

447. *Medical*.—Accommodation for all hospitals withdrawn from the mainland had with difficulty been found in the Singapore Town area, where there was naturally much congestion. The Alexandra Military Hospital remained the main hospital for British troops, as did the Tyersall Park Hospital in the Tanglin area for Indian troops. The Australian Base Hospital evacuated from Malacca was accommodated in a school on the northern outskirts of Singapore Town. Temporary hospitals were formed at Changi, in St. Patrick's School, in the lower part of the Cathay building and, later on, on the lower floors of the Secretariat and of the Municipal Offices, at the Singapore Club and at the Cricket Club.

There were good reserves of medical stores at Tanglin.

As regards the Civil Medical Services, the Main Civil Hospital and a number of other hospitals in the Singapore area were still in full use.

448. *Ordnance*.—The Main Army Ordnance Depot was at Alexandra, with large Sub-Depots at Nee Soon and in the Singapore Town area. That of the Royal Air Force was at Seletar.

449. *Naval Stores*.—At the Naval Base were held large quantities of stores of all descriptions for the use of the Royal Navy.

450. *Docks*.—As a result of the Japanese air raids on the Singapore Docks, labour difficulties, similar to those which had been experienced elsewhere, developed towards the end of January. The Asiatic labourers, who were in the regular employ of the Singapore Harbour Board and most of whom occupied quarters adjoining the Docks, disappeared as the air raids became more intense, with the result that ships bringing military stores had to be unloaded by military personnel.

SECTION XLVII.—APPRECIATION OF THE SITUATION, 31ST JANUARY, 1942.

451. *Object*.—As the Naval Base was now under observed artillery and small arms fire and within close range of enemy aircraft to which we could offer only limited opposition, we had clearly failed to achieve our object of protecting that base. From now onward our object was to hold Singapore.

452. *Naval*.—On the sea the Japanese retained complete control of the waters east of Malaya. With Borneo in their hands it was probable also that their naval forces would rapidly extend their control westwards and south-westwards towards South Sumatra.

On the west coast of Malaya no Japanese warships had yet penetrated to the Straits of Malacca but their coastal craft could move with impunity under cover of their aircraft. In addition to captured coastal craft it was now clear that the Japanese had succeeded in transferring to the west coast some of their own landing craft.

453. *Air*.—In the air the Japanese enjoyed almost complete supremacy, the only Air Forces we had available in Malaya at this stage being the one squadron of Hurricane Fighters and a small number of Buffaloes.

All the aerodromes, except that at Kallang, were under observed artillery fire and some of them were under small arms fire.

454. *Army*.—It was estimated that the Japanese could probably deploy three divisions

against Singapore Island, i.e., the Guards and 5 Division, or their replacements, from the west coast and one division from the east coast. These, if up to strength, would give a total of about 60,000 men. Behind these it was reasonable to expect that they had local reserves in Malaya and they also probably still had a General Reserve in Indo-China or elsewhere of one or two divisions. It was estimated, therefore, that they probably had available for operations against Singapore a total strength of seven or eight divisions. They were known in addition to have tank units and a formation of air-borne troops.

As regards our own strength, I have no official figures available now, but I believe it to have been in the neighbourhood of 85,000, i.e., the equivalent of four weak divisions with a large number of Base and other administrative troops. Included in this figure were units of non-combatant Corps, i.e., the Royal Army Medical Corps and the Pioneer and Labour Units, and men for whom no arms could be provided. Probably about 70,000 of the total were armed and equipped. A large number of these were very inadequately trained. Some of the reinforcements indeed were so untrained that it had been deemed unwise to draft them to units and they remained in the Reinforcement Camps.

We hoped to get reinforcements totalling about 2,500 early in February.

455. As regards equipment, the enemy had complete superiority in tanks as we still only had a few obsolescent light tanks available. We were, however, reasonably well equipped with anti-tank guns and still had a good number of Bren gun carriers and armoured cars. Our coast artillery was strong and our field artillery was equal if not superior to that of the enemy though our ammunition reserve was limited. The Japanese had a good infantry gun and their troops were well trained in the use of the mortar which was a better weapon than our own. We had two fully equipped machine-gun battalions, but few units even approached establishment in light automatics, mortars or Thompson sub-machine guns owing to heavy losses in the fighting on the mainland. There were comparatively few anti-tank rifles.

456. *Topography*.—The comparative narrowness of the western channel of the Johore Straits and the fact that the main west coast land communications led to that front made it appear probable that the main Japanese attack would develop from the west. There was also the possibility of an approach via the Malacca Straits to the south-west sector of Singapore Island. Another possible avenue of approach which could not be neglected was from Kota Tinggi via the River Johore leading to Tekong Island and the Changi area.

Should the enemy succeed in getting a footing on Singapore Island, the offensive and infiltration tactics which he would certainly adopt would be favoured by the lack of ground observation.

457. *Communications*.—The Japanese land communications were now very long and vulnerable and exposed to the harassing tactics of the various parties which had been left behind on the mainland for that purpose. Many bridges had been destroyed. On the other hand by making use of the sea and by landing troops and material at Mersing or at one of