

583. The general line of our foremost positions at the cessation of hostilities was from right to left as under:—

All inclusive the Kallang Aerodrome (Civil Airport)—The Tarlat Air Strip—The Junction of the Serangoon and Braddell roads—The Junction of Braddell and Thomson roads—The Broadcasting Station—Bukit Brown—Adam road—Raffles College area—Tyersall area—Tanglin area—Mount Echo—The Biscuit Factory—The Alexandra Ammunition Magazine—Mount Washington—The eastern end of the Keppel Golf Links.

We also held Blakang Mati, Pulau Brani, Tekong and the Pengerang area.

584. Japanese troops entered Singapore Town on the morning of the 16th February. There was a military demonstration in which 175 Medium and Light Tanks took part. The majority of the Japanese troops, however, were retained outside the Town area.

585. After the cessation of hostilities it was 5½ days, with engineers and water parties working at full pressure, before water again reached the lower areas of Singapore Town, which had been deprived of it, and the first floor of buildings in the lowest areas. It was 10 days before water again reached the General Hospital and many other buildings on the higher levels.

SECTION LVII.—IMPLEMENTATION OF THE SCORCHED EARTH POLICY ON SINGAPORE ISLAND.

586. The plans for the implementation of the Scorched Earth Policy on Singapore Island have already been explained in Section XLII and Appendix J. It was an operation of war, the planning and execution of which took up much time and required constant attention. To fight and destroy simultaneously is in my opinion one of the most difficult things which commanders and troops can be called upon to do. Hoping, as we did, that we should be able to stop the enemy and make use of our material resources we naturally delayed the demolition work for as long as possible. In this respect the problem differed widely from that in a pre-meditated withdrawal carried out on a time programme. As stated in Appendix J I reserved to myself the responsibility of ordering the various schemes to be put into effect whenever time permitted. In most cases, though not all, it was possible to do this and it was in fact done. As in the case of the mainland, it would be idle for me to attempt to assess the success of the Scorched Earth Policy on Singapore Island other than in general terms. In some cases the Policy could not for various reasons be implemented. It is natural also that, in the turmoil of operations, demolitions, most of which must necessarily be put into effect at the last minute, should not in all cases be as effective as would otherwise be the case. Nevertheless, a general picture of the implementation of the Scorched Earth Policy may be given.

587. *Army.—Fixed Defences*—It is believed that all the guns and other vital equipment of the Fixed Defences were damaged in such a way that it would be impossible for the Japanese to make further use of them.

Anti-Aircraft Defences.—With only a few exceptions the guns and the searchlights were effectively destroyed. Subsequent attempts by the Japanese to obtain assistance for the repair of guns were refused.

Field Armament.—The great majority, though not all, of the field and anti-tank guns were rendered unserviceable. In the case of the small arms, however, it was inadvisable to destroy these before the capitulation had been accepted by the enemy while later it was against the terms agreed upon. In consequence, it is probable that only a proportion of the small arms were rendered unserviceable.

Secret and Technical Equipment, Secret Documents etc.—These were, as far as is known, successfully destroyed.

Ammunition.—There is no doubt that considerable stocks of ammunition fell into the hands of the enemy. The large Alexandra Magazine was left intact for reasons which have already been explained, i.e. that it could not with safety be destroyed owing to its proximity to the Military Hospital. The demolition of the Changi Magazine was partially successful, a second effort being made by the Royal Engineers the day after the evacuation of the area. Other stocks were left intact in dumps which were overrun in the course of the fighting, especially at Kranji, Nee Soon and on the Bukit Timah Rifle Range.

Petrol.—The only petrol which fell into the enemy's hands on Singapore Island was the contents of a few small dumps and what was left in vehicle tanks.

588. *Royal Navy.*—The machinery of the Graving Dock at the Naval Base was destroyed. The Floating Dock was sunk.

I am not in a position to report on the other installations for which the Royal Navy was responsible except as regards the Normanton Group of Oil Tanks. Owing to the proximity of these tanks to the Alexandra Military Hospital the Rear-Admiral Malaya, after consultation with me, issued orders that only the eight most westerly tanks of the group should be destroyed.

589. *Royal Air Force.*—Owing to the withdrawal of Royal Air Force personnel from Singapore Island the responsibility for destroying many of their scattered dumps devolved upon the Army. Though some small dumps were overrun in the course of the operations and fell into enemy hands, it is believed that the bulk of the aviation petrol was successfully destroyed or otherwise disposed of.

The Main Reserve Dump of aircraft bombs was also destroyed.

590. *Civil.*—The application of the Scorched Earth Policy to property owned by the civil government, by public bodies, and by firms and private individuals was carefully organized by the Director General of Civil Defence who was assisted by selected officers of the Public Works Department. The work on denial of machinery, plant and liquor continued throughout the 24 hours for the last week. The machinery and plant belonging to firms with British managers were, with a few exceptions, effectively destroyed in spite of the reluctance on the part of some firms to acquiesce in the proceedings. Those belonging to Asiatic firms were, however, not destroyed. All the reserve stocks of spirits and liqueurs were destroyed. All railway engines were rendered unserviceable by the removal of vital parts. The plant and machinery in the modern well-equipped workshops of the Singapore Harbour Board were destroyed.