2000 survivors and brought them to Singapore. This now left the 53rd Bde which had been swung round to defend posts at Benut and Rengit.

On the East coast Endau was attacked from the North followed by a new landing, but the enemy were held up in the Marsing area. 24 Wildbeestes were sent up from Singapore in two flights of 12 to bomb Japanese transports off Endau in broad daylight, a suicidal operation which was carried out with the utmost gallantry. Only 11 of the 24 returned to their base. With the first flight an escort of 6 Buffalos engaged enemy fighters; the 6 Hurricanes destined to arrive over the target area with the second flight, failed to arrive resulting in the loss of 8 aircraft in the second flight alone. Yong Peng and Kluang became untenable. The enemy's progress was remarkably quick, the Japanese making good use of the large numbers of bicycles and motor cycles and the local transport found in each place. In Kluang area a very successful counter attack was made by the 5/11 Sikhs supported by a battery of 8, 4.5" howitzers, accounting for 200 Japanese. The three Johore aerodromes were now in enemy hands which gave them unlimited scope for bombing Singapore.

A plan for a bridgehead defence around Johore Bahru was considered, but this could only have been possible with the help of thousands of coolies, and furthermore, this did not embrace the water reservoirs at Pontian and the supply of water for the position would therefore have been extremely difficult. It would moreover have taken from 10 to 14 days to make anything like a formidable position. Orders were therefore given for all units to withdraw into Singapore Island. The Causeway was blown on January 31st. The retirement of the 9 Div was carried out down the railway line South of Kluang. In this retirement the 22nd Bde was cut off north of Loyang. Only a handful of survivors resolutely plodded on through the jungle moving night and day with neither rest or food and crossing the Straits of Johore under cover of darkness on Feb 1st. The remaining 2 Bdes of the 18th Div had arrived on the Island and it was hoped to find them with defences already prepared, but there was little done. We greatly underestimated the material and landing craft available to the enemy. The Japanese brought down the peninsular in a remarkably short time, sufficient motor driven landing craft to land 18 Bns on the Island a few days later. On the night of the attack on the Island, February 8/9th, these 18 Bns were launched under a heavy barrage of artillery and mortar fire which had raged throughout the day.



It was a most gigantic barrage, more than 200,000 shells falling on the 22nd Australian Bde, the positions of which were well known following several days of reconnaissance by low flying aircraft. Landings took place between the Kranji and Jurong rivers, in some cases by coys only, in others ~~by~~ places by whole Bns. Some of these were repulsed, but others broke through platoon and coy posts and badly mauled them. No artillery fire of ours materialised and this must surely rank as the crowning mistake in a vast volume of mishaps, misfortunes and misunderstandings. Our forces on the Island were grossly insufficient to defend in any strength the entire coastline but in artillery fire we were at least considered to be formidable since the heavy coast defence equipment of 15 inch, 9.2" and 6" guns were all available together with ammunition.

By dawn on Feb 9th, 18 Bns had been disembarked in the Kranji-Jurong area's. In the crossing many M.L.Cs had been riddled with bullets. One Japanese officer later narrated how out of 40 men in his boat, all but three had received bullet wounds including himself. The officer also said that the crossing of the straits took only 6 minutes. Four of their M.C.Ls. bolted together conveyed a tank or gun and tractor on the roof. This shows the thoroughness with which the Japanese had planned this campaign. The Japanese captured Tengah aerodrome on Feb 9th despite the reinforcements from 12 Bde consisting of 2 weak Bns. One of these was the Argylls and the Royal Marines combined; they were under 400 men in strength. The withdrawal continued to pre-arranged lines, the final line being from Reformatory Road across to Bukit Timah road joining up with the 18th Div about the Race Course and Reservoir and thence to Nee Soon village.

The Australian Bde suffered heavily, 64 officers and 500 of other ranks were either killed or wounded. This Bde was also reinforced by 11 Div. Japanese infantry were working in close co-operation with their air arm. Whenever they were held up they opened up a W/T set and called for one reconnaissance plane through Bn HQ. This plane arrived within ten minutes, carried out a detailed recce of our position and reported to the bombers who then came over and dropped their bombs on the selected target. The infantry then moved forward once more. They also employed observation balloons for artillery spotting and for picking out our ~~defensive positions~~ defensive positions. Their mortar and artillery fire was amazingly accurate and their tanks were most effective on the Bukit Timah Rd in particular. In the skies they were entirely unopposed after the 10th. Our A.A. fire was pathetically ineffective. Relays of Bombers came over all day to add further destruction of our ever diminishing perimeter, we were striving to defend. Finally the water supply was cut, the hospitals became overcrowded and the shelling and the bombing of the town so intense and with such slaughter to the local population that capitulation took place on Sunday, 15th February. Throughout these operations on the Island the Japanese had a reserve division in ships lying off the East coast of Johore awaiting developments, but it was found necessary to use it in Mayala and it went to Sumatra.

PART. 111.THE REASONS FOR OUR DEFEAT.

1. The Japanese had the advantage of the initiative and command of both sea and air.

The political situation in Japan was actually stronger than a Dictatorship. The Army and Navy ministers were serving men of the respective services and if they disagreed with the cabinet on matters in their sphere, the cabinet automatically fell. The Japanese had reached the peak of their mobilization of 75 Divs, but there were 250,000 new wage earners coming into the market annually. G.H.Q. estimated that the Japanese could bring up against us in Malaya 2 Divs backed up by two more, but they had not believed that they could have had to spare to attack Burma simultaneously. In actual fact the Japanese always had 75,000 troops fighting against us and always one man in reserve for each man in the front line, so we were at all times up against 150,000. Furthermore, every man in the Japanese army is first a fighting man and then a technician afterwards unlike our numerous non-combatants.

We had never counted in having a fleet in Malayan waters. A large of submarines was what we required. The Japanese began operations with command of the China sea and after the first 10 days of war had also established command of the Malacca Straits. They were therefore able to penetrate up the creeks on the coast, landing forces behind us and thereby threatening our L. of C., causing us to withdraw, as at the Muar River. We were therefore always fighting with exposed flanks which we had no means of securing.

It was unfortunate that they obtained our boats at Penang though it was inevitable that they would nibble at the west coast. The sinking of the 'Prince of Wales' and 'Repulse' on the third day of the war put the navy out of the picture from the start.

The efficiency of their air force came as a great surprise. They probably started on their aircraft building programme 3 or 4 years ago (1938) and the air fleet employed against us had no doubt been specially built to conquer Malaya. The quality of both machines and pilots were very marked. They surprised everybody by the accuracy of their bombing and it was reported that they had obtained the plans for the American patent bomb sights which are believed to have been stolen by the Nazis. Their bombing was more accurate than anything we had suffered in the Middle East. In the early days we never saw less than 22 to 27 aircraft employed. Their bombers were invariably escorted by fighters which kept out of sight. Our airmen only knew they were there when they went up to intercept. One air photograph taken by the R.A.F. revealed 98 aircraft on one small ground and on another there were 200. Yet it was found impossible to bomb these aerodromes during the day because enemy fighters kept up a continuous patrol flight during the hours of daylight. Nonamxx expected them to get with such ease command of the air. This they did by use of long distance fighters fitted with the 'belly' tank which produced the biggest surprise of all.

Their air force secrets had been well kept. Their fighters were infinitely superior to our fighters and their bombers were very fast. They had 100% reserve aircraft up their sleeves in the matter of surprise. After the first fortnight of war the Japanese started to ~~mark~~ bomb our troops with Stuka dive bombers. The defeat of our air force had a disastrous effect on the morale of our troops; unopposed enemy aircraft produced a peculiar psychological effect.

2. The advantage of surprise.

The Japanese produced their greatest surprise by launching their attack during the North East Monsoon. Naval authorities had always advised that this was not a practical venture. During their landings in China they practised for the coming landings in Malaya and from the valuable experience gained they produced a very efficient motor landing craft of a type which could negotiate the North East Monsoon. Nearly all the Japanese Divs employed in Malaya had had experience of amphibious operations off the China Coast. They were first class.

3. The detailed planning of the campaign.

The Japanese had the advantage of similarity of appearance with the natives of Malaya. There can be no doubt that many Japanese officers came over to Malaya in various disguises and carried out reconnaissances and selected fields of operations. In French Indo-China they found the ideal training ground where the conditions are very similar to those in Malaya and in that country they developed and practised special tactics and special weapons, recognizing that the closeness of the country favoured the attacker.

For years past they had planted their nationals all over the country as barbers, miners and photographers, many of whom were Staff Officers of the Imperial Japanese Army.

They had studied jungle warfare with great thoroughness. Their scouts excelled in initiative, resolution and daring, and by virtue of their superficial resemblance to Malays and Chinese they were able to don the costume of the local people and operate freely well forward of their main forces. The junior officers had been trained in the campaign against China. All ranks were full of the spirit of sacrifice for their country and they took their knocks without flinching. Greater detailed planning had been put into this campaign by the Japanese than any other.

4. The advantage of the tanks.

The Japanese possessed a great moral and material advantage in their tanks. At Jitra and Slim River their influence was decisive and later on the Island they played a very effective part. We had no tanks until the operations on the Island had begun when half a dozen arrived from India; these were not only light tanks but mechanically unreliable. At the Japanese triumphal entry into Singapore, no less than 175 tanks of various calibre were counted, medium, light medium and light. With tanks we could certainly have given the enemy a knock. In General Heath's view, without tanks

a modern army is an emasculate affair as has already been brought out in other theatres of war in the present war.

3. Our own lack of preparation.

We suffered from lack of preparation. We were very far from home and when put to the test had very inadequate forces. We had not received the aircraft, tanks and men which we had asked for and the failure to supply these must find its roots in our losses in France and Belgium, our losses in Greece and the call upon our resources of men and material from Egypt, Iraq and Iran as well as from Russia. Troops and aircraft which at one time were destined for this country were diverted elsewhere. In this connection no blame should be attached to the present Government but if blame is to be allocated it must go to the British Nation for its pacific tendencies.

It would rather have been better if Malaya had earlier been mobilized for war rather for 100% production of rubber and tin. Large labour forces could have been utilised over a period of many months, but these were not provided. Defences had not been prepared on Singapore Island to deal with the threat from the mainland of Malaya. The matter had been considered in Council but it was decided to do nothing as it might have had a bad effect on morale.

General Heath said that Singapore was not a fortress, never had been one and was indefensible as such. He doubted the wisdom of having a Naval Base in the 'main gateway'. Possibly a ring of islands fortified against bomb and shell or even the fortification of the Eastern end of the Island only, would have been better.

6. Japanese tactics.

The Japanese High Command had studied deeply the special needs of and modifications to tactical practice necessitated by the very enclosed nature of the country. We on the other hand had not the same practical experience as that gained by the Japanese in China to arrive at an ~~worky~~ equally sound and ingenious way of overcoming local conditions. Wading through swamp was second nature to the Japanese since most of them had been brought up in rice fields in their country. They wore as part of their clothing split toe rubber boots which enabled them to climb trees and negotiate swamps with comparative ease. This ~~skill~~ ability to climb trees had a very marked moral effect against our troops who were continually being sniped at from above. In the early stages of the campaign it also made our open carriers extremely vulnerable to ~~the~~ the lobbing of grenades in enclosed country. They also carried waistcoats which they could inflate when crossing rivers; these were carried as part of their equipment. Special clothing was also carried as means of camouflage such as long black shirts for use at night.

They were always able to employ fresh troops against our tired and depleted units. Usually a Bn was launched at one time and given a limited objective.

Once this had been gained a fresh Bn would be thrown in to seize the next objective while the original troops were rested. They suffered heavily in killed and wounded, but never felt the effect of their losses because they held 100% reserve with which the momentum of the advance could always be maintained. The Japanese lived on the country and were therefore able to advance miles beyond their supplies which partially accounts for their boldness in advancing into our positions; their stamina was remarkable; they were capable of displaying amazing feats of endurance at selected times. They are brave soldiers but they know fear. They hate the darkness and invariably lit fires at night. In Japan the whole family sleeps in one room with the light on all night.

They were especially adept in surrounding and cutting off isolated detachments and posts, a process in which they were greatly assisted by the nature of the country. We were always out-manoeuvred and enveloped. ~~If~~ If we hung on too long the Japanese defeated us in detail and cut us off from our supplies.

Their armour piercing small arms bullet came as a big surprise and a bitter disappointment. This was a hard steel bullet of .256 calibre encased in brass which pierced the armour of our new armoured cars from India and South Africa up to an angle of 45 degrees and thereby nullified our armoured mobility. A story is told of a certain Colonel Sigorski who was told to produce a type of armour for Japanese armoured fighting vehicles which would be immune to the armour piercing bullet of that time. He did so; he was then ordered to go away and invent a bullet which would pierce his newly invented armour. This again he did with the result that our armour in Malaya was reduced to the level of three ply wood.

In the Japanese army every man is required to ride a bicycle. Large numbers can also ride a motor cycle. The mobility conferred therefore, by having a whole army cyclists, was one of the chief factors in the relentless pressure which the Japanese were able to exert and which gave our weary troops no breathing space ~~from which~~ to recover from their knocks and arduous marches.

Explosive bullets which went off crack on impact with a tree or hard substance, and crackers filled in mortar bombs and shells were other features of the enemy's studied preparation to confuse and dismay his adversary.

There was always the enemy's sound appreciation that given long-sighted eyes, the mortar would be a handier and much more accurate easily employable weapon than field artillery in 80% of such fighting as was likely to take place under Malayan conditions. Eyes were provided and accuracy of fire ensured by the simple expedient of employing mortar F.O.Ps. who ran out behind them a measured telephone cable.

The enemy had ample field artillery, though they used it only at Kampar, the Muar River and on Singapore Island, and then with great effect. We wanted an infantry artillery piece though we did make good use of the 4.5" howitzer used singly. After the initial stages of the campaign the Japanese used Stuka dive bombers for use as close artillery support.

With regard to fifth column activity the Japanese had a first class organisation among the Malays and to a lesser extent among the Chinese. At Jitra a German was killed on a bridge which he was trying to, cross as an English civilian. Another person (European) fifth columnist was encountered at Bukit Mertajam near Prai.

Japanese engineers provided yet another surprise in their remarkable efficiency in bridging gaps on the line of march with such astonishing speed. They must have been fully prepared for any obstacle likely to be encountered in Malaya. In addition they were able to make good use of the vast stores of timber which we had amassed near our bridges with the object of using it ourselves in the event of these bridges being destroyed by Japanese air or artillery action. At one time it was thought that this timber and other materials for bridge repairing had been placed in position for the use of the Japanese by fifth columnists.

Fighting as they were for the most part against Indian troops the Japanese were able to pick out the white faces of the British officers among the brown faces of their troops. Losses among commanders and regimental officers ~~was~~ was particularly severe, and in the Indian Army where so much depends upon leadership, this was a grave factor.

We were defeated in detail by superior numbers and by troops better equipped in the essentials for the particular type of operations in Malaya. We were defeated by experienced and seasoned troops and by commanders who had been able to command their operations in consummate detail and who were provided with their every particular detail, and need. We were deficient of two most formidable essentials - tanks and aircraft.

Our defeat, in fact, had its roots in the failure to prepare for war over the long period since our victory in 1918.

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## THE MALAYAN CAMPAIGN.

Precis of a lecture given by  
LIEUT -GENERAL HEATH  
Commanding the 3rd Indian Corps.

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It might be wondered by many of the personnel of the 18th Division how it was that, in the space of two months, the Japanese were able to sweep right through Malaya from North to South, a distance of nearly 600 miles, and why the division came to be thrust into the campaign apparently rather late in the day when it might have been better employed elsewhere. The purpose of this lecture is to answer these questions.

### Political and Physical Features of the Country.

1. The Malay Peninsular consists of a conglomeration of states under different types of rules.

- (a) The Straits Settlements of Singapore, Malacca, Penang and Province Wellesley.
- (b) The Federated Malay States of Perak, Pahang, Selangor and Negri Sembilan under British protection.
- (c) The Unfederated Malay States of Trengganua, Kedah, Kelantan, Perlis and Johore, which although not under direct British rule were each assisted by a British Advisor responsible to the High Commissioner, who was in fact the Governor of Singapore. Of these States, Johore, situated to the north of Singapore possessed a Government a little more advanced than the others.

It will be appreciated that this lack of uniformity in the Government of the various States greatly complicated the defence of the Peninsular, especially as, in the case of the Unfederated Malay States, a policy of advice had to be adopted rather than direct control.

The predominant topographical feature of the Peninsular is the range of mountains that bisect it from north to south. The average height of these mountains is 4,000 feet with some peaks running up to 7,000 feet. (One is 8,000 feet). The mountains are almost completely covered with thick jungles, which, though not entirely impenetrable is very nearly so, unless the traveller is equipped with a machete (parang) and make use of this as he advances, cutting down the undergrowth to make footpaths. At one time the jungle belt extended right down to the coastal belt, but on the west side of the Peninsular, during the last 50 years, has been replaced by belts of rubber, palms and tapioca and this process still continues. Rice fields are found in Kedah and Malacca and there is tin mining in Perak and Selangor in the Kuala Lumpur district. The east side of the Peninsular is much less developed than the west, and is almost entirely covered with jungle, with rice fields in the coastal areas of Kelantan.

2.

It will therefore be seen that , generally speaking, visibility is limited to no more than 100 yards throughout the Peninsular.

As may be expected, the central range of mountains interferes greatly with the communications of the peninsular. There is a metre gauge railway that connects Singapore with Bangkok, the capital of Thailand. This railway bifurcates at Gemas and runs on to the other side of the central range, eventually meeting at Kadyai near the important port of Singgora, in Thailand. On the west side there is a trunk road running from Singapore to Singgora connecting the inter-network of inter-communication roads in Malacca, and the Ipoh district of Perak and in south Kedah.

On the east coast the road system peters out at Kuala Lipis and communications with Kelantan and the important Kotah Bahru areas depend entirely on the railway. Two main roads connect the east with the west road in Johore on the line Jemluang (Edau and Mersing) Kluang, Batu Pahat and the Frazers Hill Gap Road connecting Kuantan with the important towns of the west. It was hoped that this road would have an important strategic value in operations, but it was impossible to use it to its fullest value. In the north there is a most important road that starts at the Patani in Thailand and crosses the frontier at Kroh. Formerly a very ~~difficult~~ indifferent road, it has been improved recently and further improvements were in progress when hostilities commenced. This road links up the south Kedah network and there is a further road through Grik to Kuala Kangsa near Ipoh, which if captured by the enemy would directly threaten our communications with the north.

Almost all the rivers in the Peninsular are not more than a 100 yards wide in the lower level country although the Sungai Parak is half a mile wide as far ~~xx~~ inland as Kuala Kangas. The longest river in the country is the Sungai Pahang which is navigatable for motor landing craft, such as were used by the Japanese, until it reaches the eastern part of the railway leading to Kelantan.

By aeroplane the distance from Singapore to Kota Bahri in the north is 350 miles and to Alor Star in the north west is 400 miles. By road the latter distance is 600 miles.

#### THE PROBLEM OF DEFENDING MALAYA.

The problem of defending Malaya was never faced very seriously in the past. It was thought at one time it would be possible to defend the peninsular almost entirely with a fleet and the construction of the Naval Base with this in view after the Washington Naval Conference in 1922. At the outbreak of war it was found that no fleet could be spared for these waters, which were to be defended by a few cruisers and small craft usually allotted to the China Station.

It then became apparent that the major responsibility for the defence of the peninsular would devolve on the R.A.F. Such aerodromes as already existed on the mainland were not large enough for the modern bombers and fighters, and it therefore became necessary to embark on an extensive programme of aerodrome construction.



The R.A.F. is an independant service and the extent of its co-operations with the army is largely a matter of personalities. Although it was clear that the defence of the aerodromes to be constructed in Malaya would devolve on the army. The A.O.C. embarked on his construction programme without consulting the G.O.C. Malaya with regrettable consequences.

There was already a small landing ground at Kota Bahru and it was decided to make this into a first class aerodrome, with two further aerodromes in the same area although in all three cases the sites selected were within 20 miles of the coast, rendering the problem of defending them a difficult one.

In the north west, the Alor Star aerodrome was greatly improved and three new ones were constructed at Butterworth.

Further aerodromes were modernised or constructed at Taiping, Ipoh and Kuala Lumpur, on the west of Jemluang, forming a vital part in the defence of Singapore itself. In addition there were four aerodromes on Singapore Island itself. Thus it will be seen that the army was faced with a task of defending aerodromes widely dispersed, with a force totally inadequate for the purpose.

In November 1940 it was decided to form a G.H.Q. Far East with Sir Robert Brooke-Popham in command of intelligence as C. in C. It was estimated that, bearing in mind their commitments in the Far East, the Japanese could not afford to use against the N.E.I. and/or Malaya a force more than four divisions two being used in the initial operations and two in reserve. To deal with this it was estimated that we should need an Air Force of 370 planes of modern design and performance, including torpedo bombers.

Army estimates were at first very modest but when General Parcival assumed command he decided that for the adequate defence of Malaya the following troops would be needed:-

(a) Three corps, then consisting of two divisions of two Brigades each should be brought up to three full divisions

(b) The two brigades of Australians should be brought up to a full division.

(c) A full division would needed for G.H.Q. reserve.

(d) A further full division would needed for the defence of the fortress.

(e) A Tank Regiment of 40 ton tanks. That the tank would have to be limited to this size as this was the maximum capacity of many of the bridges on the peninsular.

Had this force been made available and had the air estimate been met, no doubt the defence of Malaya would have presented a very different problem from that which eventually had to be faced. Various talks took place with interested powers in the sea waters, both Dutch and American, but it became clear that no capital fleet would be available for some time. The Dutch did however undertake to send their bombers to our assistance, if such assistance became necessary and they themselves were not attacked.

When the Japanese walked into Indo-China during the summer of 1941, the threat to Malaya assumed a very different form.

This resulted in the sending of several reinforcements to the peninsular but the decision that the needs of Russia and the Middle East should receive priority, greatly retarded the defence programme.

Malaya was thus starved at the expense of other interests. The estimate of men and material for the army was not met and the R.A.F. received little more than half of the 370 planes that they wanted, while some of those they did possess, such as Swordfish and Wildebeestes were very out of date in design and performance.

In the Autumn of 1941 the Japanese sent their representative to America and went through the actions of negotiations. It became apparent however that these talks were not proceeding too well, and it was decided that the troops on the peninsular would be disposed at their war stations as follows:-

KOTA BAHRU and KELANTAN. Owing to the aerodrome sites selected in this vulnerable sector, there was ~~more~~ more than 40 miles of beach and frontier to defend in this part of the country. To perform this task adequately a full Division would have hardly been sufficient, but in fact it had to be entrusted to a Brigade of four Battalions, the 8th Brigade.

KUATAN:- A Brigade less a Battalion sent to augment the 8th brigade, were allotted for the defence in this area.

KEDAH:- Three brigades were disposed of in this important area. An anti-tank position was in the course of construction and preparation in the Jitra area north of Alor Star, but difficulty of employing native labour prevented it from being completed and efficient as it should have been. It had been dictated by Whitehall that Malaya's function in the war was to produce 100% tin and rubber and thus become a dollar factory. Practically all labour was used for this purpose and unhappily the country defences suffered in consequence.

CENTRE REGION:- In the central region of the peninsular, Volunteer Battalions of somewhat doubtful fighting ability as 80 per cent of the personnel were of untrained Malays, were employed on aerodrome defence, the guarding of internees and L. of C. duties.

ENDAU and MERSING:- Two Brigades of the 8th Australian Division were allotted for the defence of these two ports. Endau was rather lightly held but Mersing was the best defended position on the peninsular.

FORTRESS TROOPS:- Consisted of two Brigades. All troops were in position by the end of November, Corps H.Q. being situated at Kuala Lumpur.

Early in December it became evident that a Japanese attack on Malaya was imminent. Condensation trails of hostile aircraft began to appear all over our aerodromes as far south as Ipoh, where parts of a Japanese aeroplane camera were picked up. Our fighters did not succeed in intercepting these reconnaissance planes.

THE CAMPAIGN.(1) The landing at Kota Bahru.

The first warning of a hostile movement was given by one of our reconnaissance planes, which in the early afternoon of December 6th, sighted a hostile convoy of enemy transports with a strong naval escort just south of Southern Indo-China, steaming due West a course that would bring them to Singgora in Thailand. Unfortunately weather conditions were not too good and this aeroplane lost touch with the convoy. The next day some large range Catalina Flying Boats were sent out from Singapore to regain touch but they never returned. Information was then received that a further convoy of similar strength was proceeding on a course approximately the same as the first but was 24 hours behind it. Had it been definitely known that these convoys were proceeding to Thailand the Government might have been induced to allow our troops in the north west sector (the 11th Indian Division) to go forward to Singgora before the enemy arrived. The uncertain information available however, did not justify the violation of Thai neutrality, a course that might have had an adverse effect on American opinion. At one time it was hoped that Thailand might have been an Ally, but with the Japanese occupation of Indo-China such hopes were shattered. The Thai's simply could not afford to be our friends. In the early hours of Monday December the 8th, the first act of Japanese aggression took place when hostile bombers flew over Singapore and dropped bombs, on Raffles Square and the Chinese Quarters causing many casualties, although at the time of the raid all lights in Singapore were blazing practice Black Outs had been in force for some time. At the same time the Japanese landed at Kota Bahru, the very North East tip of the Peninsular, and also landed troops at Patani and Singgora in Thailand. All communications between Thailand and Singapore were cut off but it was eventually learned that "the land of the free" capitulated after two hours fighting. At the time of the landing at Kota Bahru a North East monsoon was blowing, and our naval authorities were quite certain that a landing was impossible under such conditions. The Japanese however, were accustomed to overcoming greater difficulties in their powerful boats, and what might have been beyond the capabilities of our normal ships and boats was certainly within theirs. They were assisted in their landing by a certain Chinese Smuggler who guided them between two beaches with a lantern. This Smuggler was known to the British Military Authorities but their efforts to have him arrested was resisted by the Civil Police on the grounds of insufficient evidence. Prior to the attack our air H.Q. would not admit the possibility of an invading force attempting to land on the shore without the assistance of shore based aircraft. They therefore expected the enemy to consolidate their positions at Singgora and Patani before attacking Kota Bahru.

The Japanese did in fact attack all three positions at the same time probably with the assistance of aircraft carriers. Air H.Q. had also estimated that even with obsolete aircraft at their disposal they would be able to knock out forty per cent of any enemy convoy approaching South of Malaya or South Thailand. If this had been achieved the enemy would have been disorganised to such an extent that her fighting efficiency would have been reduced to 75 per cent. Events proved that our air experts had been too optimistic, actually we did not destroy more than one eightieth of the enemy's convoy. During the 8th December the fighting at Khota Bahru was very fierce but at the end of the day the enemy was left in possession of two pillboxes that gave him a frontage of three hundred yards. This they exploited successfully during the night and when morning came they had sufficient troops to enable them to drive a wedge right into our defences. The 8th Brigade resisted stubbornly but by the 11th December they had suffered so many losses and were so extended that it was decided to evacuate Kelanta altogether. Although this was a severe blow to us, the army had never wanted to site defences in this area and only did so because of their obligation to defend the aerodromes that had been constructed there.

#### The Thrust from Singgorra.

Meanwhile it had become apparent that the Japanese attack was taking a form of a three pointed attack from Khota Bahru, Singgorra, and Patani. At first their strength was about two divisions but that was soon increased to three. When the hostile convoys were first sighted the 11th Division in the Kedah area prepared to move across the frontier into Thailand. For political reasons it was not possible to give them the order immediately, but as soon as the news was received that the enemy had landed, a column moved forward to try and ambush them. Some tanks were effectively ambushed but their advance was not delayed. The Divisional Commander put out a covering force which was cut off and a similar fate befell another Battalion which was sent up to try and extricate this covering force. By the 11th December the 11th Division had lost the Jitra position a front of 19 miles, nine miles of open country on the West, the remainder jungle and rubber country. Fighting had become confused and communication with our forward troops had been destroyed. A defensive position had been recced' at Gurun and had the time been given to its construction it would have been a very good position, but it was not to delay the enemy advance to any extent. A feature of the whole campaign was the outstanding and brilliant work achieved by the enemy engineers. Very little time was lost in crossing rivers whose bridges we had effectively blown. Examples occurred during the Japanese advance from Jitra to Gurun when two rivers were crossed within four hours of it having been evacuated. At Gurun fighting was fierce, the whole of the 6th Brigade H.Q. being knocked out with the exception of its Commander and the 11th Division being reduced to 40% of its original strength and its fighting efficiency to a still greater extent. Throughout the campaign the enemy proved time and time again how remarkably efficient were its fifth column activities. For several years before the commencement of hostilities, Japanese had been working all over Malaya as rubber planters, shopkeepers and in other capacities.

Many of them we must presume were staff officers in disguise and the knowledge of the country and of our troops and ~~positions~~ positions must have been invaluable to the enemy. The Japanese frequently displayed expertness in the location of our H.Q.'s, which received special attention from them. Use was made of the local population and frequently they advanced preceded by Tamils acting as rubber tappers. The Thrust from Patani.

It has been seen that the third enemy thrust came from Patani and was therefore directed against the central sector of the Thai frontier. For the defense of this area only two battalions could be originally spared. A position had been rec'd 30 miles across the frontier on a ledge that commanded the whole line of attack. Accordingly our column moved forward to occupy this position. Before their main landing at Patania, the enemy with characteristic cunning, had planted some soldiers in civilian clothing at different places in Thailand, which were, indeed commonly used by them in the initial stages of the war. These disguised soldiers opposed our advancing column which eventually arrived at the south end of the ledge at the same time as the spearhead of the enemy advance. In this area the enemy was two Brigades strong, and, despite the different roads, was supported by tanks. It should be remembered that a Japanese Brigade consists of six battalions as opposed by our three and that a Japanese division consists of two brigades. The week held on the Southern extremity of the ledge position could not be maintained and our two battalions fell back fighting on to Kroh. The 12th Brigade, less one battalion, the Command reserve, was then placed under the 3rd Corps but they arrived too late to deny Kroh to the enemy and they were used to form a protective force on the 11th Division's right flank. It soon became apparent however, that the enemy was thrusting down to Perak. The 12th Brigade was accordingly withdrawn and was sent forward to try and delay the enemy's advance via Grik. The Brigade fought hard but the enemy's advance of from 7-10 miles per day was continued. It became essential for the 11th Division to withdraw from the Sungai Krian and later establishment of a strong defensive line across the Sungai Perak became a matter of vital necessity. The Campaign in the Air and the Fall of Penang.

After the capture of Singgora the enemy lost no time in establishing the aerodromes there. Aircraft was brought from Indo-China and it was estimated that on the 9th December, a day after the attack on Kota Bahru, they had at their disposal 100 planes. By the next day the figure had increased to 200. Their aircraft proved to be far superior in design and performance to our pre-war estimates. The Brewster Buffalo and the Navy (Japanese) O.96 were not to be compared. A feature of some of their fighters was the detachable belly tank which enabled these fighters to accompany bombers over long ranges without being cumbersome in aerial combat. The usual Japanese tactics were to send over wings of bombers, 27 strong, supported by a similar number of fighters high above them. It was hardly surprising that our fighters met with so little success. After supporting their initial landing operations the enemy apparently decided to concentrate all his attention in the air to the destruction of our aerodromes.

The special bomb sight which they possessed enabled them to obtain extreme accuracy from great heights and the dispersion of our aircraft proved to be of no counter-measure. On the 9th December the important aerodrome at Aloa Star was attacked and both planes and buildings were so severely damaged that they had to be evacuated the same day. This procedure was repeated at Sungai Patani and Butterworth. Penang also received heavy attacks and all Government and Civil installations ceased to function. On the night 16/17th December, Penang was also evacuated. 24 propelled (motor) launches and a large number of smaller craft was left behind. It will be seen that these craft played a great part in the subsequent operations in enabling the enemy to keep up out-flanking movements on us in the West.

#### The Defence of Kampar and Trolak.

The position selected for the stand to be made after the withdrawal across the Perak River was at Kampar. This may be said to be the only natural position in the whole of Malaya. Set ~~xxx~~ astride the main road it had one important weakness, a loop road that ran the other side of the mountain and joined the main road behind it. A brigade of Gurkhas was sent to block the loop road and to be prepared for a counter stroke. The country was especially suited for this type of warfare in which the Gurkhas excelled, but the troops were too weary for offensive operations. For three days the enemy battered himself against our positions at Kampar and it seemed that at last he might be held. It had only been possible to allot the independent company (Commando) for the defense of this area. On the third day however, the enemy commenced outflanking tactics by sea and landed at Telok Anson. The 12th Brigade was thrown in but the position at Kampar was soon untenable by this threat to its flank that it had to be evacuated.

The next defensive position was at Trolak, North of Slim River where the main road and the railway run together through thick jungle. This was not an ideal position but it had its advantages. Corridors had been cut through the forest to make way for the road and railway and the only effective way of holding this position was only in depth. There is no doubt that great strain was placed on the men's nerves for the jungle was not absolutely impregnable, and there was constant fear that the enemy might be creeping round the flanks. However, two successful ambushes were carried out effectively on the 4th and 5th of January. Meanwhile, displaying his usual engineering abilities, the enemy had succeeded in getting his tanks across the 800 yard wide Perak River, and within 24 hours the bridges were being blown.

The enemy launched his main attack at 0400 hours on the morning January 6th. He first captured one of our advanced posts and cleared an uncompleted tank block. He then came down the road with 16 tanks blazing away with all their guns and mortars, more for the moral effect than to inflict casualties. Unfortunately certain battalions were changing over at the time of the attack which accentuated confusion. The tanks burst right through the leading brigade and into the second brigade. Not until daylight was the enemy held, a 4.5 Howitzer laying out the leading tank at 200 yards, thus forming an effective road block. As a result of this action, of the two brigades of the 11th Div. engaged, one was practically wiped out and the other was reduced to half strength. Only one effective brigade remained, the composite 6/15th which was badly in need of rest and reorganisation.

### Closing Stages of the Campaign.

Meanwhile on the East coast positions had also deteriorated but not to the same extent as the West. The 8th Brigade had managed to evacuate nearly all its stores and transports from Kelantan but the enemy then pressed down the East coast and defeated the 22nd Brigade covering the Kluantan aerodrome. On the 8th January this brigade was withdrawn West of the Penang River. The 7th January General Wavell visited our H.Q. and decided it was imperative to bring fresh troops over to the West sector, and said that the enemy was to be held. Accordingly it was decided to form a West force from the Australian Brigade and the 9th Indian Division at the expense of our forces of the East coast. Shortly afterwards the West force was reinforced by the 45th Brigade which had arrived from India. It was decided that the force should hold a line on the string of important aerodromes at Batu Pahat, Kluang, Jemaluang, and a position was selected on the general line of the Muar River. The right of this ~~line~~ at Gemas was very strong but the same confidence was not felt about the left. There was an ever present danger of our being outflanked by the sea at the Muar River in the same manner as we had been outflanked first at Kampar and later North of Kuala Lumpur. The Australians carried out a very successful ambush North of Gemas, but the position was destined to suffer the same fate as the others. The Japanese had been reinforced by a fresh guards division which concentrated on attacking the 45th Brigade inflicting heavy casualties. The West Force reserve Battalion had to be sent in and another A.I.F. Battalion was brought over from Mersing on the East Coast.

It was at this juncture that the 53rd Brigade arrived, on the scene, one Battalion being sent down to Batu Pahat and another acting as reinforcements to the Australians. There was still a slight hope that it would be possible to hold the line North of the Aerodromes, but we were severely handicapped by the enemies complete air superiority which gave him complete command of the sea on both coasts. Actually 51 Hurricanes had recently arrived and were manned by one trained Hurricane Squadron and Brewster Buffalo Squadron, but even this could do little in the face of the superior numbers of the enemy and 25 were lost in the first week. The enemy continued his outflanking tactics and the threat developed to Yong Peng which resulted in our forces in Gemas having to be brought back. Meanwhile the enemy had effected a successful landing at Endau on the East coast but the Battalion of Australians at Mersing held up this advance. Later a further outflanking movement resulted in Batu Pahat being cut off, 2000 of our troops being evacuated to Singapore on successive nights. It now became clear that the line of aerodromes could not be held and again it was necessary to withdraw. The possibility of establishing a bridgehead at Johore Bahru was examined but found unfeasible; in particular the water could not be defended. It was therefore decided to make a general withdrawal to Singapore Island and hope that the enemy had not sufficient craft to ferry across his troops over the Johore Straits..

It was a vain hope as on the first night he succeeded in transporting across the Straits almost a complete Division on the West Coast and a further 6 Battalions on the North West. It was afterwards found that special motor landing craft had been brought from Japan for the purpose, being landed in the North and brought as far as possible by rail down the ~~Peninsular~~ Peninsular. By bolting three of this craft together it was possible to transport a tank.

THE BATTLE FOR SINGAPORE.

While the battles had been raging on the mainland, the large guns of Singapore Island had been kept in constant action. On the 8th February the Japanese tried to land on Pula Ubin, but the local defenses laid such a devastating barrage that the enemy had to withdraw from this Island.

The Johore Battery, consisting of three 15" guns, kept up an almost unending barrage into Johore Bahru, destroying considerable quantities of enemy equipment. On the 11th February the order to demolish all the defenses in the Changi Area was issued, and subsequently all the guns and equipment there were blown sky high, rendering them useless to the enemy. The teams that manned these guns were sent into Singapore to act as Infantry, and there they were until the battle finished.

After landing on the West Coast, the enemy consolidated and shipped more troops across the straits. At this time, an aeroplane of the British Air Force was a thing that nobody expected to see, or saw, so just solid weight of numbers, supported by aircraft again forced us to withdraw and this time the only way we could withdraw was towards the town itself.

At last on the 5th February, reinforcements that were badly needed arrived. The personnel on these ships had had rather a rough time. Five days out they were spotted out by a Japanese recce' plane, and on the third day out they were bombed by high level bombers.

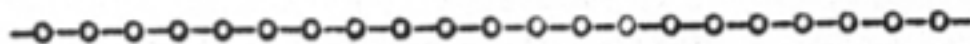
On reaching the harbour of Singapore they were dive bombed and the result was that they lost the "Empress of Asia" which unfortunately was carrying the Recce Corps and all of their equipment. These troops were landed without even a rifle amongst them and were issued out with Aussi gear which could hardly be spared. But still these lads who had not even been the land in which they were to fight, went into the front line and did a good job of work.

Artillery units of the Division were put in as Infantry and they proved to be quite efficient at the job, but even this could not stop the advance of the ~~xxx~~ enemy who regardless of loss kept pushing more and more men into the field.

At last we were pushed into an area a mile square with our backs to the sea. There could be no more retreating and the men prepared to fight to the last but the powers that be decided that we would have to capitulate.

At three O'clock on the 15th February, General Percival went over to the enemy lines accompanied by two Brigadiers, one of whom carried the Union Jack and the other the dreaded white flag.

Whatever the conditions were they were not accentuated by the Japanese General, so they returned and the order to fight on was given. At five o'clock the same day he went out again and this time the struggle was over and Singapore fell to an unconditional surrender.





PART. 12.

C O P Y .

To:- FD AAD 1.MIB Village Troops SSVF FMSVF SARE  
SA.SIGS RASC ADMS SA PRO GA DAPM.

From:- H.Q.S.A.

SA.319.

7 August 42.

The Area Commander directs that the u/m letter be brought to the attention of All Ranks under your command, as an example of the type of treatment to be expected by personnel caught outside the wire.

- " 1. I.....report for your information that on 14th June 1942, I was detained in Curran Camp under the supervision of the Indian Garrison as an arrested prisoner of war.
2. The occupants of the above mentioned camp are Sikhs, their Commanding Officer being Captain DILLING, a Sikh holding a King's Commission. It was particularly noticed that this officer was anti-British. He acts in the capacity of the O.C. Administration and professes to be a staunch supporter of the Japanese Co-Prosperity Sphere.
3. The conditions of the camp are terrible and ill-treatment at the hands of the officers is a daily occurrence for any European prisoners detained there. The hours of work are excessive and this work which is carried out under the supervision of an armed sentry, consists of cleaning latrines and other degrading jobs. The same duties are carried out daily.
4. The strength of the camp is 201 including officers of whom five are Sikhs.
5. Various atrocities are carried out on the British and Australian prisoners in an attempt to gain information from them, but no matter what results are gained from the prisoners, punishment is awarded to the apparant joy of the Sikhs. The most popular form of punishment is the placing of the prisoners head in a vice: others are the use of sticks, whips and leather slippers.
6. The conditions are beyond the comprehension of any Christian. All prisoners are accommodated in a barbed wire enclosure with a canvas roof, the only sleeping arrangements being the floor. The sentry has orders to shoot if any prisoner even touches the wire. Captain DILLING said he could order the shooting of any prisoner and explain it away to the Japanese by stating the prisoner had attempted to escape. After six weeks of this punishment I was brought back to Changi on the 29th July 42, under British escort and returned to my unit."

SGD XXXXXXXXXXX

(Sgd) F.C.EYRE,

MAJOR.

D.A.A.G. SOUTHERN AREA.

PART. 15.

This party was marched to the old quarters, where they were herded into rooms which varied in size from 9 x 9 ft to 10 x 12 ft, and 50 to 70 being placed in each. They were literally jammed in and took some minutes to raise their hands above their heads. Sitting down was out of the question and the occupants were forced to urinate against each other. During the night many died and all suffered from thirst and the suffocating atmosphere. Water was promised but never arrived. When dawn came the Japs were seen with cases of tinned fruits which they kept to themselves.

By evening shelling was at its height and shells were bursting all around. One struck the roof injuring some of the prisoners and blowing open the door and window. When this happened an escape was attempted—some were successful, others were machine gunned. Prior to this the Japs had been leading small parties out of sight and the ensuing yells and screams, coupled on one occasion with the Japs returning wiping blood from their bayonets, left little doubt as to their fate.

Captain Allardyce, who could speak a little Japanese, and Cpls Mc.Donough and Wilkins were taken off. Captain Allardyce appeared to be under the impression that he was required as a hostage or possibly to attend to Jap wounded. However, he was seen only for the last time that night at the quarters where the doomed 200 were imprisoned. It must be assumed that he and Cpl. Wilkins suffered a similar fate as the others. The body of Cpl. Mc.Donough was found outside the hospital and it would appear that he was killed by shrapnel.

3. A party of Japanese came into the Reception Room shouting and threatening the Staff and Patients who were congregated there. Sgt. Sierrif was bayoneted and died and the remainder were similarly treated. Another party went into the Wards 16 and 17 causing injuries to patients. They entered the kitchens of these two wards and killed Pte Bruce, probably using a Tommy Gun. This party was also shown the Red Cross Brassard, but replied by throwing a hand Grenade into a Sister's bunk.

It is difficult to find a reason for this barbaric attack on the hospital and investigations were carried out to find a possible explanation for it. Rumour has it that Indian Sappers and Miners, digging a tunnel at the rear of the hospital, had presumably made a run for it when the Japanese advanced and passed through the hospital building.

At 1600 hours some 40-50 people were herded into the corridor and a guard placed over them. Later the guard went away and Captain Bartlett went out to investigate but found no signs of the Japs. This party remained there until dawn.

#### Sunday 15th February, 1942.

Shelling was very heavy and a few direct hits were made on the building. The Japs were using the ground floor and corridor for battle. This, however, did not interfere with the duties of the hospital staff. About 1800 hours a party which included Sgt. Anderson and about 20 others, was taken away by the Japs. They had their hands tied behind them and were led to a drain behind the W.O.'s Quarters where they remained all night but were given cigarettes and raisins. About 0800 hrs the Jap looters arrived. At 1000 hrs a Japanese Medical officer of the rank of D.D.M.S. entered the hospital and saluted all our dead. He complimented the staff on the way the patients had been looked after and provided a guard against looters.

Tuesday 17th February, 1942.

The Japanese G.O.C., Lieut-General Yamashita, called and expressed his regret for what had happened and assured the staff they had nothing further to fear.

He told the O.C. Hospital, that he, the General, was to be regarded as a direct representative of the Emperor and that no higher honour could be paid to the Hospital.

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PART. 14.

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WE DARED.

Our bid for freedom had failed, our captors marching us back to our dismal billets bullying us and striking us en route. On arrival we were interrogated by the Commandant and other Japanese officials. We were then made to stand outside the guardroom to attention for three days and three nights, and we were indeed in a sorry plight. We thank our lucky stars that the Commandant had noticed our exhausting condition for it was he who ordered our removal to hospital for treatment.

We remained but one day in the hospital in spite of our Medical Officer's efforts to keep us in for a while, and we take this opportunity to thank this same Medical Officer for so gentlemanly and tactful handling of a rather ticklish situation as the Japanese were in a spiteful mood. On the 4th of October the Japanese decided that our escape bid was a vicious crime and so we were despatched to Singapore for a General Court Martial. We left BANG PONG in the evening with mixed feelings and certainly knowing fear. It was hard to leave without saying cheerio to comrades with whom we had served though thick and thin.

Our three days journey to Singapore was a nightmare for we were handcuffed to our seats, given scanty and dirty food and sleep was out of the question. It was here that we noticed the true mentality of the common soldier of Nippon during our miserable ride. We found him a poor, excitable and spiteful companion, ever ready to remind us of their conquest in Asia, and a very nasty individual indeed. When we informed him that the Allies were renowned for their "Stepping off on the wrong foot" we were prepared that Japan had prepared for a twenty years war. What childish prattle?

The morning of the 7th saw us at Singapore Station and the crowds we encountered showed their sympathy in various ways. We found this to be more pronounced among the Chinese. These stolid people incited the wrath of our guard by their determined efforts to engage us in conversation and give us words of encouragement. We obviously gave cause for comment being filthy dirty with nine days growth of beard and our clothing in rags and tatters. We also showed signs of distress our feet being terribly swollen and our wrists where the handcuffs had been locked in a ratchet clasp thus impairing our blood circulation.

Our guards now handed us over to the M.Ps where our troubles really began for these sons of the devil promptly proceeded to let us know who was boss. But though suffering some physical pain we were still able to smile at these brown dwarfs whose every action appeared to have been adopted from the tough guy type of the film.

Eventually we were lodged in Outram Road Gaol after having experienced some more indignities at the hands of our Gaolers. The Gaol proved to be filthy and absolutely vermin infested. We were given a blanket or rag to serve as such, which was lousy. This was our first introduction to a life of solitary confinement which we were to live. We must first describe the farce of a Court Martial which was to condemn us to imprisonment.

After a period of waiting we were shorn of our beards and our heads were shaved. We were then handcuffed and taken by a lorry to G.H.Q. The handcuffs were taken off and we were marched into a room which was filled with Japanese officers. After a pantomime of bows and handshakes all round the court was called to order and we were off. The persons who confronted us were a Major General, two Majors and two junior officers.

The prosecuting officer asked the court for the death sentence which gave us a shaking. The Court was adjourned for two hours and during that short period of waiting we suffered untold mental agonies, the Jap guard making grim gestures and passes with his sword all the time. Once again we were marched in front of our judges and again witnessed the so polite and gentlemanly gestures of the Court. This ended and the prosecutor prepared to read the Do's and Dont's of P.O.Ws. At last we were told that we were not to die for the Imperial Government of Nippon were exercising leniency on our behalf. This was indeed nice to know and duly appreciated. What was to become of us? Were we going to get off scott free? Our hopes were soon shattered because the Court whole heartedly agreed that we deserved five years solitary confinement in spite of the efforts of a more westernized interpreter to bring about a lighter sentence. We were then escorted back to prison to start our sentence.

On arrival we saw some awful sights in the prison compound. English, Australian and Indian troops were one and all in various stages of beri beri; none were able to walk erect. Limbs and private parts were terribly swollen. Even so, one and all made feeble attempts to smile and the V for Victory sign was much in evidence. We had no opportunity to speak to them for we were locked in our cells immediately. I shall never forget the screams and curses of an Englishman who was dying in the cell opposite. Throughout the night this poor wretched creature hung on to life and soundly cursed his tormentors, no fewer than five times the guard entered his cell to jeer and rile him.

The following morning a commotion was heard in the corridor. Six Chinese Communists were being bound by ropes before being ushered off for execution. Five of these prisoners were actually smiling at the efforts of the guards to break their nerves and were doing their utmost to pacify the sixth member who was a boy of fourteen. Their efforts were duly rewarded for the youngster squared his shoulders and dried his eyes, but we can rightly say that we too did our share in bringing such a change in that brave boy's eyes and manners for he responded visibly to our guarded signals of victory and salute. We shall never forget that boy's face when he spotted our faces at the small apertures in our cell doors. We know that he died the death of the brave. The Jap guard however, had noticed our signals etc., so we had a severe trouncing but it was worth it, for we had witnessed a stirring spectacle. That morning our breakfast was a poor effort; little rice and dirty looking fishy soup which made us vomit, and warm water served as a drink that tasted rank. We soon learned that this was to be our regular diet. We also found that we were forbidden to talk under any circumstances unless spoken to by guards, neither sit or walk unless ordered by the guard.



Barter's death naturally set us thinking that we were to be denied medical treatment and left to die. We knew only too well that several of the lads were physically finished and did not mind very much if they were left to die. We did our utmost to keep their spirits up by inventing some victories of the Allies in Europe.

Out of a total of 32 European prisoners there remained on their feet a mere 11, 6 Australians and 5 British. My two pals and I were included in the unfortunate list. All three of us were covered with scabies and lice and Beri-Beri had brought about a bloated appearance. We were very light-headed and violent shooting pains in our private parts made us yell out in pain. We thank our pal the Doc for ~~his~~ his efforts to obtain treatment for us, for which he suffered as the guards struck him repeatedly.

In February two Japanese Medical Officers entered my cell and ordered me to my feet. I tried hard to carry out that order but always my legs refused to bear my weight. At last they left me alone and I listened as they carried out an inspection of all inmates. I prayed long and fervently that morning, had the Japs relented? Were we to have treatment after all? In the afternoon a Jap orderly entered ~~my~~ my cell, took my temperature and gave me two tablets. What a queer mentality the Jap has, I had been given tablets to induce sleep whilst a few cells away a comrade was being hidden because he could not stifle the cry of sheer pain brought about by a swollen abdomen and private parts.

A short while later, to our amazement we were sent to Roberts Hospital at Changi P.O.W. Camp, where we still are and well on our way to recovery.

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PART. 15.

AUSSIE P.O.Ws.  
EXPERIENCES IN  
THAILAND and BURMA.

Stories of what the other man did in Thailand and Burma are always an interesting subject for discussion among the occupants in Changi Camp, whether he be a man who did not leave the Island or one who suffered much somewhere along the line to the north.

With a number of members of "A" Force and Java parties coming into camp hospital from River Valley Road, it is possible to gather facts which when linked up gives us an idea of the conditions and experiences the early contingents of prisoners of war leaving Changi faced.

"A" Force comprising 1,000 of the 22nd Bde, AIF, travelling on the "Celebes Maru", with Col. Ramsey in charge of them, and 2,000, which included a large number of the 2/4 M.G. Bn and others of AIF units, under Major Green, on the "Tayohasi Maru", left Singapore on May 14, 1942, for Burma. At Margui, 1,000 consisting of the 2/4 M.G. Bn and others disembarked, while the remainder continued on towards Tavoy, disembarking at a large rice store, 25 miles down river from Tavoy.

There was a sensation the day after encamping when eight men of the AIF 4th Anti/Tank Regt escaped.

They were brought back four days later and shot,

The executions were naturally, very unpleasant, particularly as the Japanese would not let them speak to anyone not even the padre, while their belongings, including paybooks, were buried with them.

A month later, Major Green's party arrived from Mergui and went to Ye; a party of reinforcements also continued with them. Later another party came into Tavoy from Victoria Point. Subsequently, the bigger part of the force was sent to Moulmein and then on to Than Buziyat or Tan Besar, as this camp became known generally.

Tan Besar became the HQ of "A" Force, Williams Party, among them 2nd/2nd Pioneers and Navy personnel, from Java, which spent two days in Changi before proceeding north, a party of 3rd M.T., 105th Transport and 6th Field Coy, all AIF under Col. Black, and a large contingent of N.E.I. Forces. This camp was known as No 3 Branch, Thai Prisoners of War Administration.

Brigadier Varlet, AIF now in River Valley Road Camp, was P.O.W. Commander. Col. Anderson took charge of the remainder of "A" Force, which with "Williams" Force, became separately known as Mobile Unit No.1. when work began on laying irons for the railway.

Compared with the experiences of "F" and "H" Forces, these early Burma and Thailand parties were fortunate. Though they had a certain amount of marches to do, they were not forced on long marches such as in the case of some members of "F" Force for instance, 200 kilos. Further, though there were periods when there was a lot of sickness, there were fewer deaths, "A" Force losing approximately 380.

When the main bodies of #F\* and "H" Forces had left Kanburi all No.3. Branch were transported to the southern camp and later the fit were taken to Saigon where they awaited transport to Japan. Lack of shipping prevented further persuance to these plans and after three months in Saigon some moved by rail to Singapore. This party comprised of 15 groups of 150 (1250) all AIF except for 250 English and Americans (belonging to the Java Parties). The remainder were transferred back to Thailand to No.3. Branch. A further 300 men, 200 AIF and 200 Dutch and Americans later arrived at River Valley Road Camp from Kanburi.

Some of the sick are being sent to Changi Hospital and one or two of these men will tell their story in their own words.

PTE. GILLETTE.

"At Tavoy, we were encamped in a Hangar at the aerodrome which had a floor of blue metal. This was at a spot four miles out of the town. We started the march there from the point where we disembarked, 25 miles down river, at dawn, and we were given our first meal at 2 am the following morning. We did not get another meal until 4.30 pm. that day when we reached the drome. Conditions were bad here and we soon developed a number of dysentery cases. After a week we moved to the former R.A.F. quarters where accommadation was better and also the food improved.

The day after arrival at Tavoy drome, eight men tried to escape but were found ~~shot~~ by the Japanese and shot.

At Tavoy, we worked on the airfield; it was reasonable work and we had every Sunday free. We finished there on Sept.29. and embarked on the "Ankai Maru" a vessel of 1,000 tons. There were 1,000 of us aboard and though the Japanese tried, they could not get more on the boat.

We reached Moulmein at 4 pm. on October 1st and marched several miles to Moulmein Mission Hall where we were billeted. All through Moulmein the native population was exceptionally good to us. The following day we left for Tan Besar. We ~~remained~~ commenced a period of four days work here and were then taken to a camp 18 kilos away, Tan Besar remained our H.Q. with Brig. Varley in charge. In the new camp the hutments were very poor but the food was fairly good. Our work was excavations. Our interpreter, Captain Drower, an English Officer did a marvellous job of work on behalf of the camp, but on Dec 24 he was badly beaten up by the Japanese, for what reason we do not know even now. There was almost a riot among the men who were eager to show their disapproval.

About the same time, a Sgt O'Donnell was missing. We had a special roll call and the Japanese went in search of him in a southerly direction; after a while we heard the reports of three shots. Near dark we sent some men out to get him because the Japanese said they had shot him, our men found him two miles to the north. He had been shot three times and on examination it was found that ~~the~~ the second and third shots had struck him whilst on the ground. The Japanese would not permit the M.O. to examine the body. Col, Anderson only was permitted to see it.

After this incident, conditions changed and things were tightened up. The guards were very tough and it was almost dangerous and daring to go anywhere near them.

Here let A.B. S.C. Matson, HMAS. Perth, take up the story;

A.B. Matson was with "Williams" party from Java and left Singapore after two days in Changi, for Rangoon in October 1942. He speaks of the movements of Mobile Unit No.1. from the time it left Tan Besar, the base camp.

"Our first working camp was, (I do not remember the names of the camps) at a point 35 kilos from Tan Besar. We were there for five months during which time we had only one death. The general treatment there was good and the food was better than on occasions later. The health of the men was also reasonably good and there was really very little sickness. We were working on the railway line, building embankments and cutting away earth from the 30 to 40 kilo points.

We left there for the 26 kilo, point where work became harder with longer hours but for a month we were given double rations. From the 26 kilo we moved to 45 kilo where we had a number go down with sickness, they were sent back to the base camp hospital. At this point we had to work very late hours from 9 am to 11 pm. From here 150 men were sent to 30 kilo point while the main party moved on to 60 kilo point. We arrived there on May 9 and it was in this camp that one man died from cholera. Again, the food was very good. From here the major part of the force was moved to 40 kilo point. We had been engaged on laying rails and ballast but at this point the work was all ballast. Camp conditions were very bad; there was a lot of fever and other diseases and we had a number of deaths. Food was not too good but we were still getting fresh meat.

A lot of sick were left at that camp when the main body moved back to 60 kilo point. Here we had our first experience of stews made from boxed meat. The boxes were usually soaking wet through, having been left in the rain and became maggot ridden. The meat stank and though it was well washed, thousands of maggots would be floating around in the stew. Occasionally, a dry box of meat or spiced meat was produced and these would be very good indeed. Otherwise food here was poor.

The work from 60-70 kilo, points was bad and we were out all hours. The treatment from the Japanese was also bad and there were plenty of lashings. Nothing seemed to go right. The rains set in and the weather was very hostile.

At the 80 kilo point we also met a lot of setbacks and there the Japanese even had groups of fifty one star Japanese soldiers working under the same conditions as ourselves. During the period here we had two 36 hour stretches of work. From here we moved to the 75th kilo where there was a large Japanese camp, extensive transport depot and ammunition and food dump stretching for five kilos. Later we were shifted to the 108th kilo, a big Dutch camp, here the food improved a great deal compared with the previous three or four camps.

During this period we were laying rails and the system was for our baggage to be sent ahead by truck to the camp which would be our destination and for the party to follow up, laying rails and ballast on the way.

At 116 kilo point we struck the worst camp during our stay in Burma and Thailand, and even the Japanese admitted it was a very bad camp. General health was bad and most of us developed fever. The food was shocking and the living conditions deplorable. When we arrived we had to remove dead natives from the huts which we were to occupy. In parts mud was up to our knees. Our hut was on a slope with a hut occupied by native labour just a little higher. Water flowed from the native's hut into our quarters and the mess they made with it came also and stuck there. The stench was terrible. The kitchen was a low roofed affair which presented the picture of a pig-sty. We were very glad to leave this camp when we were moved away to the 122 kilo point which was the first big camp we entered in what was regarded as the Thailand end of the line. It was a camp of Australians and here we lost many dead. We were housed in huts which had previously been elephant dens.

Eventually, we moved again to the 131 kilo camp which was the last camp we struck as far as the construction of the railway was concerned, and from here we went on to 155 kilo where the line was joined. For the first ten days the food was good, as good as anywhere along the line, but afterwards it became very poor. While we were here the Japanese celebrated the completion of the railway. They ordered that cemeteries were to be tidied up and that a memorial service should ~~held~~ be held, handing us a cross for the graveyard at this point.

At Christmas, while we were at 131 kilo, known to us as Little Neiki, we received our first mail which was only for personnel of the Java Parties. Little Neiki was a bad fever camp and many went down sick. The Japanese then decided to send our sick to Tamakan hospital near Kanburi. All the fit men were sent to camps 114 and 105 kilo points; 114 point was on the Japanese designed border of Thailand and Burma. From these camps, any sick were sent to the main Neiki camp now occupied by Dutch Troops. Later the sick were sent to Tamakan.

Early in the New ~~Year~~ Year it was decided to send a working party to Kanburi and we reached this camp on January 12th. We then heard that we were to be sent to Japan. The fit men were sorted out from the sick or unfit. We first had to pass our own M.O. and then a Japanese M.O. after which we were segregated and not permitted to talk to the unfits. We were then divided into "Kumies" or parties of 150 and these kumies left in groups of two's for Non-Phradok where each remained a week. The Japanese were very particular as to what we ate and insisted that all our water be boiled for drinking. We were not allowed to mix with any sick in camp or even talk to them.

We left by train for Bangkok and Non-Peng, Indo-China and travelled down river by ferry to Saigon. In Saigon the camps were very full and congested; hygiene was by no means the best, but the food was good. We stayed here for three months, awaiting transport to Japan. Actually two kumies were put aboard a ship on which they stayed for three days before they returned to camp

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We were billeted on a wharf, some 2½ miles from the city, and during our stay here we experienced several air raid alarms. One night it was 'fair dinkum'. Planes came over one at a time and dropped their bombs the nearest falling 200 yards from the camp. One wiped out a cigarette factory only ½ mile from the camp. Other bombs appear to have done little damage except for wrecking native huts and houses and killing a number of Anamites and Chinese. The ack ack was pretty lively but very ineffective.

Whilst, at Saigon, we were digging air-raid shelters all over the city, and working on anti-blast walls at an aerodrome. Saigon is now a mass of holes. We also worked at the Japanese Ordnance Depot and HQ., petrol dumps in a rubber plantation and on moving ammunition from ships and factories to other ships. Day and night shifts were also engaged on loading rice aboard ships for Singapore and Japan. One shift by day and two ~~xxx~~ at night.

The treatment by the Japanese was fairly good and any man injured at work received compensation in the form of full pay while he was sick. The French and the Anamites were exceptionally good to us and handed us money, food and cigarette s at every opportunity. The French Red Cross gave the camp an almost full orchestra of instruments, and each kumie two sets of chessmen and a badminton set. In regard to purchases, food was very cheap, and so were cigarettes, in fact the cheapest we had struck since becoming prisoners of war.

Occasionally there was trouble through over loading trucks with men and twice we had smashes in which some of our men were injured. Otherwise the general health of the camp was good. Sometimes the Korean guards behaved offensively but the Japanese officer who was in charge took action to prevent any repetition of such incidents.

Here again we received mail and International Red Cross parcels from America. Of the latter the Japanese handed one to each American (with Williams Force) in camp. Two single boxes remained and these were shared among a number of English, Australians and Dutch received nothing from these parcels.

From the total in camp, 15 Kumies of mainly Australians were detailed for transportation to Singapore. The remainder to Thailand. We travelled back along the same line on which we had come, up to Saigon via Non-Peng, Bangkok, Non-Phradok and Bamphong. On the down country trip food arrangements were exceptionally bad and we never knew when we were going to get a meal.

On arrival in Singapore we were taken to River Valley Camp, while our sick were brought on to Changi Hospital. At River Valley Road, the food is the worst we have ever struck, even worse than in the jungle of Thailand.



On July 25th or 26th, 650 men left River Valley Road Camp for some destination unknown, believed to be an Island where an aerodrome is to be built. When we arrived in Singapore we expected to find ships ready to take us to Japan. We found that a party of P.O.W were aboard one ship and it is believed they had been on that ship in the harbour for 17 days.

At Tan Besar, ~~xxx~~ we experienced two air raids during which bombs fell on our hospital and several huts. After the second day of the raid, we were evacuated to the 80 kilo camp. During the raids fellows left their huts to cheer the planes and a number were killed as a result of bombs or machine gun fire. Since we left Thailand, all the railway sidings, particularly at the 105 and 62 kilo camps, have come in for some bombings. There was also a lot of strafing of trains but to my knowledge, no bridges have been wrecked.

A.B. Matson recalls that while walking to the railway station at Moulmein from the gaol, between 400 and 500 natives opened their shops and houses and gave the troops anything they wanted.



PART. 16.

XXXXXXXXXXXX

PENAL LAWS WITH REGARD TO PRISONERS OF WAR.

ARTICLE. I.

The present laws apply to crime(s) committed by prisoners of war.

ARTICLE. 11.

In case of violence or threat is committed by any party, company or group of individuals, the leader (s) shall be liable to capital punishment, or imprisonment, or confinement for an indefinite period. Others involved shall be liable to imprisonment or confinement for an indefinite period ~~or~~ for not less than one year.

ARTICLE. 111.

Section. 1. Anyone killing or causing the death of any supervisor, guard or escort of prisoners of war shall be liable to capital punishment.

Section. 11. Anyone preparing or causing any plot or conspiracy to be communicated, for the purpose of committing the crime (s) mentioned in the preceding section shall be liable to imprisonment or confinement for a definite period of not less than two years.

ARTICLE. 1V.

Section. 1. Any one inflicting injury on the person of any supervisor guard or escort of prisoners of war, or committing any violence or making any threat against the afore mentioned person (s) shall be liable to capital punishment, or imprisonment or confinement for an indefinite period, or for a period of not less than two years.

Section. 11. In case any of the aforementioned crime (s) are committed by any company, party or group of individuals, the leaders shall be liable to capital punishment, or imprisonment or confinement for an indefinite period. Others involved shall be liable to capital punishment, or imprisonment or confinement for an indefinite period or for not less than three years.

Section. 111. Any one causing the death of any persons resulting from the act (s) mentioned in the preceding two sections shall be liable to capital punishment.

ARTICLE. V.

Section. 1. Any one resisting any order or command of any supervisor; guard or escort of prisoners of war, or disobeying any order of the aforementioned person (s) shall be liable to capital punishment, or imprisonment or confinement for an indefinite period, for not less than one year.

Section. 11. In case any party, company or group of individuals committ any act mentioned in the preceding section, the leader (s) shall be liable to capital punishment, or imprisonment or confinement for an indefinite period. Others involved shall be liable to capital punishment, or imprisonment or confinement for an indefinite period or for not less than two years.

ARTICLE. VI.

Section.1. Any one insulting any supervisor, guard or escort of prisoners of war in his or their presence, or by any other manner commit any insult or act of disrespect, shall be liable to imprisonment or confinement for a period not exceeding five years.

ARTICLE. VII.

Section.1. In case any escape is made by a party, company or group of individuals, the leader (s) shall be liable to capital punishment, or imprisonment or confinement for an indefinite period, or for not less than ten years. Others involved shall be liable to imprisonment or confinement for an indefinite period, or for not less than one year.

ARTICLE. VIII.

Section.1. Any one attempting to commit any crime mentioned in section 1, Article 11; Section 1, Article 111; Section 1&11, Article 1V, and Article VII, shall be liable to punishment.

ARTICLE. IX.

Section.1. Any one who, released on oath, breaks his oath, shall be liable to capital punishment, or imprisonment or confinement for an indefinite period or for not less than seven years.

Section.11. Any one who, released on oath, takes up arms in order to commit any act of resistance, shall be liable to capital punishment.

ARTICLE. X.

Any one violating an oath not to escape shall be liable to imprisonment or confinement for a period of not less than one year. Any one violating any other oath (s) shall be liable to imprisonment or confinement for a period not exceeding ten years.

ARTICLE. XI.

The leader (s) who form any party, company or group of individuals for ~~any~~ the purpose of committing any act of insubordination, shall be liable to imprisonment or confinement for a period of not less than one year nor more than ten. Others involved shall be liable to imprisonment or confinement for a period of not less than six months nor more than five years.

ARTICLE XII.

Provisions given under Article VII shall not apply to any crime committed by any one during his previous ~~in~~ captivity, who again is taken as prisoner of war.

SUPPLEMENTARY PROVISION.

The present laws shall come into force on and after the day of promulgation.

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PROMULGATED ON THE NINTH DAY OF MARCH IN THE EIGHTEENTH YEAR OF SHOWA.

PART. 17.

UP COUNTRY WITH "F" FORCE .

Wed. 28 Apr. 42. Left Changi by lorry - 1 Officer and 26 O.Rs to a lorry at 0300 hours. Entrained in goods waggons at 0600 hours. Left Singapore (Syonan) 0645 hrs. Permitted to take such luggage as could be manhandled for short distances plus  $\frac{1}{2}$  truck heavy baggage (450) men. Each wagon carried two table tops, 1 latrine seat, 1 six and 2 four gallon containers, 1 pick and shovel. Heavy baggage included reserve rations, soya stoves, electric light plant, office equipment, tools, canteen supplies, timber, currugated iron sheeting and medical stores. Arrived at Gemas at 1800 hrs and given food. Sanitary arrangements consisted of short halts at wayside stations. There was insufficient latrine space so open spaces were used. No pits were dug.

Thurs. 29 Apr. 0400 hrs arrived at Kuala Lumpur, and fed.  
1500 hrs arrived at Ipoh, and fed.

It was noticeable on the journey throughout Malaya that

- (a) The inhabitants were friendly, badly clothed, all fed.  
(They sent children to collect scraps from our meals).
- (b) There was very little work going on. No tapping of Rubber Trees.  
A few tin mines were working near Ipoh.
- (c) Road and railway bridges which had been wrecked by us were all repaired either temporarily or permanently.

Fri. 30th Apr. 0200 hrs arrived at Prai, and fed.  
1500 hrs arrived at Haad Yai, and fed.

Whilst in Malaya we had been permitted to buy food, chiefly fruit from hawkers. On arrival in Thailand this privelege was withdrawn. Our guard was friendly but the I.J.A. personnel at Thai stations were far from being so.

Sun. 2nd May. 1400 hrs arrived at Bampong.  
Bampong is approximately 68 km. (40 miles) short of Bangkok and about 1100 miles by rail from Singapore. The time taken for the journey was 103 hours, about double normal time. 27 men with their baggage in steel trucks for 103 hours in tropical country is not exactly a pleasure trip. The trucks measured 19' x 7' x 6' 6". From this camp we commenced the night marches.

NIGHT MARCHES.

3/4	May	- Bampong	to Tamara	approx 25 km.	15 $\frac{1}{2}$ mile.
4/5	"	Tamara	to Kamburi	" " "	" "
5/6	"	One nights rest.			
6/7	"	Kamburi	to Wonpah	" 24 km.	15 "
7/8	"	Wonpah	to Tardun.	" 26 "	16 "
8/9	"	One nights rest.			
9/10	"	Tardun	to Tarso.	" 24 "	15 "
10/11	"	Tarso	to Kanyo.	" 23 "	14 $\frac{1}{2}$ "
11/12	"	Kanyo	to Kinsayo	" 18 "	11 $\frac{1}{2}$ "
12/13	"	One nights rest.			
13/14	"	One nights rest.			
14/15	"	Kinsayo	to Womping	" 23 "	14 $\frac{1}{2}$ "
15/16	"	Womping	to Bronkali	" 23 "	14 $\frac{1}{2}$ "
16/17	"	One nights rest.			
17/18	"	Bronkali	to Tarkanun	" 17 "	10 $\frac{1}{2}$ "
18/19	"	Tarkanun	to Tameran Par.	" 21 "	13 "
19/20	"	Tameran Par	to Konkoita.	" 23 "	14 $\frac{1}{2}$ "

20/21 May.      Konkoita      to      Shimo-Nieke      Approx. 20km 12 $\frac{1}{2}$  m.  
21/22    "      Shimo-Nieke      to      Sonkrai.      "      17 " 11 "

TOTAL:- 309 Kilometres = approx 193 miles.

Sonkrai to Kami Sonkrai 3 miles; to Changraya, 5 miles;  
to Tambaya Hospital, 50 miles.

SUMMARY.      Marched 14 nights with 5 nights rest, the last 5  
                         nights in succession. Could never discover how many  
                         more marches we had to do, or how far each march was.  
Night marches usually started at 1900 hrs and ended at 0500 hrs.  
The half-way halt for hot water was made and a two or three hrs.  
rest. End of each march we had 3 hours rest.

DETAILS OF MARCHES.

Sun. 2 May.      Arrived at Bangpong 1400 hours. Ordered to detrain  
and stack all baggage on siding. Later ordered to take up all  
personnel kit and form up by ~~the~~ wagons outside the station.  
All heavy kit had to be left on siding. After considerable delay,  
counting and recounting, ordered to carry all personnel kit to  
camp, a distance of approx. 1 $\frac{1}{2}$  miles. A considerable amount of kit  
was dumped throughout this distance by men unable to carry it.  
On arrival at the camp we were greeted by two staff officers of  
18 Div. with the news that we were to march approx. 150 miles and  
carry our own kit. We were to have approx. 36 hrs rest at Bampon  
During this period we were allotted I.J.A. numbers, searched,  
sorted into parties of 100, and sold such kit as we were unable  
to carry. Changing of money was difficult, the Thais not being  
at all keen in accepting I.J.A. Straits Dollar Script. Eggs and  
good cigarettes were plentiful- eggs 14 for a dollar, cigarettes  
1 dollar per packet of 20.

                         Marched out of Bampong at 1900 hours.

Received a good send off by personnel of No. 12 Train. Road  
fairly good mens spirits fairly high. Halted at 1230 am for tea.  
Given hot water in lieu (this tea halt always meant boiling water).  
Men disposed of kit by the wayside. Plenty of stragglers. During  
the march great difficulty was experienced in keeping the men in  
column. Thais actually mingled with the column and relieved men  
of articles of clothing, action in quite a few cases being taken  
by the men themselves in no uncertain manner. Eventually whole  
party arrived at 1030 hrs and many had to be assisted. Captain  
Anderson, A.I.F., Camp Commandant. Bathing in River was permitted.  
Good canteen where eggs, coffee, cakes could be bought. Prices  
were high and there was no small change available.

Tues. 4 May.      At 2000 hrs we marched out leaving about 50 sick  
men. Very high percentage of those that started were suffering  
from sore feet. It should be remembered that the men had been  
Ps.O.W. for 18 months, had been on a very meagre rations, and  
that their footwear was far from satisfactory. Socks were in many  
cases were non-existent.

The party eventually arrived at Kanburi at approx. 1030 hrs. Captain Waller S.S.V.F. was Camp Commandant. We were told that we would be staying for one night, but there was no cover except four hospital patients; no tea and no water was issued. No hawkers were allowed but there was a small canteen at which four men were allowed at a time, and water already boiled could be bought at 10 cents per bucket. Bathing was allowed once a day in an organised group, but the river was 25 minutes march away. Approx. 150 men went to bathe and as a result of six men coming back independantly, contrary to orders, they were rounded up and slapped in the face, kicked on the shins and made to sit on the square in the rain. They were later released. Food here was good - stews contained meat, Towgay, Beans, Eggs and Onions.

Thurs. 6 May. All men considered fit to march to the next place had to parade at 1100 hrs and march 2 miles to the I.J.A. Hospital go through a 'glass-rodding' and Malarial blood test and march back. Nearly every body was by this time suffering from blistered feet and the supply of Elasto-Plast was running low.

1900 hours paraded ready to march off.

2300 hours Marched off. The delay was caused by Hospital numbers being incorrect. It rained steadily during the wait and several men collapsed and had to be left behind. The march was very badly controlled by I.J.A. guards. Leading guards set too fast a pace, and as a result the column quickly became split. The last Company (led by Captain Burnett R.A.S.C.) took the wrong road at the Hospital cross-roads and did not discover their mistake until they had gone about 1½ miles. The Company was halted, and, after a discussion with the I.J.A. rearguard, we turned about and turned left at the cross-roads. After we had gone about half a mile the guard halted the company and it soon became obvious that he had lost his way. One of the guards pushed off to get instructions and after approximately one hours halt we proceeded. We had only gone about one mile when we caught up with what we imagined the remainder of the company, but later discovered what was the centre of the column which was also lost. After a heated argument between the guards, the order was given to advance and after approx. 5 miles of extremely heavy going along a sand-track, we came to the half-way halt where we found the remainder of the column. On this occasion we halted for two-half hours and were able to buy excellent coffee.

The second half of the march was along a very muddy road. We eventually arrived at our destination many of the men were very tired and had to be assisted. The camp was comparatively a pleasant place - there was a certain amount of cover under tress and shrubs and the food was good.

Fri. 7 May. Heavy personnel baggage was sent on by bullock cart at a cost of 50 cents per head. The march was fairly good going to start with but deteriorated into a muddy track and was hilly in parts. There were canteen arrangements at the half-way halt, but owing to the difference of opinion (presumably over the rake off) between the I.J.A. and Thai hawkers, we were not allowed to buy anything - hot water only being provided. We had about two hours halt and arrived at Tardun 0500 hrs.



We halted until, 0800 hours - very cold and damp - when we marched into camp. There was as usual no cover than hand-made Bamboo shelters covered with ground sheets etc., there was a small canteen with hawkers, river bathing about three-quarters a mile away, and the food was fairly good. We halted one night here. By now many men were suffering from Diarrhoea due largely to chills on the stomach picked up at the halts. The best cure proved to be a small Japanese black pill, with cresote as chief content. Our one and only interrupter was taken away from us which increased our difficulties for the rest of the time.

Sunday. 9 May. Marched off at approx. 2000 hrs for Tarso. The march was uneventful but about the most tiring to date. Struck the much talked of railway for the first time. Colonel Dillon A.Q. 18 Div. and Major Wilde, O & B.L.I. met us. Put under cover of tents for the afternoon. The sick parade was taken by an I.J.A. M.O. We were warned by our own M.Os that nobody would be left behind who were suffering from Diarroheoa or sores of any kind. The result was that the next march was carried out with many sick men.

Monday. 10 May. Left Tarso at 1800 hrs for Kanyo. A very tiring march. Reached Kanyo at 0400 hrs, halted and slept to 0700 hours. When we entered the camp and met our two staff officers. A small stream ran through the camp and one was able to get a good wash. Food here was indifferent and there was no canteen. Lieut. Harwood RAOC, had his face severely slapped because at one of the halts, two of his men failed to move on at the restart. This treatment was most unjustified as it was dark and impossible to find men, The I.J.A. had taken away our torches etc., at Bampong.

Tues. 11 May. 1900 hrs left Kanyo Kinsayo. An uneventful march. When we arrived there personnel of Train 10 were still there. We were to spend two nights in this camp - a much needed rest. The camp was in a bamboo forest: no fixed cover was available, but we managed to make ourselves fairly comfortable. There were good bathing facilities about  $1\frac{1}{2}$  miles away and also a good I.J.A. canteen about 1 mile away. Food was fairly good - oiled fish, onions, rice and beans. Train 10 had started to leave here on 11th May, but for some unknown reason (reported to be Chinese 'Gorillas') had been turned back. Train 12v arrived a.m. 13 May.

Friday 14 May. Left Kinsayo for Womping. We had left about 30 sick behind after a certain amount of argument. The rest had certainly done us good and some of our blisters were a little more comfortable. Diarrhoea was as bad as ever and there were signs of Dysentery.

Saturday. 15 May. Womping to Bronkali ( the concentration Camp). This camp was so ~~named~~ named owing to the treatment meted out by the Japanese NCO in charge, to Officers and Men alike. It should be noted that all camps we had been in, the senior Japanese soldier had been at the most the equivalent of a Sergeant. These Japanese NCOs were in many cases reasonably helpful and competent. It was, however, impossible to alter any programme laid down by higher authority, or to get any real assistance over medical arrangements etc. These NCOs had their instructions and no argument, however reasonable, would make them revise their orders. This NCO, it was rumoured, had been in the Japanese Imperial Guard. He certainly ran an efficient camp, but this was brought about striking the men with sticks. We were on endless fatigues, digging latrines, refuse pits, drawing water etc. There was in fact little or no rest, mental or otherwise, for anybody. The IJA were persistent in their attempts to buy watches, fountain pens and cigarette lighters, but offered very small sums for them. If one refused to sell they became annoyed and in some cases, violent. Lt. Moffatt was beaten up for refusing to sell his silver screw pencil.

Monday. 17 May. No.12 train marched in about 0800 hrs and received the same treatment as we had done. 1900 hrs we marched out, glad to a man to leave this place. An uncomfortable march owing to rain and undulating country. Camp close to river - bathing good - accomodation as usual.

Tuesday. 18 May. 1800 hrs~~x~~ marched out - rained for most of the march. New camp pretty poor - food poor - no canteen. Good bathing - bought some bananas from Thais living on the river.

Wednesday. 19 May. A terrific downpour of rain just as we were about to leave camp, made us and our belongings soaking wet. Our new camp was the worst we had been in. There was absolutely no cover, no sanitary arrangements, and bathing and feeding was  $\frac{3}{4}$  mile away. The march had been very hilly and had severely tested the men. It rained nearly all the way, and we had to wade through mud and water. Although dog-tired, the spirit of the men did not flag and songs like "Tipperary" and "Pack up Your Troubles" were sung. The Japanese sentry had missed the hot water halt and to make matters worse he marched the column past our next camp for a distance of  $2\frac{1}{2}$  kilos.

Thursday. 20 May. Marched to Neiki, the base HQ camp where Col. Harris and Major Wilde were present. We were all warned to take full precautions against cholera as there had already been a few deaths from this, at this camp. Col. Harris gave us encouraging news of our next and final camp; said that arrangements for a canteen were well in hand; that quarters were comfortable and that generally speaking, we should soon forget the trials of the march. Food here was good, containing meat and veg.

Saturday. 15 May. Womping to Bronkali ( the concentration Camp). This camp was so ~~xxx~~ named owing to the treatment meted out by the Japanese NCO in charge, to Officers and Men alike. It should be noted that all camps we had been in, the senior Japanese soldier had been at the most the equivalent of a Sergeant. These Japanese NCOs were in many cases reasonably helpful and competent. It was, however, impossible to alter any programme laid down by higher authority, or to get any real assistance over medical arrangements etc. These NCOs had their instructions and no argument, however reasonable, would make them revise their orders. This NCO, it was rumoured, had been in the Japanese Imperial Guard. He certainly ran an efficient camp, but this was brought about striking the men with sticks. We were on endless fatigues, digging latrines, refuse pits, drawing water etc. There was in fact little or no rest, mental or otherwise, for anybody. The IJA were persistent in their attempts to buy watches, fountain pens and cigarette lighters, but offered very small sums for them. If one refused to sell they became annoyed and in some cases, violent. Lt. Moffatt was beaten up for refusing to sell his silver screw pencil.

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Eventually tents were put over a half completed hut, fires lit inside and food sent over for the new inmates.

Meanwhile, the O?C? Camp, (Lt.Col. Pope.) had been trying to persuade the IJA to permit us to move the sick men and hospital patients the following morning. Three separate appeals were made and on each occasion they were refused. On the last occasion Col. Pope was informed that ~~THE IJA~~ in the IJA, orders were never questioned and were carried out regardless of any other consideration. It was clearly stated to the NCO l/c Camp that to carry out this order meant moving men who were dangerously ill, but this made no difference. By 0200 hrs all but 27 walking wounded and 4 stretcher cases were moved across. The remainder, and the move of the diarrhoea cases were completed between 0700 hrs and 1000 hrs. Accommodation for the isolation camp was beyond description. The ground was a quagmire, the roof of the hut leaked badly and the men had nothing to lie or sit on other than their own kit, which in many cases did not even include a blanket or groundsheet. It was altogether the most inhuman thing I have ever witnessed, and attribute the death of Pte. JC. Walker very largely to this move.

Not content with this move, the IJA ordered a further move of isolation cases into tents as they would not allow the Burmans to put an attap roof on the hut whilst it was occupied. Tents were pitched by the patients, the area limed and disinfected, and the hospital patients moved again. The following day, 8th June the IJA ordered the tents to be struck and moved to a new area because they thought the present place too near the Burmese huts. This was done.

The food up to now, 13 June, had been fairly reasonable. rice, butter beans, towgay, dried yak meat and oiled fish were included. The days menu was usually ; breakfast, rice; Mid-day, rice and fish with a veg stew; evening meal, rice and meat stew. About this time we became somewhat apprehensive of the food situation to come. It was learned that the railway on the Burma side was completed for only 90 kilos from Moulmien and that in wet weather even this stretch was continually breaking down owing to embankments slipping. From rail-head to road-head was about 110 kilos and from road-head to our camp about 20 kilos. Along the road portion there were already breaks including one big bridge, and the monsoon had not yet started. On the Siam side the situation was even worse, the railway went as far as Tarso (120 kilos from our camp). This road, as we knew, was very poor and we knew that bridges were also down and that MT. was unable to get through. We had no reserve rations and on this date there were approx 20 bags of rice, some fish and onions and two bullocks in reserve. Medical supplies were in a very low state; in fact dangerously low, Little has been said of the cholera epidemic - figures as shown in the chart speak for themselves:-

CHOLERA CHART.

Date.	Admit.	Deaths.	Date.	Admt.	Deaths.
21st M.	3	-	10 Jne.	2	2
22	8	1	11	15	11
23	1	1	12	9	8
24	-	-	13	4	5
25	6	1	14	2	7
26	17	7	15	2	7
27	21	6	16	-	4
28	19	6	17	-	2
29	52	4	18	-	-
30	33	25	19	-	2
31	18	16	20	-	1
1st J.	17	11	21	-	2
2	16	10	22	-	1
3	16	10	23	-	1
4	15	13	24	-	2
5	11	12	25	-	2
6	6	8	26	-	2
7	11	11			
8	-	9			
9	1	3			

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Period:- 37 Days.  
 Admissions:- 315.  
 Deaths:- 219.

The treatment of POWs by IJA personnel left much to be desired. Troops were beaten up with sticks, fists used in their faces and kicks on the shins etc on many occasions. Protest was made to Lt. 1Abey l/C IJA Engineers - it had some effect but not much. There were cases where men were knocked to the ground unconscious and then kicked whilst on the ground. Sgt. Greeby aged 42 was one. About this time there was an increase in malaria - mostly relapses - also swellings of the legs thighs, private parts and face - all symptoms of Beri-Beri due to under-nourishment on a rice diet.

Monday. 14 June.

Ration situation is serious.

IJA gave orders that only two meals a day will be issued except for working parties and they will get three. It is finally arranged that we have three meals but that they are cut by half. IJA order 100 men to go 26 Km to carry 40lbs of rice per man, but as we are unable to find this number of fit men, it is postponed for 24 hours. News comes in that the situation is as bad, and in some cases worse, in other camps.

Tuesday. 15 June. 40 men man-handle 4 bullock carts 26 Km for rations. Brought back rice, butter beans and towgay. Very heavy going, carts having to be virtually lifted at some points,

Wednesday. 16 June. IJA receive their months canteen supplies. The system of issue is of interest. A list of commodities is placed on one sheet of squared paper, and a list of names on another. One sheet is then placed on the other and a soldier has to buy whatsoever item appears against his name. Whether he can pay cash or not, he is handed the goods and is given a certain time in which to produce the cash. As a result of this system some BOWS gained some much needed food stuffs:- biscuits, tinned fish, frying oil and cigarettes.

Thursday. 17 June. Another party went for rations - 14 bullocks also arrived. The ration situation further back appears to be worse than it is with us.

Sunday. 20 June. Church Service by camp fire at 2100 hrs: Very impressive and 100% attendance of officers. Col. Banu arrived on a visit and discussed our difficulties with Col. Hingston. RAOC. The question of food was raised on the grounds that ~~from~~ better food was essential to build up broken bodies. Col. Banu was sympathetic, but said that it was dependent on the road. There may be some truth in this but the fact remains that lorries can and do get through. The question of beatings up by the IJA soldiers was also raised, and it was stated that this had been prohibited.

Monday. 21 June. Col. Banu finished his visit. Major Hanbury and Col. Hingston to Neiki to see Col. Harris (force Comdr).

Tuesday. 22 June. Party for rations. Ration lorry arrived with 21 sacks rice (4½ days supply). "Glass Rodding" and Malarial test. Another death from cerebral malaria. Death very sudden - in this case, slight fever, temp. 99. Nearly all cases of this type of malaria are reported to be fatal. One or two cases of small-pox - none fatal.

Wednesday 23 June. Col. Harris and Col. Banu arrived and stayed the night. Col. Banu apparently perturbed at the physical state of the men. It is considered by the "experts" that our ration is probably sufficient to keep men in reasonable health, provided that they are not expected to do heavy work. It is quite inadequate to build men up after an illness. One days ration consists of, 4½ sacks of rice - ½ sack beans or towgay - with ¾ bullock and fish for those working - this for 1,400 men. It amounts to 1 pint mug full, of rice three times a day, ½ pint mug of stew twice a day (contains meat only once) and about every other day a piece of dried fish 4" long by 1½" wide.

Thursday. 24 June. 6 lorry loads of rice arrived. Capt Burnett, RASC died of exhaustion following malaria and dysentery

Friday. 25. June. 400 men ordered out at 2100 hrs to pull lorries out of ditches. Elephants had already failed, and it was now dark. Col. Hingston protested and had the order cancelled. IJA issue orders that workers receive 600 grams of rice, sick 500 grams.

Thursday. 1. July. 130 fit men only available for work under the IJA. They demand 165. When we protested they say they will come and collect from "bed down" and hospital. In order to prevent this the C.O. decides to make up the number from selected sick men, Among my party were two men with fever, four with ulcers on their legs, one with an ulcerated stomach and several dysentery cases. The men left camp at 0900 hrs and returned at 2150 (12½ hours). They had a break of one hour at midday and ½ hour at 1700 hrs. They were employed at sawing tree trunks, felling trees, carrying granite and heavy logs and laying them on the road. I managed to get one man back to camp and four others were rested as a result of complete exhaustion. Six men had no boots. This stage of affairs seemed likely to continue. Of 45 men working in my group, 15 were hit over the head with hand and fist, and one man had a crowbar thrust into his stomach - result vomiting.

There has been a gradual but marked change in the men since we have been here - they have lost what spirit they had; their reaction to orders etc is very slow indeed and they go about with a vacant look and lost expression on their faces. In this connection one should note that they get no holiday unless they are in hospital; they have breakfast in the dark and very often supper as well. They have no time for washing body or clothing except at night. They have no form of light at night and no reading matter. They have little or no money and can buy very little when they have (very inferior tobacco only). When they are working they are treated little better than animals and certainly it can be wondered at that they are losing their individuality and in many cases their self respect. The officers have no opportunity to put these matters right as they never see their men except when they are working or when they are sick.

Saturday. 3. July. An IJA M.O. and Lt. Abey carry out medical inspection of the camp, and as a result, order our M.O. to discharge 50 men from hospital and put them on the road. They say we must be more harsh on the men; As a result 50 men are discharged chiefly from the diarrhoea centres, and some ulcer cases, and Col. Hingston addressed all officers and men and explained the position, in order that all should understand why sick men had to go out on working parties. He also called on all officers and men to pull their weight to the full. One result was that the officers who did not go out on the road did most of the ration carrying, ie, to the hospitals 1 mile away. A 6 gallon cast iron container full of rice is no mean load!

Monday 5 July. Seven Officers and one B.O.R. found to have escaped. Lieut.Col.Wilkinson R.E., Captain Anker RASC, Captain Feathers, RASC, Lieut.Jones.Malaya Regt., Lieut.Moffatt and Lieut.Bradley,R.E., Lieut.Machado and Pte F.T.Brown,Vols. All left without permission - speaking generally it was thought that 'they had "done the dirty" especially after Colonel Hingston's talk on 3rd July. Colonel Banu, arrived and confined all officers to their quarters without food until further orders. Colonel Hingston was held personally responsible, and after a conference of I.J.A. Officers, was sentenced to be shot. On appeal this was withdrawn, but he was warned that if there were any further escapes he would be shot. No Supper.

Tuesday 6 July. All officers kits searched and all money confiscated. No meals.

Wednesday 7 July. Meals permitted again. Even 24 hours without food when one is on such a meagre diet is a strain and left one feeling weak. 260 men for I.J.A. Parade. This entailed taking men from the various wards in the hospital. The I.J.A. seem incapable of realizing that this will eventually reduce the number of men available for work as the sick have no chance of recovering.

Thursday 8 July. Men in Hospital and men in fit quarters changed over accommodation. This continual changing over seems to be a mania with the I.J.A. It is most unsettling to all concerned.

Friday 9 July. New Guard arrived with Lieut.Bun in charge. supposed to have been sent to 'hot' things up as a result of the escapes. The I.J.A. appear to think we are the centre an 'escape club' - all officers asked what they know about plans, and will not believe us when they find we know nothing of any proposed attempts or plans.

Saturday 10 July. All Ranks warned that :-

- (a) Any man seen attempting to escape will be shot.
- (b) If any man succeeds in escaping, the whole camp will be shot.

Sunday 11 July. I.J.A. go round hospital. One patient does not answer his name and as a result is beaten up. He dies in the middle of the punishment. M.O. told that the patients were being treated too kindly and that more men must be found for the road.

12 - 19 July. An uneventful week - no improvement in our conditions. A few men seemed to be on the mend but the ailing are getting steadily weaker. Men kept out working very late - in one case 21 men for 22 hours.



21 -27 July. Men start work at 6730 hours. It is completely at these times. News received that the escape party of 5th July caught in a village near Moulmein and that they are being brought back to camp.

Total deaths now 310 - many due to Dysentery and Beri-Beri but chiefly due to malnutrition and the results of being forced out to work when unfit.

I.J.A. insist on 260 men for work but we can produce only approx. 180. The remainder of men to make up the party are marked unfit or bed-down by the M.O. owing to fever, ulcers, debility etc. These are set on one side but the I.J.A. still insist in taking them. The advance party for the Burma Hospital move off at 1430 hours consisting of one W.O. and 14 O.Rs.

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The diary ends here and the following taken from another diary.

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26-31 August. The seriously ill started to move to Hospital in Burma, on the 27th, followed by more on the 28th and 29th. It is obvious that a lot will not reach Burma alive. The number of deaths in the camp decreased, no doubt to the move of the sick. The weather is improving and it appears that the Monsoon on the wane. Food is still very poor but should improve with smaller numbers. It is rumoured that convalescent personnel will be sent to a rest camp in Burma.

1 - 7 September. The move of patients to Burma still continues. Details given of convalescents who also commence to move. Approx. 600 to go with Lieut.Col.Hingston in charge. These moves seem to be the commencement of the breaking up of the camp and of many partnerships between friends of other days and of those made in the camp under its very trying circumstances. This period covered the anniversary of the outbreak of war and was a great day in the camp, there having been no deaths for the 24 hours, this being the first clear period since 25 May. The weather is still improving which makes things much better for the parties working outside the camp. Had a very unexpected issue of 50 cigarettes each, one tin of milk to five men and one 3½ lb tin of Margarine to ten men.

8 - 14 September. 1,000 Dutch troops arrived on the 11th and all looked fit and well. Had an issue of two spoonfuls of sugar for 4 days and a further 50 cigarettes. The railway track is going on apace and is alive with coolies, - It is reported that the line is due here in 5 days. The I.J.A. are treating the troops much better and nearly all troops are working on the road. 5 elephants arrived with canteen stores. The I.J.A. O.C.Camp has allowed our administration to place an order for \$5,000 worth of canteen goods.

15 - 21 September. Now have plenty of Canteen Stores - Gula, Oil, Tobacco and Peanuts, with more supplies, including eggs, being brought in by elephants. Very bad weather with line and road-river bridge washed away with railway bridge in danger owing to wreckage of road-bridge against it. The track through the camp completed and the first engine through at 5 pm 20th. Bad news- learn of death of 163 patients on move to Burma.

22 - 30 September. Raining every day but proceeding on rail and road. A sad event occurred. Padre Foster-Haig who gave a concert on the 21st, died at 6 a.m. on the 23rd from Cardiac Beri-Beri. He was the famous tenor, John Foster of wireless and Albert Hall fame. The I.J.A. O.C. Camp returned from Burma and brought chickens and ducks as a present to the camp - very acceptable. A large party of Australians arrived. Weather commenced improving on 26th. 8 more elephants loaded with biscuits, Gula and Sugar, came in. Weather improves so much that the water supply looks like drying up. Rumours that we will move back to Singapore shortly. First major operation in camp performed by Capt. Karl, A.I.F. - an amputation case.

1 - 7 October. The month opened with very bad news. Death ~~rate~~ roll to date at Burma Convalescent Hospital is 358 - principally from Ulcers, Dysentery, Beri-Beri and Malaria. Death ~~rate~~ rate dropped considerably here - approx one every two days. Rumour says work on road finishes in 10 days then back to Singapore. Large crowds of coolies from off railway return to Burma. Water supply running out and now needs rain. A large tree near British-Australian cemetery was cut down to within 15' of the ground and the stump carved so as to leave a landmark indicating position of cemetery.

8 - 14 October. Water supply extremely low. Have to carry water from creek to cookhouses. IJA surveying to replace road-river bridge washed away during the rains. Party from No.3. Camp came down to collect canteen supplies, state things very serious there.

15 - 21 October. More road traffic now that the road has dried up - traffic use railway bridge to cross river. Troops build small siding from main line to quarries, and are having a much easier time with the IJA. Lt. Col. Hingston came back from Burma Hospital - stated conditions there very bad. First steam engine went through taking many IJA to Burma. Party to No.3. Camp with canteen supplies - stated on return that camp as a whole is filthy and conditions awful - during one period of 24 hours there, suffered 17 deaths.

22 - 31 October. More canteen goods arrive - we are now well supplied. A further consignment taken to No.3. camp. More deaths there and a few here. Weather still holds with no rain. New bridge commenced and going on very well. Thousands of coolies pass through on their way to Burma. Troops had a day of rest on the 18th and some bullocks were killed for fresh meat.

1 - 7 November. The IJA informed us that wev leave for Singapore in 15 days time. Weather very hot and water very low. A dam was built in the creek to collect and hold water. Plenty of night traffic on the railway with IJA moving up to Burma. Road bridge nearing completion. 100 Australians troops in from Nieke prior to moving down to Singapore. Wev get ready for move.

8 - 14 November. The IJA say we move in 5-8 days time. More bullocks killed - now living quite well. Reports of more deaths in Burma hospital. New road-river bridge completed and in use. Armistice Day was celebrated at 1100 hours by a service with AIF padre. Medical examination preparatory to move. All getting excited at going back.

17 November. At long last we left for down-country by train, but with greatly depleted ranks. Extremely slow and very tiring journey with long halts and little food, with trucks even more crowded than on the up journey with as many as 40 to a truck. The first sign of civilisation - reached Tarso Camp on 20 November. where we remained 12 hours before moving off to the next camp.

22 Nov - 17 December. Arrived at Kanburi and marched one mile to transit camp. Accommodation assorted - tents, large attap huts and improvised shelters in trees. Worst sick cases moved to Kanburi Hospital about 3 miles away. Water supply very bad - troops dug two wells. Rations good with meat, eggs and plenty of green veg. Parties were allowed out on swimming parades daily where it was possible to buy bananas, cakes, fish etc from the Thais. Life now much more tolerable. Parties continually arrive in the camp, the first party for Singapore moving off on the 2nd Dec. The IJA issued supplies of clothing and boots, which are very badly needed, a blanket to those in need of one and also medical supplies. Party move off to Singapore on 16th December.

18 December. Marched to atation and entrained. Trucks as usual very crowded - food quite reasonable. Good journey to Non-Praduk where received meal and rested.

19 December. Changed trains and moved off at 1500 hrs. Able to buy cakes and bananas at station halts.

20 December. Still in Thailand. Country much flatter with only a few mountains.

21 December. Crossed Malayan border in early morning. Food not too good - only two meals a day but still able to buy little stations. Reached Ipoh at 1200 hrs - everything very quite - children came begging for rice.

22 December. Weather getting warmer. As we go south everything becomes much dearer. Reached Kuala Lumpur about 1200 hrs. Stopped two hours and had wash and meal.

23 December. Arrived Singapore at 1800 hours, and taken by lorry to Sime Road Camp. Good accommodation and facilities. Grand to have electric lighting again.

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The total personnel in Sonkrai Camp at the commencement was 1,602. Of this number 305 left for hospitals in Burma, and only 122 marched out at the end for Singapore. There was thus 1,175 deaths in this camp.

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MISCELLANEOUS. 1.

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CAMP BULLETIN ITEMS.

The following are extracts from the Camp Bulletin ( except where otherwise stated) issued under the directions of the Camp Representative Officer.

They are chiefly records of conversations between the Camp Commander Lieut, TAKAHASHI, I.J.A. and the Camp Rep Officer, Lieut, Col NEWBY. It should be noted that the ~~ration~~ ration figures are given in grammes

28½ ( approx) grammes = 1 oz.

454 grammes = 1 lb.

-X-X-X-X-X-X-X-X-X-X-X-X-X-X-X-X-X-X-X-

Bulletin. No.1. 27/7/44.

POST CARDS. In order that Ps.O.W. might be able to answer the mail they have received recently, a request was made for an issue of P.O.W. Cards. The Camp Commdt' said that none were available but he had hopes of a further supply shortly.

NEWS. The question of news was discussed. It is understood that Gen. Saito proposes to produce a daily news bulletin for the information of the whole camp in future.

BULLETIN. No.2. 3/8/44.

News. Ref. Bulletin No.1. It is understood that the news bulletin to be released by the I.J.A. is still under consideration.

FILMS. The Rep. Officer requested that films might be given in the camp. The Camp Commdt' thought it was impracticable at the present moment but agreed to discuss it later after the completion of the Theatre.

GARDENS. The I.J.A. continue to emphasize the shortage of food and that the camp must make every endeavour to develop the gardens.

I.J.A. RATION ISSUES - PERIOD 1. - 31 JULY. 1944.

The following is the average daily issues over the period above:-

Fresh Fish.	...	...	...	10	grammes per head per day.
Dried, preserved, salt fish.	...	...	...	44	.....Do.....
Vegetables, Root.	....	...	...	319	.....Do.....
" Leaf	....	...	...	62	.....Do.....
Fruit	....	...	...	74	.....Do.....
Dried Seaweed.	...	...	...	5	.....Do.....

NOTE:-

In connection with the issue of fruit, which is chiefly bananas the skins of these are not wasted as these are cut up and put in the evening meal of stew. and occasionally in the mid-day meal of dried rice hash.

BULLETIN. No.3. 10/8/44.

AIR RAIDS. The Camp Commdt' said that Air Raids might be expected at any time now.

SOAP. A quantity of material for the manufacture of soap has been received and a construction of a soap factory has been started.

RED CROSS SUPPLIES.

Lt. Takahashi said that he desired to expel from the minds of the Ps.O.W. that the Japanese Government was preventing Red Cross Supplies from reaching them. He added that it was up to our countries to send the goods.

The Camp Commdt' said that we were permitted to receive Red Cross Funds, but in our case it was stopped as we were being paid by the I.J.A. As regards the civilian internees, it was understood that they were still in receipt of Red Cross Funds.

The Rep Officer was informed that the Red Cross supplies received to date had been distributed to all PS.O.W. and Civilian Internees.

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MISCELLANEOUS. 2.

Odd items of general interest.



INSTRUCTIONS TO PRISONERS OF WAR  
BY  
COLONEL SUIJIMO

( Chief of Thai P.O.W. Camps )  
=====

I have the pleasure to lead you on the last stretch of Railway Construction, war doom. In examination of various reports as well as to the result of my partial inspection of the present conditions I am pleased to find that you in general keeping discipline and working diligently. At the same time I regret to find seriousness in health matters. It is evident that there are various causes inevitable for this and but to my opinion meaningfully to the fact of absence of firm belief in Japanese. Health follows will and leave only when the enemy is annihilated. Those who fail to reach objective in charge by lack of health or spirit is considered in the Japanese Army most shameful deed.

Devotion to death is good yet we still have the spirit. Devotion to the Imperial Cause even to the 7th life in reincarnation the spirit which cannot become void by death. Yet you are in act of charge in colleague with the IJA you are expected to charge to the last stage of this work in good spirit by taking care of your own health.

Besides you are to remember that your welfare is guaranteed only by obedience to the order of the IJA. IJA will not be unfair to those who are honest and obey them but protect such.

You are to understand this fundamental Japanese spirit and carry out the tasks given you with perfect ease of mind and under protection of IJA,

-o-o-o-o-o-o-o-o-o-o-o-o-o-o-o-o-o-o-

L E A F L E T S

+++++

TERRIBLE RIOT IN SINGAPORE, SECRET EVACUATED OF  
BRITISH TROOPS.

A TERRIBLE RIOT HAS BROKEN OUT IN SINGAPORE.

British and Australian Soldiers are being secretly evacuated  
from Singapore !!

Malayan and Indian Soldiers ! Pack up your troubles in your  
old kit bag and co-operate with the Nippon Army.

-o-o-o-o-o-o-o-o-o-o-o-o-o-o-o-o-

BRITISH AND AUSTRALIAN SOLDIERS !

Return to your homes at once by look or by crook.  
you may never get another chance to see your beloved ones in  
England and Australia.

-o-o-o-o-o-o-o-o-o-o-o-o-o-o-o-o-



EXTRACT FROM THE " SYONAN TIMES" DATED  
APRIL 18th, 2602, ( 1942 )

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When history comes to be written, the story of the last days of Singapore make tragic reading. Those seven memorable days when Nippon Forces stormed the fortress were a veritable nightmare for its inhabitants, both civic and military. The defending troops were none too hopeful, though anxiously wait for those promised air reinforcements which never came because they never existed outside the imagination of Churchill and Ropsevelt. The moral of the civilian population rapidly began to deteriorate as their employers one by one began mysteriously to disappear. The wharves were besieged by frantic women and children, and ship after ship left quayside ~~by~~ stealthily by night. These the Nippon airforce did not interfere with though they could easily have done so.

The skies were black with the heavy smoke of numerous fires. One essential service after another had ceased to function.. Gas, electricity, and finally water supplies were interrupted. Public transport had already come to a standstill and the streets were deserted except for military trucks and troops who crowded into the city area to shelter among the homes of civilians, convents, churches and hospitals. With no air support the defending troops soon became dejected. Many threw away their arms into ditches and some even began to discard uniforms.

Meanwhile ~~took~~ the big guns boomed, shells shrieked in all directions and the Nippon Airforce systematically pounded away at troop concentrations. On Thursday, Feb, 12th, Singapore already looked doomed. A view from the top of the Cathay Buildings gave the impression that the whole Island was a raging inferno. There were a dozen big fires blazing all round, the dockyard area having received the worst hammering of all. And then Friday the 13th... perhaps the worst day of all, the assault was at its height, and then.....

Like a dying monster giving up the ghost, Singapore's big guns belched forth incessantly for the last time, the din of battle was terrific, the Nippon undoubtedly faced a furious barrage, but they came on and on. Frantically defenders looked for the promised air reinforcements which were going to blacken the skies, The Nippon were masters of the situation, the allied airforce having been reduced to an Air Farce. Saturday and Sunday came and went, while the process of silencing Singapore's big guns was carried on with relentless thoroughness.

On Sunday evening the city heard the "All Clear" ; they did not understand. Some laughed at its apparant absurdity. There was dead silence that night. The stillness was that of a graveyard. Raffles Singapore had breathed its last. Then early Monday morning people everywhere peered out of doors looking askance. What had happened ? Why was everything so quiet ?.

REPORT ON CONDITIONS OF PRISONERS OF  
WAR IN THAILAND - MAY TO DECEMBER 43

Introduction.

The Representative of the IJA Military Police required a frank report to be made on the recent conditions of prisoners of war, in Thailand with suggestions for the improvement of conditions for prisoners of war generally.

Accordingly, this report is made in two parts:-

Part 1. FACTS                      Part 2. SUGGESTIONS.

Part 1 is neither a complaint nor a protest, but a statement of facts, all of which can be substantiated by officers who were present.

The suggestions in Part 2 are made in the sincere hope that the conditions of the prisoner of war will improve in the future, since it is our firm belief that our recent experiences have not been in accordance with the policy or intentions of the Imperial Japanese Government in Tokyo, or of the Japanese Red Cross, who cannot have been aware of the actual state of affairs in Thailand.

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1. Early in April 1943, orders were issued to prepare 7000 POWs for a move by train. The order stated that:-
  - (a) The reason for the move was that the food situation in Singapore was difficult and would be far better in the new place.
  - (b) This was NOT a working party.
  - (c) As there were not 7000 fit men in Changi, 30% of the party were to be unfit men; unfit to march or work. The unfit men would have a better chance of recovery with good food and in a pleasant hilly place with good facilities for recreation.
  - (d) There would be NO marching except for short distances from train to near-by camp, and transport would be provided for baggage and men unfit to march.
  - (e) Bands were to be taken.
  - (f) All tools and cooking gear and an engine and gear for electric light were to be taken.
  - (g) Gramophones, blankets, clothing and mosquito nets would be issued at the new camp.
  - (h) A good canteen would be available in each camp after three weeks. Canteen supplies for the first three weeks were to be bought with prisoners money before leaving Changi.
  - (i) The party would include a medical party of about

350 with equipment for a central Hospital for 400 patients and medical supplies for three months.

2. As each trainload of 600 arrived at Banpong they were informed, to their astonishment, that a march of several days was to be carried out by all men including the 30 unfit. All kit that officers and men could not carry was to be dumped at Banpong. This amounted to about 15 railway trucks of stores and baggage.

3. The march, in fact, was one of 300 kilometres in 15 stages and lasted for two and a half weeks. Marching at night along a rough jungle track (except for the first two stages) and as all torches had been taken from all POWs at Banpong, control by POW officers and NCOs was difficult or impossible.

4. After the first stage, the unfit men became increasingly ill and were a heavy handicap to the other men, who were at first fairly fit, but they rapidly became ill and exhausted as they had to help and even carry the increasing number of men who were unable to walk unaided.

5. Conditions at the staging camps were:-

- (a) At no stage was overhead cover provided, except for a few tents (for 100 men) at one camp. The weather was variable and the rainy season started when the march was in progress.
- (b) Food supplies were generally very poor and in many camps consisted of rice only.
- (c) Water was short at many camps, and at Banburi drinking water had to be bought by the prisoners at a privately owned well. Colonel Harris protested, but the matter was not put right.
- (d) No proper arrangements existed for retaining sick at these camps and the men who were absolutely unfit to march (owing to diseases and weakness) were beaten and driven from camp to camp. Officers including Medical Officers, who begged and prayed for sick men to be left behind, were themselves beaten at many camps. In one particular case, a Japanese Medical Officer (Lieutenant) ordered the IJA Corporal in charge of three staging camp, to leave 30 men behind as they were too ill to be moved. The Corporal refused to obey this order, although it was repeated in writing, and a British Officer (Major) interpreter, and an Australian Doctor (Major) were severely beaten when they protested. A bone in the doctor's hand was broken. Of these sick men who were compelled to march,

nearly all have since died, including an Australian Chaplain who died at the next camp. (The Japanese Medical Officer had particularly said that the Chaplain should not march as he was elderly man with a weak heart, and was already at the end of his strength.

(c) The men marched all night as a rule, from 7 p.m. to 7 a.m. They had to perform Camp duties, get their meals and wash during the day, so they had very little rest.

#### 6. Medical.

(a) Such medical stores as had been hurriedly collected at Bampong, and carried by hand by the marching party were rapidly exhausted and the march continued with no medicines at all.

(b) Dysentery and diarrhoea broke out in all parties and exhaustion was general. Ulcerated feet occurred in large numbers, due to sick men with blistered feet being forced to march on day after day.

7. At Konkota the marching parties were quartered in the same camp as the Thai Labour Corps, who were suffering from cholera. The infection was picked up by each of the thirteen marching parties.

8. On the fifteenth of May, cholera broke out at Shiao-Nieke. Colonel Harris (Commander of the POW) immediately reported to Colonel Banno, the IJA Commander, and requested that movement should cease until the outbreak was under control, and that the Konkota camp should at all costs not be used for further parties. Unfortunately Colonel Banno was unable to comply with this request, and, as a result, cholera was spread to all five camps occupied by the Force.

9. Only a small quantity of medical stores at Bampong was brought up later by a lorry. (Over three-quarters of it was still at Bampong when the Force returned to Kanburi in December). The IJA were unable at this time to provide or produce any medical supplies whatsoever, except cholera vaccine and quinine, which were always supplied as required. Colonel Banno gave us six tins of milk of his own property.

10. By the end of May about 5000 POW had been distributed to several different camps. These camps consisted of huts without any roofing, although the rainy season had now fully started, and the rain was falling heavily every day and night. The camps were not fully roofed for some weeks, during which time men had no proper shelter, consequently deaths from pneumonia were numerous.

11. In spite of the above conditions, the general state of exhaustion of the men, the presence of the epidemic cholera at all camps, the practically universal malaria, diarrhoea and dysentery, the men were put to work at once by the IJA Engineers.

12. Maximum numbers of men were taken to work each day. This left insufficient numbers in camps for sanitary duties and for the nursing of the sick, whilst disease of every kind increased. In some camps, Red Cross personnel were forced to go out to work on the roads, but this was quickly stopped by Colonel Banno.

13. In several camps, a scarcity of tools made improvement to sanitation difficult or impossible. The tools which the prisoners had brought from Changi, and which were part of the heavy baggage at Baupong, were never brought up.

14. It was clear to all prisoner officers that if the IJA Engineers continued to take all fit and convalescent men to work every day, there would soon be no men at all fit to work. In fact the Engineers were rapidly destroying their only available source of labour. This aspect was explained to our own IJA M. . . who clearly agreed but were unable to prevent the Engineers from doing apparently as they liked. The task in front of the engineers, and the need for speed, was fully realised by us, but the destruction of their only available labour was just as bad from their point of view as from ours. A little common sense on the part of the engineers could, early in June, have saved the situation for themselves and for us. Unfortunately for us, this short-sighted policy continued, and by the end of June, only about 700 of the 5000 men north of Niseke were at work daily, and of these at least half were unfit and useless for heavy work. Of the remainder, except for Red Cross personnel and a small number of administrative personnel (including officers), all men were lying ill in the camp hospitals.

15. By this time the road from the south was impassable, and to the north was difficult, and the scale of rations fell to below the level required to keep men fit in health, and far below the level required to help sick men back to health. It has been said that we were on the same rations as the IJA soldiers, but this was not true, as can be very easily proved. The rations of the men in hospital were fixed at far too low a scale, (250 to 300 grs of rice per day with a small quantity of beans). In our opinion this was a great mistake, and we continually said so to the IJA. There seemed to be an idea that the lack of pay and rations would drive the men out of the hospitals, but this, of course, would only happen if the men were not really ill. There was, however, no



deception about the illness of our men, as men were dying the large numbers.

16. As the health of the men grew worse, the demands of the Engineers were more and more difficult to meet, and their treatment of our weak men whilst at work, became more and more brutal. The work was often beyond what reasonably could be expected of fit men, and it was certainly beyond the strength of our weak men. This especially related to the carriage of heavy logs. It was noticed that where Thai or Burmese labour was used, two or three times the number of our men were used. It became common for our men to be literally driven with wire whips and bamboo sticks throughout the whole working day. Hitting with the fist and kicking also occurred frequently throughout the day. It was emphasised that the beating was not for disciplinary purposes, but was intended to drive unfit men to efforts beyond their strength.

17. The hours of work were also excessive: 14 hours a day was a common occurrence and work went on, day after day, without a break, for months. Many men never saw their camp in daylight for weeks on end, and never had a chance to wash the selves or their clothes.

18. In some camps where the number of fit men fell below the Engineers demands, the Engineers came into the camp the selves and forced the prisoners out of the hospital to work. Except in isolated cases, officers were not made to work outside the camps, but the Engineers often made the threat that officers would be taken for work if more men were not turned out from the hospital.

19. At Sonkrai, where conditions were probably worse than anywhere else, the I/A Engineering officer, Lieutenant Abe, himself came into the officers quarters, and, asking to see the six officers who were the most seriously ill (of whom three subsequently died), said, "Unless more men are produced for work tomorrow, I will send my soldiers to take these officers out to work." This Engineering Officer was conspicuous at all times in failing to stop the brutal treatment of prisoners by his men, even if it happened in his presence. Of the 4600 men who were originally sent to Sonkrai Camp in May, 4200 were already dead and 200 more are still in hospital, of whom many are not expected to recover. Many petitions and appeals were made to Lieutenant Abe, but he treated them with contempt. The result would have been worse if it had not been for the arrival of Lieutenant Wakabayashi (of the Malay POW Administration) in Sonkrai Camp at the beginning of August. From the date of his arrival, things gradually improved.

20. By July, more than half the Poles were without boots and this caused a large number of poisoned feet, and "trench feet" from the continual work in the wet. Blankets were not issued as promised (at Changi) to men without them. Clothing issues were negligible. Issues of Medical stores were totally inadequate. Bandages and dressing were seldom issued, and only in very small quantities. For the hundreds of tropical ulcer cases, dressing were improvised from banana leaves and bandages from sleeves and legs cut out of men's shirts and trousers. Consequently, many limbs had to be amputated unnecessarily and many patients died.

21. By the end of July, the road from Bumpung was still impassable, but although the river was open to traffic and was in use by the IJA and the Thai shopkeepers, our Medical and other stores at Bumpung were still not brought up and, in the end, were never brought up. This was in spite of our repeated protests.

22. It was during the foregoing period that several men, at times alone, sometimes in groups, disappeared into the jungle. Some probably had the idea of escaping, some undoubtedly only left so as to die in freedom rather than in captivity, of disease, illness and ill-treatment. The men on the whole were in despair. The choice in front of them seemed to be death from disease or never-ending toil and brutal treatment at the hands of the Engineers. Their officers were unable to protect them in spite of all their efforts. One party of officers, seeing their men dying and ill-treated around them, and in despair of being able to get any redress from the IJA, attempted to escape so as to let the world know what was happening to the prisoners, and to obtain help from the International Red Cross. This party failed as was inevitable. Five perished from privation in the jungle and the remaining four recaptured.

23. In August, a Hospital was established in Burma and about 2000 men were sent there. Unfortunately the rations were still deficient of the necessary vitamins and 300 died. Nevertheless, the Burma Hospital did great good for there was no regular Engineer work and therefore many men had a chance to get well slowly.

24. From August onwards, things improved at Sonkrai, but did not improve much at Lisai-Sonkrai. As late as October, for instance, the Engineers were blasting in a quarry just behind the prisoners hospital in such a way that the rocks and stones fell onto the hospital huts at each blast. The huts were crammed full of patients, many of whom were dying (about eight a day were dying). All patients were terrorised. Many were hit and were

or less seriously injured, and one man had his arm broken and subsequently died from a combination of the injury and his previous disease. This went on for over a week before representations were made to the IJA Officer in charge of the Camp. These were successful. Mistaking continued in such a way that rocks did not fall on the hospital, thus showing that the previous practice had been avoidable. In this camp also, the latrine used by several hundred Tamil labourers was within ten yards of the prisoner officer's quarters. The Tamils had suspected cholera and smallpox at the time.

25. In all camps, accommodation was totally inadequate. Men actually slept touching each other, and, as a result skin disease infection was 100% throughout the Force. Except in Sonkrai, officers were as badly off as the men.

26. The move back to Kanburi took place in November, but the men were in such a state that (although the worst cases were left in Burma) 46 died on the train journey and 180 more in the first three weeks in Kanburi in spite of better food and living conditions. It is certain that several hundreds more will die in the next month or two from the result of their treatment in Thailand.

27. Our own guards on the whole treat us well. Face-slapping of all ranks was discouraged by our IJA Officers but was still fairly common. It nearly always arose through a language misunderstanding and was not in itself serious although it makes the maintenance of discipline very difficult for the prisoner officer when their men see them slapped by young Japanese privates. Similarly, when the men are slapped and beaten it merely breeds resentment and bad feeling which will last long after the war. There were some guards, however, who seemed incapable of being put in charge of any task without losing their tempers and hitting prisoners. The most flagrant case is that of a Gansoku Toyama, who claims to be a well educated man. At Baupong he hit officers and men of every party with a heavy steel-shafted golf club. He cut one Major's head open, badly damaged another Major's arm and severely hurt many others. The cause of these assaults was never known. Later at Shine-Sonkrai and at Hani-Sonkrai camps he habitually hit officers and men on every possible occasion for no just cause. He has an ungovernable temper and is apparently uncontrollable by his officers. Apart from actual striking, he was always at pains to be insulting to officers, especially Senior Officers. Such a man should never be allowed to be in charge of prisoners.

28. There were many cases latterly in which our own guards prevented Engineers from mistreating prisoners.

29. It may be thought that some of the above report is exaggerated. It is however, only the barest outline of a period of intense hardship suffered by parties of prisoners of war. If proof is wanted, it is surely sufficient to point to the fact that of the 7000 prisoners who left Changi in April, now in December, about 3000 are dead; 3000 more are hospital patients or convalescents of whom hundreds more will die within the next few months from the result of the hardships they have undergone.

30. We know from letters received from England and Australia that it is believed there that Prisoners of War are being well treated by the Japanese.

If the actual facts regarding Thailand were known abroad, the news would be greeted with indignation and amazement.

#### PART 2 - SUGGESTIONS

GENERAL: We ask firstly that we should be treated in accordance with the letter and spirit of the Geneva and Hague Conventions, particularly those of 1906 and 1907, both of which were ratified by Britain and Japan.

It has been suggested that the unconditional surrender of Singapore placed the prisoners from Singapore outside the terms of the Hague Convention. This is obviously not so. The position of any prisoner who is captured on the field of battle, is that of unconditional surrender, but no one would suggest that he is not covered by the Convention. How then can the nature of the Singapore surrender (which was correctly made at the written request of General Yamashita in order to avoid further useless loss of life on both sides, and especially the lives of the civilians in the city) put the Garrison of Singapore outside the terms of the Convention?

DETAILED SUGGESTIONS: The following detailed suggestions are all consequent upon this general one:-

1. "Doctors and Red Cross personnel are not prisoners of war and should not be treated as prisoners." (Geneva Convention 1907 Art.9)
2. "Prisoners should be humanely treated." (Annex to Hague Con. 1907 Art.4)
3. "Work should not be excessive." (Annex to Hague Con. 1907 Art.6)

4. "Prisoners should be treated as regards rations, quarters and clothing, on the same footing as the troops of the Government which captures them."

(Annex to Hague Con. 1907 Art.7)

Note 1. All the above articles were broken in Thailand.

Note 2. As regards rations, it is not enough to fix a scale of rations; the essential is that the rations should reach the prisoners. It is suggested that the Military Police undertake the duty of seeing that the scale of issue allowed does, in fact, reach the prisoners.

Note 3. As regards quarters, it should be remembered that Officer prisoners PAY for their quarters.

5. "Officers must not be employed for labour. (This equally applies to being threatened with labour.) (Annex to Hague Con 1907 Art.6)

There were not many instances where Officers parties were made to labour, but it is known to all of us that many hundreds of Officers of other parties were forced to work as labourers on road and railway construction in organised gangs. This treatment of Officer Prisoner of war is without precedence in the whole history of modern war, besides being a direct breach of the Hague Convention. It will not be forgotten for a hundred years.

6. "Red Cross Representatives should be allowed to visit POW Camps."

(Annex to Hague Con 1907. Art 15)

No representatives were allowed to visit us in Thailand.

7. "Proper arrangements should be made to collect deceased persons effects."

(Annex to Hague Con 1907, Art.14)

This has not been done, and, as a result, many effects have been lost.

8. "Soldiers should be respected and taken care of when sick."

(Geneva Con 1900, Art.1)

This was often broken in Thailand and sick men made to work.

9. Games, entertainments, reading, educational classes and lectures should be encouraged to keep up morale.
10. Arrangements for letters, to and from home, should be improved. Letters arriving are a year old and we have not been allowed to write a single letter home, but only a few lines on a postcard twice in two years. Prisoners of war in all belligerent countries in Europe are allowed to write as follows:-  
Officers:- 2 letters and 2 postcards each month  
Other Ranks:- 1 letter and 1 postcard each month.

19th June 1990.

ESCAPE FROM SINGAPORE 1942.

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The photos which I donated to the Jat Museum in Bareilly at this year's Reunion related to the escape from Singapore of a party of Jats commanded by Lieut.Col A. Cumming of the Frontier Force Regiment.

The escape took place 10 days after the fall of Singapore.  
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During the final days before the 15th February 1942 when Singapore fell, a Jat Battalion was formed out of the survivors of the 4th Battalion who had held the position at ~~Muar~~ with the help of the Australians and the remains of the 2nd Battalion who had fought all the way down the Malay peninsular. This Jat unit was commanded by Lieut. Col. A. Cumming of the Frontier Force Regiment, who at the time had won the V.C. unbeknown to himself whilst fighting up country.

On the morning of the 12th February the Jats were ordered to attack Hill 220 south of Bukit Panjam. As the Jats advanced they were heavily bombed by 27 low flying enemy aircraft and suffered a number of casualties. It was understood that they were to be supported on either flank, but this did not happen. They were not informed that the attack had been cancelled the night before. Little resistance was encountered and the hill was captured.

The Jats remained concealed in thick scrub while Japanese Zeros and heavy bombers flew overhead attacking troops at their rear and also bombing Singapore. The Japanese were seen to advance down Bukit Tima road and they later positioned a heavy artillery battery at the base of the hill to the rear of the Jats position. Firing continued on Singapore town for the next two days and it was obvious that the Jats were surrounded and on the 15th February the guns stopped firing and shouts of "Bonzi" were heard.

The Jat men had had no food or water for 4 days and were in poor shape. Colonel Cumming called all Officers and Viceroy Commissioned Officers together and explained the situation. The VCOs passed on to all their men that Singapore had fallen and there was little chance of any of us getting away. Colonel Cumming suggested that troops should form themselves into small parties and try to pass themselves off as Malays.

A small party was made up of British Officers and VCOs, but some British Officers and VCOs decided to surrender. After many hardships this small party managed to escape from the Island and reach Sumatra. The photographs tell the story of the escape. Their troubles were not over, as on reaching

Sumatra the Japanese were already advancing up the island and the fall of Padang on the West coast was imminent. The party eventually reached Padang and were asked to volunteer to fight in Java and embarked on a small coastal steamer called Palopo, which headed south. This was the last ship to leave Padang. After two or three days at sea an upturned lifeboat was spotted with two survivors of the ship that had left before us. This had been torpedoed. On nearing Java, a message was received to head for Ceylon as Java was about to capitulate. Eventually the ship reached Ceylon. We had arrived exactly a month after leaving Singapore.

February 1991



## ACCOUNT OF THE MALAYAN CAMPAIGN BY CAPTAIN F.E. MILEHAM 4/9th JAT REGIMENT.

On December 21st 1941, the 4/9th Jat Regiment sailed on H.M.T. Rajula from Bombay as part of the 45th Brigade, 17th Indian Division. The 45th BDE was made up of 5/18th Gharwal Rifles, the 7/6th Rajputana Rifles and the 4/9th Jat Regiment, who had undergone training together in Kumbergaon Camp near Poona.

### OFFICERS OF THE 4th/9th JAT REGIMENT.

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LT. COL. J. WILLIAMS.	(Commanding Officer)
MAJOR E.P. WHITE.	(2nd in Command)
CAPTAIN D.C. EVANS	("A" Coy Commander)
CAPTAIN H.W. WATSON	("C" Coy Commander)
CAPTAIN F.E. MILEHAM	(Carrier Platoon Commander)
CAPTAIN B. LEE	(Adjutant)
CAPTAIN A. HENDERSON	("E" Coy Commander)
CAPTAIN D. DYER	(Transport Officer)
2Lt. F.B. COPE	("D" Coy Commander)
2Lt. D.T. PIPER	(Signals Officer)
2Lt. F.R.J. BAKER	(Intelligence Officer)
Lt. RAJAGOPALACHIRYA	(Medical Officer)
2/Lt. RAN SINGH	(Liaison Officer)

### THE VOYAGE

The 4th/9th Jat Regiment embarked at Bombay on the 21st December on H.M.T. Rajula and sailed under sealed orders with Col. Williams as O/C Ship. On board was the 38th Field Ambulance and a detachment of the R.I.A.S.C. The rest of the Brigade embarked on four other ships and our transport was to follow in another convoy so Captain Dyer was left behind to supervise this. The convoy was escorted by H.M.S. Glasgow and H.M.S. Dragonfly and also for a short time a corvette of the Royal Indian Navy.

The convoy headed south and we all thought this was very extraordinary as we had understood we were to go to Basra and then up to the Caucasus Mountains to help the Russians. Thus, before we sailed all vehicles were painted white with grey stripes and we were issued with Battle Dresses. After Colonel Williams had opened the sealed orders, he told us we were heading for Malaya.

The only excitement we had before rounding Ceylon was when a man fell overboard from one of the other ships in the convoy and was picked up by the Rajula none the worse for his wetting. This incident went to show our troops that the lifebelts which they had to wear at all times was a good life saver, as the man overboard had been wearing his when he fell.

On Christmas Day we sailed due East leaving Ceylon behind us and the Glasgow left us and we were joined by H.M.A.S. Hobart and three destroyers. The Hobart came alongside us and wished us a Happy Christmas, which I think was had by all on our ship.

During the voyage we had many Lifeboat drills and a certain amount of weapon training was carried out. All available automatic weapons were mounted ready for a possible air attack, which we expected on nearing Singapore. The anti-aircraft posts were manned day and night.

When we reached the Sunda Straits between Java and Sumatra, we were joined by a strong force of Destroyers and also had air support, which was made up of Catalinas and Brewster Buffaloes from Java.

From the Sunda Straits to Singapore we expect air attack at any moment, but none came and we arrived in the Naval Docks just as it was getting dark on the 3rd January 1942. As the Rajula was docking, three Japanese bombers came over and dropped a few bombs in the town area. We had a good view of them as they were caught in the searchlights.

#### SINGAPORE

When we had tied up, the C.O. received orders that the Bn was to proceed immediately to Malacca on the west coast of Malaya. All light kit was unloaded and the Bn, less 80 drivers, were left with me to await the arrival of Captain Dyer and our transport. The rest of the equipment we unloaded on the 4th and 5th January with very little help from dockers, who were rather thin on the ground, who had disappeared after the first air raids. Lt. Col. Stevens of Movement Control was very good to us and we managed with his help to override many little bits of Singapore red tape which was evident.

I had a message from Col. Williams to send up immediately shovels and other bits of equipment. I tried my hardest to obtain a lorry and spent many hours without success. Eventually a friendly Australian Sergeant took the equipment and drove his lorry up to Malacca. This was well over 100 miles.

On the 6th January I moved the men from Seletar to a Rest Camp near Singapore main docks, as the work was completed and all stores unloaded. We didn't have to wait long as our transport arrived in the evening. I met Captain Dyer and made arrangements for the following day's work. All my men were very tired by this time, as they had had very little sleep since the Rajula had docked on the 3rd. I spent the night at Colonel Stevens house in Race Course village and managed to see a cousin of mine, Major Claude Tanner, of the 45th Transport Company. The next day was spent unloading the trucks and lorries, a task which was made very difficult by the lack of

dock workers and crane operators. The first batch of trucks to be unloaded were very difficult to start as they had been placed on the deck. When 37 trucks had been unloaded and filled up with stores by 6 a.m. on the 7th January, we set off with Hav Mohd Sher (The Transport Hav) for Malacca. The route through Singapore was difficult as our drivers had never seen traffic lights before. How we got through without an accident I really don't know.

#### ROAD TO MALACCA

I called the first halt at Johore on the other side of the Causeway and found all trucks present, so after a short rest we set off north. At this stage I did not know what the danger of possible air attack was, but looking back I would have taken very different action. All our trucks were camouflaged for snow conditions and made a beautiful target for any aircraft. Although we saw Japanese planes at a distance, we managed to proceed without attack.

The road was packed with huge Australian lorries, but was extremely narrow and our drivers were certainly not used to these conditions but managed to keep going.

At 19.00 hrs we arrived at Segamat, a fairly large town due East of Malacca. Here due to the stupidity of an Australian M.P., eleven of the convoy went straight on instead of turning right. I made a harbour of the remaining vehicles and told Hav Mohd. Sher to find food and a place for the men to rest for the night. At Segamat station I met Major Hayes of the 38th Field Ambulance, who had accompanied us on H.M.T. Rajula. He told me that his unit was stationed in the town. When I told him I had lost eleven of my convoy, he very kindly offered to help me find them. We set off back to Yong Peng not knowing at this time that the trucks were heading north to Gemis, so we travelled 40 miles south and on returning, having not found them, were told that they had been located and were on their way back to Segamat.

The next morning, the 9th, at 10.00 hrs we set off again for Malacca and arrived without mishap at 15.00 hrs and reported to Lt. Col. Williams, our C.O. who was very glad to see us. The Battalion was situated on an old Army camp, so I brought the vehicles in and distributed them around the football pitch. The drivers were very tired, so I dismissed them. After having a very well earned rest and a meal, I found out that "A" and "B" companies had been sent north to Tan Jhon Brewis some miles up the coast road.

The Adjutant, Captain Lee, took me for a run round the town and told me that the Japanese were still 150 miles north of Malacca. As we went along the sea front road I noticed a large transport ship about 1½ miles from the shore. On asking Lee what it was, he told me he hadn't seen it before and would

report it to the Colonel. By the time we returned to camp it was getting dark and it was not long before the C.O. summoned us and said that reports of enemy landings had been received. Captain Lee and Major White set off to inform "A" and "B" companies and on the way came across a motor cyclist who was flashing a torch seawards and who on seeing their car jumped on his bike and disappeared. The transport ship we had seen previously was obviously Japanese. The C.O. ordered all transport to be made ready for the road. This was no easy operation as we were very short of petrol. I was despatched to find some and took 3 trucks and obtained 500 gallons at a petrol point in the town. By 22.00 hrs the trucks were sent off to retrieve "A" and "B" companies.

Dawn broke on the 10th with the news that "B" company had been fired on by a party of 20 enemy but had suffered no casualties. The C.O. told me that three Bren Gun Carriers had arrived at Segamat station and ordered me to proceed there and bring them back. Up till now the Battalion had never seen Bren Gun carriers, but fortunately I had been on a course in India.

#### SEGAMAT

At 10.00 hrs we left for Segamat with enough men to drive the three Bren Gun Carriers. On the way we rounded a bend and saw 2 natives cutting telephone wires. After a few shots from the truck they seemed to fall down and disappear. On arrival at Segamat I went to the R.T.O.'s office to take delivery of the vehicles. A large formation of Japanese bombers decided that the Station was a very good target and bombed us heavily. I found myself half in and half out of an air raid station with a body on top of me. When the raid ended I discovered that the body on top of me was a Bar Corporal at Belgaum where I had been stationed at O.C.T.U. The rest of the day was spent in trying to train drivers how to cope with track carriers which was extremely difficult. By evening I considered that between us we could get them back to Malacca as the vehicles were badly needed. At 18.00 hrs I called on Col. Neil, also of the 38th Field Ambulance who informed me that he had heard that the 45th Brigade had evacuated all previous positions at Malacca and withdrawn to the Muar river, 25 miles south of Malacca. This was a great shock to us all and to me it meant that to join the Battalion I must go south to Yong Peng and then north to Muar. This was a long way round.

I also heard that Captain Dyer's convoy with our remaining trucks, had had seven requisitioned by whom I knew not. This disturbed me greatly. Having stayed the night with the 38th Field Ambulance, I was about to say "Goodbye" to Col. Neil, who had been very good to me, when another Japanese air raid started. We both made for a deep drain and the Japanese bombed the town again.

#### THE ROAD TO MUAR

At 09.30 hrs on the 11th we left with 3 Carriers and 1 Truck. It was a very hot day and driving a Bren Gun Carrier for well over 100 miles was a hard task. After about 70 miles one of the Carriers' sprocket wheels overheated and before long the rubber tyre had completely disintegrated. On reaching Bakri on the Muar Ayer Hitam road, I left the Carrier with the Brigade Workshops at the roadside.

On arrival at Muar we ran into a tremendous bombing raid, the main objective being a large Transport ship full of stores, which was hit several times. There were a large number of dead and wounded civilians lying about in the streets, but as I didn't want to lose our precious Carriers, and had found out that the Battalion was situated around the 15th mile stone on the Muar Lenga road, I pushed on and located Battalion headquarters.

### THE MUAR RIVER

January 12th turned out to be a very wet and miserable day and I found all my kit had suffered badly from the heavy rain the night before. I reported to the C.O. and received my Orders which were to patrol the Muar Lenga road and try and keep in touch with "A", "B" and "C" companies, which were endeavouring to hold an 8 mile front. It was impossible in this type of country to hold a line of such a length.

There was very little information about the enemy and an attack was expected any time. It was difficult to locate the Company Commanders as they were often a long way from Company Headquarters and sometimes on the other side of the river. During the way 3 English civilians joined us to assist with the Malay language and endeavoured to teach us something about the surrounding country. They were Major Kidd, a retired Malay Civil Servant, Mr. Neaves and 2nd Lieut Hislop, Malay volunteers.

Two more Carriers arrived on the 13th together with one Armoured Car and patrolling continued all day. It took up to 3½ hours to contact all Company Commanders owing to the great distance between companies. There was continuous tropical rain all day.

On the 14th there were reports of enemy parties on the north bank of the river. The Carriers patrolled the road all day. "D" company returned from rear guard duties from Malacca to Muar.

I took the Carriers on the 15th for a training drive towards Muar. A Captain of the Rajputana Rifles asked me to go to Muar for a reconnaissance as he had been fired at from the north side of the river. I proceeded to Muar with three Carriers but did not encounter any enemy. Later in the day the enemy crossed the Muar River and broke through the Rajputana Rifles

defences. "D" Company was sent to clear the Muar Langa road which was blocked by felled trees and suffered 30 casualties, including a Petty Officer from the Royal Navy, who had earlier survived the sinking of the Repulse and Prince of Wales. He had joined "D" Company during the rear guard duties of the previous day.

On the 16th, which was my 25th birthday, I was in Battalion H.Q. and gathered that little or nothing was known about the activities of the rest of the brigade. Major White, the 2nd in Command, and 2nd Lieut. Piper left in my Armoured car to try and contact Brigade H.Q. They reached the Muar Parit Sulong road and were knocked off the road by enemy tanks. They both escaped from the Armoured Car and later returned to Battalion H.Q.

While patrolling the road up to "B" Company's position we came across a Battery of Royal Artillery, who were firing on a road block. I took the Carriers down to the road block and managed to disperse them. During this operation I lost one Carrier. The Japanese were held up in the trees by ropes with a good supply of hand grenades. I think one must have been thrown into the Carrier behind me, as there was a loud explosion and it didn't follow. In this type of country a Bren Gun Carrier was a very vulnerable vehicle. I returned to Battalion H.Q. which was now situated in a clearing surrounded by rubber trees. We made an attack on a small village where our Ration lorry had been captured, but there were no enemy contacted.

Battalion H.Q. moved forward 300 yards on the 17th from the position taken up the previous night. Major White and 2nd Lieut Piper returned with orders to join up with the 29th Australian Battalion at Mile Stone 101 on the Bakri Muar road. At 11.30 hrs the Battalion moved down a track in the rubber trees towards Bakri. After 300 yds the transport was halted and told to await orders for any advance. This time I was leading the convoy of trucks with my Bren Gun Carrier, the other 2 having broken down. The Battalion had only left half an hour before when my section of transport was fired on by light machine guns. The fire was not heavy. The Vickers machine guns which I had already placed round the transport for protection went mad firing without seeing the target. I endeavoured to stop this. The transport was at this time split in two so when the firing ceased I managed to join my section up with the other section and form a perimeter. I sent 3 separate messages by motor cycle despatch riders to inform Battalion H.Q. of the situation, but none of these returned. Presumably they were killed by the Japanese, who by this time had taken over the track through the rubber trees. At 17.00 hrs the wounded started coming back up the track and one Viceroy's Commissioned Officer said he had seen the C.O. and the Adjutant killed. We told him not to say anything to the rest of the men, who by this time appeared to be very concerned.

Our party had been joined by a Battery of Royal Artillery without their guns and also an Ammunition Waggon. I had a talk with Captain Dyer and the Sergeant of the Royal Artillery. We decided to get everything ready to abandon the transport if need be. At 19.00 hrs 4 Australians turned up from the 29th Australian Battalion with orders to abandon the transport and join the Battalion at Mile Stone 101. They said this order was impossible as the enemy had already crossed the rubber track we were intending to use. These Australians said they had had great difficulty in getting to us. We then decided to try and get to the 96 Mile Stone down the Muar Bakri road. This meant going through swampy marshes. Major Kidd who had joined us said he would lead the party as he knew which route to take. Our party now consisted of 200 men. We set off at 21.00 hrs and the party soon got split as the path was very dark.

My party consisted of about 160 men. We were also joined by Lieut. Hislop. We were all very tired and decided to sleep for the rest of the night. We spent all the next day, the 18th, ploughing through deep swamps and latterly meeting many wounded Australians, some of whom we helped along. Major from the R.E. left some men with us and said he was going to surrender. The stories we heard from the wounded told me that our troops on the Bakri road had suffered very heavy casualties. In the afternoon Captain Dyer turned up with the rest of the transport section. We all carried on as one large party led by Major Kidd.

At dusk we came upon the Muar Bakri road south of the 101 Mile Stone and seemed to have by-passed the Japanese. Ahead of us to the north we heard heavy firing. We all crouched down in ditches to take cover until it was dark enough to move. Major Kidd went off to see if he could contact anyone and find out what was happening. While we were in this position, several mortar bombs came over and exploded in the trees unpleasantly close. After an hour Major Kidd returned with the news that he had met an Australian in charge of a camp about a mile down the road in the direction of Parit Sulong. He had also met a Malay who had told him that the Japanese were seen near Parit Sulong bridge. We moved down the road to where Major Kidd had seen the Australian but he was not there.

The men were extremely tired as they had had no food for 3 or 4 days, so I gave orders for them to rest and try and get some sleep. It was at this point that a Subedar in our party tried to make trouble telling me he was going to take some of the men down the road. I told him to obey orders and keep quiet whereupon he became very rude. I put him in charge of Jemedar Ram Sarup and another V.C.O. and I didn't see him again and think he was probably disposed of quietly.

Major Kidd at this point was exhausted and collapsed. At 22.00 hrs I heard a noise of approaching transport coming down the road from Bakri, which I thought might be tanks having broken through our forward positions. 2nd Lieut Hislop and I went forward with our tommy guns to see what it was and found to our joy that it was the 19th and the 29th Australian Battalions and what remained of the 45th Brigade, who had had many casualties. At this point I met Captain Henry W. Watson who was in command of what was left of the 4/9th Jat Battalion. In my estimation this was about 100 men. Having got my party together, we followed behind. All of us were extremely tired and found the going difficult. Before we left Major Kidd told us that a Malay whom he had contacted said that he had seen Japanese troops on the bridge at Parit Sulong. This information I passed on to Captain Henry Watson and also the C.O. of the 19th Australian Battalion. Major Kidd at this point said he could not carry on. He was not a young man and had given us wonderful service. We offered to carry him, but he assured us that he knew the country well and would be quite all right to be left. Sadly he was never seen again.

Captain Henry Watson told me what had happened to the 4/9th Jats. He said that Colonel Williams and our Adjutant, Captain Lee had been killed and Brigadier Duncan had led a bayonet charge with what remained of the 45th Brigade and was either killed or wounded. (There may be a muddle over the dates as the Regimental History states he was killed on the 21st January.)

Captain Watson also told me that 2nd Lieut Frank B. Cope had acted with tremendous bravery and should have received the Victoria Cross. When the Brigadier became a casualty, he had dashed out from the cover of a ditch and endeavoured to carry the Brigadier to safety but was killed in the process.

At dawn on the 19th the forward troops in the column contacted the enemy at Parit Sulong village and an attack was launched by the 19th Australian Battalion under their C.O. Lt. Colonel Charles Anderson. This proved unsuccessful and as the Japanese were holding the bridge across the river, our means of withdrawing was impossible unless the bridge was captured. The 45th Brigade was now being commanded by Lt. Col. Anderson. He formed the Brigade in to a box section and I took up a position at the northern perimeter. Here I came in contact with Major White, our second in Command and 2nd Lieut Barker, both of whom were wounded. Major White had a serious back wound and was unable to walk. He was being driven in an open Morris 8 car. Col. Anderson called on Captain Watson to collect as many Indian troops together as possible to attack the Japanese on Parit Sulong bridge.

The attacking party moved off and I was in the rear and had gone about 200 yds when a Major, who was second in Command of the 19th Australian Battalion, called me back as there was no Officer looking after the remaining Indian troops. I



collected about 40 men together and we proceeded to form the perimeter. On the northern edge the perimeter was approximately 300 yds across and on the southern edge 400 yds long. While we were getting in to position alongside the Australians 3 enemy fighter planes flying very low machine gunned us. When I got up from the trench in which I was taking cover, I only had about 10 Indian troops from various Battalions in the 45th Brigade left with me. I managed to arrange with an Australian Captain that each of my men would be accompanied by an Australian. We stayed in this position all day expecting a heavy attack, but only had the odd sniper and one heavy bomber which came over and dropped bombs. Two of our lorries were hit. Enemy aircraft were flying over our position most of the day and we heard bursts of machine gun fire in other parts of the perimeter.

At 17.00 hrs a very heavy bombardment of our position by heavy guns and mortars began. We were all very much in the open and the shells and mortar bombs were bursting in the rubber trees causing many casualties. An Australian Officer came up to me and asked me if I would take over the section to the right of the road, as the Officer in charge of this section had been killed. He also instructed me to close the perimeter for the night, which meant withdrawing 200 yds. I instructed the men in my section to endeavour to bring back with us the wounded, most of whom had serious back and leg wounds. It took us half an hour to get them back and during this time the Japanese could have been only 100 yds away, but held their fire. This I could not understand at the time.

When I got back to my position, I found another Officer had taken over and was getting the men into any available ditches, which had been dug in peace time for the rubber production. Shortly after this, we had another very heavy bombardment and also small arms fire. The Japanese had an automatic rifle similar to our Bren Gun, which made a very distinctive noise. By infiltrating with small parties on all sides of our perimeter, they intended to frighten us into thinking we were completely surrounded. After half an hour of very heavy firing, there was a lull and we heard the enemy tanks moving down the road. Luckily we had two 25 pounder guns and an anti-tank gun stationed on the road and the Royal Artillery did magnificently and knocked out 11 tanks. These tanks had a crew of only 2 men and were very lightly armoured, but they caused considerable havoc driving in and out of the rubber trees.

(I have some photographs of the Battle of the Muar River which show the 2 man Japanese tanks presumably taken by a British photographer).

When darkness fell we were still being attacked and after the tanks had shone their lights on us, lorryloads of Japanese infantry came down the road in old country buses. By this

time I had joined up with Captain Henry Watson who had returned from the attack on the Parit Sulong bridge. The Australian told me he and his men made a very brave attempt to drive the Japanese from the bridge area, but this unfortunately failed. We went forward with fixed bayonets and made an attack on the buses before the infantry alighted. I moved through some thick shrub and came to some open rubber trees close to the road and let fly one drum of ammunition from my tommy gun. I was trying to fix another drum on the gun, squatting behind a rubber tree, when a Japanese came on the other side of the tree firing his rifle. I eventually got back to a ditch and found myself next to an Australian, who said that the Japanese had got between us and the main body. There was quite a large bushy tree growing out of the ditch under which we hid. I think we must have fallen asleep and as dawn broke the firing had died down, so I crept out of our hiding place to have a look round. About 50 yds away I saw Japanese moving about and I think some of them were shooting our wounded. The Australian and I decided to head east into the thick jungle country and to see if we could circle round and rejoin our own troops.

We got to a point where we could see our old position of the previous night and there were many dead Japanese and also Indian and Australians, but there was no sign of our troops. There seemed to be heavy firing coming from the other side of the road and behind us. We went back to our hideout and decided to see if we could get away to the west and cross the river which lay to the south of us. I had a school map and from this we set a course to the west through the rubber trees to try to reach Batu Pahat. We came across a Sepoy from "C" Company of the Jats who joined us. We marched all day but were unable to find the river, so when it got dark we found a good hideout and went to sleep.

During this battle at Parit Sulong bridge Colonel Anderson requested that the Japanese should allow trucks with severely wounded to pass the road block and proceed to Singapore. This request was refused but later the trucks endeavoured to slip away under cover of darkness, but were captured and everyone was slaughtered.

Colonel Anderson showed great bravery during this battle and refused to surrender to the Japanese. He was later awarded the Victorian Cross.

The next day, the 21st January, the three of us set off again and in the evening came upon a Japanese position discovered only by tripping over the telephone wire. Here we contacted a Chinaman who told us the Japanese were all round the place, so we found some thick scrub and hid for the night. At dawn we made a hurried retreat. By this time all three of us were very weak as we had had no food for some days. We came across many telephone wires, which we cut. We hid up most of the day and managed to get a few coconuts to eat. From a Chinaman we

found out that there were British troops in Batu Phat and here I must say that the Chinese were very good to us when we came across them. At 20.00 hrs we came to a large river and found a house and a Malay boy said he would find us a boat. He disappeared and didn't return, so we went further up the river and came to a village, where there seemed to be a chance of getting a boat. We knocked on the door of a house and called out saying that we were Australians. The whole place seemed to wake up and about 10 men advanced on us with torches, so we beat it into the rubber. They followed shouting what sounded like Japanese, so we ran for about a mile and found a Chinaman outside a house. We made it plain that we were starving and he signalled us to go underneath the house. Later he brought us some food. We went to sleep and woke to hear the noise of Japanese in the house, so we quietly crept out and hid in some bushes. Later we found another village and a boat in which the 3 of us managed to cross the river. We followed the river bank in the direction of Batu Pahat. All along the bank there were signs that there had been heavy fighting. There was distinct smell of death and a smashed machine gun position. After going about 2 miles we came across a man lying on a path. At first we thought he was dead, but after lighting a match and having a look at him we found that he was an Indian Sepoy who had tried to escape, been bayoneted and left to die. We found a Chinese house and asked the Chinaman to look after him. We spent the rest of the night in some bushes on a rubber plantation.

On the 23rd at dawn we started off again and came to a large village. We had just passed through it when we saw a column of Japanese moving along a footpath 100 yds in front of us. There was no cover, so we just sat down behind some trees and watched. They all had bicycles and every 6th man was carrying a light automatic. We waited in this place for over an hour watching them go by. There were many hundreds of them. When it was all quiet we moved on again. In the afternoon we came across more Japanese pulling a small 2 pounder gun. We nearly walked into them, but were seen so they sent a man on a bicycle to see who we were. I pointed my tommy gun at him but didn't fire for fear of giving us away. He jumped on his bicycle and pedalled off fast and so did we in the other direction.

In the evening we got to another large river where we persuaded some Chinese to take us across. As we were going across we saw Japanese some hundred yards further down also on the river. Our only chance was to get to Batu Pahat before the Japanese. After an hour we arrived at a small road which went in the direction of Batu Pahat where we were challenged by the Cambridgeshire regiment, who were in the act of withdrawing from their position. They were a bicycle platoon. We were given bicycles and told to follow the company back.

On arriving at the town of Batu Pahat, we were told to get on a truck and the party moved off down the road. Six miles from

Batu Pahat on the road to Singapore, the convoy halted as orders had come through that Batu Pahat had to be held at all cost. "A" Company of the Cambridgeshires took up a position on a hill on which stood a large house, which I think was the British Consul's. Here my Australian friend and I found some beds and went to sleep. Dawn broke on the 24th and we could hear firing. Up to now no attacks had been made on Batu Pahat. We stayed in the house where we found some tins of food and a bottle of scotch. We were just enjoying the first real food we had tasted for 7 days, when the house was machine gunned and the tin I was holding was knocked out of my hand. No one in the house was hurt. We went and found an air raid shelter of sorts and after having a good tot of whisky and feeling very much better, we went in to the garden where the Cambridgeshires had placed their mortar platoon and from this position we could see the Japanese advance into the town a few hundred feet below us. The mortars opened up and the Japanese suffered quite heavy casualties.

The Commanding Officer of the Cambridgeshires visited our position and I asked him if we could contact Brigade H.Q. He sent us down the hill in a truck to Brigade H.Q. where I reported to the Brigadier and told him that the 45th Brigade had been annihilated on the Muar River. The Brigadier was very reluctant to believe my story. I was given a very good meal and slept at Brigade H.Q. that night. I understood that the Japanese were massing for an attack in Batu Pahat.

On the morning of the 25th I met 3 Officers of the 6th Norfolks. I made enquiries from them if a cousin of mine, Eric Milne, was in their Battalion. I was very excited to hear that he was, as I hadn't seen him for over 3 years. In the evening I met him on the road and had time enough to hear his news. He was very surprised to see me, but I didn't see him again for many years as he was taken prisoner. That night the road to Singapore was blocked by the Japanese, who had encircled the Anglian Brigade and captured the river bridge.

I stayed all day on the 26th at Brigade H.Q. I was treated very well by the Officers there. As far as I remember their names were Lieut. Jones, Lieut. Smith and Lieut. Offing. During the day we sustained heavy attacks by enemy aircraft. In the evening we were informed that a convoy would try and make a dash through the road block area, as 2 Companies of the Leicesters had come up from the south and temporarily cleared the Japanese away.

We had only gone 600 yds when we got the order "De-bus, destroy the transport and every man for himself." We were all very surprised as we thought we had every chance of getting through. There were many wounded in the lorries and those who could get out joined up with various parties, some going to the left of the road and some to the right. With my 3 Norfolk friends and 50 men we crossed the bridge that had been cleared by the

Leicesters. My Australian friend Jim joined us. We went into a rubber plantation on the left of the road endeavouring to take cover in a large swamp. We had only advanced 300 yds when we were heavily fired on by the enemy. Lieut. Offing was hit in the head and fell down and I saw some Japanese rushing across my front and I opened fire with my tommy gun. At least 6 Japanese fell. The enemy fire was too heavy to advance any further, so I turned to give the signal to withdraw and saw that the troops behind were already running for it. I was putting another magazine on my tommy gun when a bullet hit the magazine and injured my hand. With Jim, the Australian, and a Sergeant from the Norfolks we reached the road again under heavy machine gun fire dodging from one rubber tree to the next.

As we approached the bridge a Royal Engineer Officer, who was about to blow the bridge, told us to hurry up. There were two ammunition lorries on the road burning fiercely. As we moved round a building on the south side of the river, the bridge was blown and the building collapsed on top of us. We were not seriously hurt because it was of wooden construction, but we suffered many lacerations. After climbing out of the rubble we reached a clearing in the jungle where we met 20 men, some of whom had minor wounds. They asked what we intended doing and after talking it over, we decided to wait until dark before making a move.

When it was dark we set off and marched through heavy jungle country for about 3 hours. We kept coming across swamps and on the other side of one of these we came across 3/400 men who were blocking our path. Jim the Australian and the Sergeant and another Australian went forward to find out why everyone had stopped. After great difficulty they reached the head of the column where there was a Captain who said he was in charge. He told us that he thought it was impossible to carry on through the swamps at night. After endeavouring to make progress for 2 hours, we stopped and slept for the night near a river.

In the early morning of the 27th the four of us moved on and came in contact with a complete anti-tank battery led by a Captain. We joined them and headed towards the coast. In the afternoon we reached a village where there were a lot more British personnel from the Anglian Brigade. We were informed that the Brigadier was in the party and was trying to get us away by sea. Everything seemed very vague and our group was not keen on sitting still. We set off in search of boats big enough to carry 30 men. After some time we found 3 boats in a village and at dusk paddled down the river towards the sea. When we got there we saw what looked like a Gun Boat about 5 miles off shore. By this time it was getting very dark and one of the boats was leaking badly, so we turned round and went up river a short way and pulled in to a mango swamp for the night.

When I woke up on the 28th I found that Jim and the Captain had left in one of the boats to see if they could contact the Gun Boat. We never saw them again. Our only chance appeared to be to get out by sea, as the Japanese had completely surrounded us. At 07.00 hours the tide seemed to be rising and we had water up to our waists so were unable to move as the mango swamps were very thick. We were relieved later when the water subsided. Enemy aircraft flew over us all day sometimes machine gunning us at a very low altitude.

In the evening some Chinese came down the river and told us that the Gun Boat had contacted the Brigade and men were being taken off that night. The Chinese then took us back in our boats to where the Brigade was waiting for evacuation. I was taken to a make-shift hospital where there was a large number of wounded, as I had a septic leg and hand. I stayed the night there and the next morning, which was the 29th, I was told that I would be evacuated during the coming night. I gave my tommy gun to a Sergeant in the Norfolks thinking he might make more use of it than me.

That night there was the evacuation of the wounded and I managed to get down to the embarkation point where there was considerable chaos. Soldiers from the Malay Regiment were endeavouring to jump into the boats without orders. An Officer who was there fired 2 or 3 shots which seemed to quell the disturbance.

The boats were 2 whalers from either HMS Ladybird or HMS Dragonfly. Once on board I was treated royally, given a large tot of rum, a pair of shorts and a singlet to replace my very tattered khaki shirt and shorts, which were falling apart. It was a great relief to find myself in some comfort after many days of hardship. I was pushed into a bunk and the next thing I knew we were tying up at the docks in Singapore.

## SINGAPORE

I came ashore still very tired on the morning of the 30th January 1942 thinking at that time how lucky I was. I found out much later that this evacuation was a mini Dunkirk and about 2000 troops managed to find their way back to Singapore.

I walked along the dock and tried to get a taxi to no avail. Eventually a kind soldier on a motor bike gave me a lift to Victoria Hospital, as I had to get my hand dressed. My arm was very swollen and I had a red patch forming on my chest. On arrival at the hospital I was told to find a patch on the grass in the compound. Some time later a Medical Orderly came and dressed my hand having massaged a lot of pus out of the wound. I stayed in the hospital area all day. The town was being bombed continually and I decided that I would be better off some other place. My Cousin, Major Claude Tanner, had a house in Thompson Road and I managed to get there and my Cousin's Wife, Joan, gave me a bath and put me to bed. I think I slept for 2 days.

Women were being evacuated on various ships which had brought in troops for the last stand. Joan Tanner was due to sail on one of the boats. Unfortunately her friend was at Changi. I managed to get a car and pick her up. It was a hair raising journey, as many of the roads were blocked by falling buildings and Singapore was being bombed regularly. At some stage I drove a party of women to the docks. Joan Tanner got away successfully to Australia, but her husband became a Prisoner of War, who survived.

About the 3rd of February I managed to locate Captain Henry Watson, who had managed to escape from Parit Sulong via Yong Peng. He and I were the only British Officers left from the 4/9th Jats. He had about 150 men with him, who had been carrying out various duties in the town. During the next few days we were amalgamated with the 2/9th Jats who had also suffered heavy casualties. They had been north of Kuala Lumpur and had withdrawn via Segamat. For the next week I carried out various duties including taking charge of parties of men, unloading ships in the docks, filling in bomb holes on aerodromes and running a train to collect rice from Kranji. This was stored in large godowns. During this time the Japanese had arrived on the north side of Johor strait and were continually shelling the town. Every day there were heavy air raids especially on the docks. There were no air raid shelter; one had to trust one's luck.

On about the 10th February, the Jat battalion of approximately 3/400 men were stationed at Serangoon Road in the Chinese evacuation camp. The Battalion was commanded by Lt. Col. A. Cumming of the Frontier Force Regiment. While up country he had won a V.C., but at this time didn't know anything about it. We were endeavouring to get our small unit in to some sort of



shape, when we were heavily shelled. Col. Cumming decided to move the unit to a safer area. One shell had landed in a hut which we had made the Officers Mess and severely wounded the 2nd in Command and an Orderly. It was lucky I was out of the Mess at the time, as I was walking towards the Hut to have breakfast, as the shell had landed on my bunk.

We moved to a site in the rubber trees and spent the night there. Shelling was heavy all around us but we sustained no casualties. I was sent down to Fort Canning to ascertain the role of our unit, accompanied by Lieut. Jack Baker from the 4th Battalion who on his arrival in Singapore had suffered an appendicitis but had now recovered. It was very dark in army H.Q. I think I was taken to General Percival but I may be wrong. I received orders for the Battalion to proceed to a point to the south of Hill 220 which overlooked the Bukit Timah road. We were instructed to advance at 07.00 hrs and attack the hill.

At 07.00 hrs we moved forward with fixed bayonets. As we were proceeding up the hill, a large formation of Japanese bombers bombed us heavily. This was extremely frightening, as we had no cover at all. We suffered some casualties. After this incident, we reached the top of the hill with only slight opposition. We remained here awaiting further orders.

Lieut. Gregson from the Selanger Volunteers had joined us as he could speak Malay. He was sent down to see if he could find out what the position was and returned in an hour or two having been unable to contact anybody, as the Japanese had already taken up positions behind us. We stayed on the hill all day and at night I went off with Lieut. Jack Baker and managed to obtain a certain amount of food and two cans of water from a small kampong. There were Japanese wandering about everywhere, so we retired back to our hideout on the hill.

The following day the Japanese stationed a battery of guns to our rear and started shelling Singapore town. We watched all day very low flying Zeros and also the Japanese had the audacity to put up an observation balloon, which our Ack Ack gunners were unable to shoot down. We had a grand stand view of the Japanese troops advancing into Singapore down the Bukit Timah road. We didn't discover that as planned we should have had troops advancing on both our flanks when we took the hill. Little did we know, that the attack had been cancelled the night before and we were never informed.

Later in the day we heard the guns stop firing and the Japanese yelling "Bonzai", "Bonzai". We knew then that Singapore had fallen. This was the 15th February. Colonel Cumming called the Officers and V.C.O.s together and discussed the situation we were in. It was decided that we should break up into small parties and endeavour to escape.

19th June 1990.

**ESCAPE FROM SINGAPORE 1942.**

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The photos which I donated to the Jat Museum in Bareilly at this year's Reunion related to the escape from Singapore of a party of Jats commanded by Lieut.Col A. Cumming of the Frontier Force Regiment.

The escape took place 10 days after the fall of Singapore.

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During the final days before the 15th February 1942 when Singapore fell, a Jat Battalion was formed out of the survivors of the 4th Battalion who had held the position at Muar with the help of the Australians and the remains of the 2nd Battalion who had fought all the way down the Malay peninsular. This Jat unit was commanded by Lieut. Col. A. Cumming of the Frontier Force Regiment, who at the time had won the V.C. unbeknown to himself whilst fighting up country.

On the morning of the 12th February the Jats were ordered to attack Hill 220 south of Bukit Panjam. As the Jats advanced they were heavily bombed by 27 low flying enemy aircraft and suffered a number of casualties. It was understood that they were to be supported on either flank, but this did not happen. They were not informed that the attack had been cancelled the night before. Little resistance was encountered and the hill was captured.

The Jats remained concealed in thick scrub while Japanese Zeros and heavy bombers flew overhead attacking troops at their rear and also bombing Singapore. The Japanese were seen to advance down Bukit Timah road and they later positioned a heavy artillery battery at the base of the hill to the rear of the Jats position. Firing continued on Singapore town for the next two days and it was obvious that the Jats were surrounded and on the 15th February the guns stopped firing and shouts of "Bonzi" were heard.

The Jat men had had no food or water for 4 days and were in poor shape. Colonel Cumming called all Officers and Viceroy Commissioned Officers together and explained the situation. The VCOs passed on to all their men that Singapore had fallen and there was little chance of any of us getting away. Colonel Cumming suggested that troops should form themselves into small parties and try to pass themselves off as Malays.

A small party was made up of British Officers and VCOs, but some British Officers and VCOs decided to surrender. After many hardships this small party managed to escape from the Island and reach Sumatra. The photographs tell the story of the escape. Their troubles were not over, as on reaching

Sumatra the Japanese were already advancing up the island and the fall of Padang on the West coast was imminent. The party eventually reached Padang and were asked to volunteer to fight in Java and embarked on a small coastal steamer called Palopo, which headed south. This was the last ship to leave Padang. After two or three days at sea an upturned lifeboat was spotted with two survivors of the ship that had left before us. This had been torpedoed. On nearing Java, a message was received to head for Ceylon as Java was about to capitulate. Eventually the ship reached Ceylon. We had arrived exactly a month after leaving Singapore.

February 1991



BRIEF HISTORY  
OF  
THE ROYAL NORFOLK REGIMENT

1685	Formed as Colonel Cornwall's Regiment of Foot
1747	Renamed as 9th Regiment of Foot
1782	9th (East Norfolk) Regiment of Foot
1881	The Norfolk Regiment
1935	<del>The Royal Norfolk Regiment</del>
1959	The Royal Norfolk Regiment amalgamated with The Suffolk Regiment to form the 1st Battalion The East Anglian Regiment (Royal Norfolk and Suffolk)
1968	Amalgamation with other East Anglian Regiments to form 1st Battalion (Norfolk, Suffolk and Cambridgeshire) The Royal Anglian Regiment
<u>Regimental Badge</u>	The Figure of Britannia
<u>Regimental March</u>	Rule Britannia
<u>Regimental Day</u>	<u>25 April.</u> Anniversary of the Battle of Almanza 1707 - it was as a reward for outstanding bravery and courage at this Battle that the Regiment was granted the privilege and distinction of wearing the figure of Britannia as a badge
<u>"Nickname"</u>	The Holy Boys. So called, because during the Peninsular War in Portugal and Spain, the figure of Britannia was thought by the local population to be that of the Virgin Mary
<u>Battle Honours</u>	Too numerous to list, but the main campaigns are: Belle Isle, West Indies 1794, Peninsula, 1st Afghan War 1842, Afghanistan 1879-80, Boer War 1900-1902
<u>World War I</u> <u>(The Great War)</u>	All major battles on Western Front, including Mons, Le Cateau, Marne 1914, Ypres 1914-15-17-18, Somme 1916-18, France and Flanders 1914-18, Italy 1917-18. <u>Middle East;</u> Landing at Suvla, Gallipoli 1915, Egypt 1915-17, Gaza, Palestine 1917-18, Shaiba, Kut-al-Amara 1915, 1917. Ctesiphon, Mesopotamia 1914-18
<u>1919-1939</u>	Battalions of the Regiment served in India, China, Aden, Iraq, Egypt, West Indies and Gibraltar
<u>World War II</u>	France and Belgium 1939-40, St Vallery 1940, St Omer, La Bassee, Dunkirk 1940, Normandy Landing, Brieux, Bridghead, Falaise, Venraij, Rhineland, Brinkum, N W Europe 1940, 44-45. Singapore Island, Malaya, 1942, North Arakan, Imphal, Kohima, Aradura, Mandalay.
<u>Korea 1951-52</u>	
<u>Cyprus 1955-57</u>	

During World War II, soldiers of the Regiment were awarded five VCs, the most awarded to any British Regiment during this War.



*On parade: the men who lined the Royal route for the City Hall opening in 1938*