

surprising that some of the orders went astray. As a result part of the 1/13 Frontier Force Rifles were left behind.

Mention should be made of the splendid work throughout a very trying day of the anti-aircraft detachment of the Hong Kong and Singapore Royal Artillery defending Kota Bharu aerodrome.

An important railway bridge on the Thailand side of the frontier was attacked by Hudsons of No. 1 Squadron (R.A.F.) prior to their withdrawal. Reports on this attack indicate that although the permanent track was damaged the bridge was not.

133. Thus within 24 hrs. of the start of the campaign the Japanese had gained their first major objective, but at considerable cost. It is believed that the forces landed in Kelantan consisted of rather less than one Japanese division. This force lost its accompanying tank formation and many of its guns before it got ashore and subsequent reports indicated that the Japanese suffered some of their heaviest losses during the first day's fighting in Kelantan.

134. A midday air reconnaissance reported 2 cruisers and 15 destroyers moving towards Besut, 6 transports lying off Patani and 25 transports off Singora.

At about 1130 hrs. 8th December I placed one Battalion of the Command reserve, the 4/19 Hyderabad which was then in the Negri Sembilan area on the conclusion of brigade training, under the command of 3 Indian Corps for duty in Kelantan. It was moved up at once by rail.

In the 3 Indian Corps area the 28 Indian Infantry Brigade was ordered on the 8th December to move forward from Ipoh and Taiping to the area of the Alor Star aerodrome and to come under orders of the commander 11 Indian Division.

#### SECTION XVIII.—THE FAR EAST WAR COUNCIL.

135. On the 10th December 1941, in accordance with instructions received from the Home Government, the Far East War Council was formed at Singapore. Its composition was as under:—

##### *Chairman.*—

The Rt. Hon. A. Duff Cooper, Cabinet representative in the Far East.

##### *Members.*—

The Governor and High Commissioner Malaya.

The Commander-in-Chief Far East.

The Commander-in-Chief Eastern Fleet.

The General Officer Commanding Malaya.

The Air Officer Commanding Far East.

Mr. Bowden representing Australia and later

Sir George Sansom, as being responsible for propaganda and Press control.

##### *Secretary.*—

Major Robertson, the Argyll & Sutherland Highlanders (staff officer to the Cabinet representative in the Far East).

In addition to the above, Major-General Gordon Bennett, commanding the A.I.F., was told that he was at liberty to attend meetings if and when he wished to do so, and that he would be informed if and when matters particularly affecting Australia were on the agenda.

The Council met at Sime Road at 0900 hrs daily. The meetings usually lasted nearly two hours. The Secretary circulated minutes after each meeting.

If any of the members were unable to attend they were usually represented by deputies.

In January, after the departure from Singapore of Mr. Duff Cooper and Sir George Sansom, the Governor and High Commissioner became Chairman, Mr. Scott took Sir George Sansom's place and Mr. Dawson became Secretary. Later Brigadier Simson, as Director General of Civil Defence, joined the Council.

#### SECTION XIX.—OPERATIONS 9-11TH DECEMBER, 1941.

136. *The Kedah Front.*—The plan for the defence of the Jitra position was to hold it with two brigades forward, the 15 Indian Infantry Brigade on the right and the 6 Indian Infantry Brigade on the left. Of the two forward battalions of the 15 Brigade the 2/9 Jats extended from the hills on the right flank of the position to a point exclusive of the main road. On their left were the 1 Leicesters whose front included both the main and Perlis roads. West of the latter they linked up with the 2 East Surreys, the right battalion of the 6 Brigade whose position included the wooded Pisang salient forward of the Alor Changlih Canal. On their left the 2/16 Punjab Regt. was responsible for the whole front from the railway to the sea. It had permanent positions on the railway and coast only and patrolled the several miles of padi and marsh which intervened. The remaining battalion of the 15 Brigade had the role of delaying the enemy between the frontier and Asun and of occupying an outpost position at Asun, subsequently coming into brigade reserve. The outpost position of the 6 Brigade at Kampong Imam was to be held by the reserve battalion, the 1/8 Punjab Regt. less two companies. The 28 Indian Infantry Brigade less one battalion was to come into Divisional Reserve on arrival in the Alor Star aerodrome area. Its detached battalion had the role of L. of C. and anti-paratroop protection between Alor Star and Sungei Patani. The Divisional Artillery consisted of 155 Field Regiment of two batteries each of eight 4.5-in. Howitzers, the 22 Mountain Regiment, less one battery in Kelantan, armed with a mixed assortment of weapons, the 80 Anti-Tank Regiment, less one battery in Kelantan, with thirty-six 2-pounders, the 16 Light A.A. Battery with sixteen Bofors and, on its way up, the 137 Field Regiment with twenty-four 25-pounders. The 3 Indian Cavalry was on paper the Divisional Reconnaissance Regiment. It had recently arrived in Malaya without its armoured vehicles, having only recently handed over its horses. It consisted of three squadrons of dismounted men, many of them recruits who had had little training. It had very few trained drivers and was equipped in Malaya with a few unarmoured trucks. It was totally unfit for its role of divisional reconnaissance unit.

The defences in the Jitra position, although well advanced, were not complete. In addition, most of the posts had become waterlogged after a week's heavy rain, which still continued for the next few days. It was in these conditions that the troops set to work to complete the defences. The rain also had a serious effect on the demolitions, all of which were