

6. That these full Civil Defence measures were not put into effect in time had definite reactions on the subsequent powers of defence and were of assistance to the enemy, e.g., small craft and sampans were available to assist the landings on the island, and supplies were to be found in Kowloon although the roads available to the enemy had been destroyed and were kept under harassing fire. These were not large items in themselves, perhaps, but were cumulative against us.

7. In fairness to the civil authorities I must state that I did say that unless the Japanese launched a major offensive against the "Gindrillers' Line" I saw no reason why the period between their crossing of the frontier and the evacuation of the mainland by my forces should not extend to a period of seven days or more. I gave no guarantee and still maintain that this was a fair estimate and might well have been accomplished had not the key to our position on the mainland been captured by surprise by the enemy.

8. The forces under my command had many limitations and amongst these must be enumerated:—

- (a) Absence of modern air power.
- (b) The weakness of the naval units.
- (c) The paucity of anti-aircraft guns, both light and heavy.
- (d) The lack of any radar equipment.
- (e) The necessary dilution, in order to economise manpower in the arms of the service, by Chinese personnel of unknown reliability in time of war.
- (f) The lack of regular transport driven by disciplined drivers.

Reference 8(a) above, the aircraft here were no match for the enemy fighters and I gave orders that they were not to be employed unless the opportunity occurred either at first light or at dusk for a torpedo attack on any enemy capital ship or large cruiser. In any case, all were put out of action in the first raid made by the enemy, though precautions such as dispersal had been taken. The lack of reconnaissance both landwards and seawards was naturally a serious handicap. Study of the past history of Japanese operations had led me to believe that they were past masters in combined operations, and throughout the period of the siege I always anticipated a landing on the Southern shores of the island; and lack of distant seaward reconnaissance was for me a distinct handicap. Similarly I know that the lack of opposition to the incessant enemy air raids had a somewhat depressing effect towards the end on the troops, and definitely increased the accuracy of the enemy bombing and the material damage done. For similar reasons the enemy's counter battery tasks were very much simplified.

Reference 8(b) above, the forces available carried out their duties in very difficult circumstances with the utmost gallantry and in the true tradition of the Royal Navy. I have nothing but praise for their gallant conduct, and the Commodore R.N. will be submitting his own despatch.

Reference 8(c) above, these few detachments fought with great gallantry and can claim five enemy aircraft shot down, and three others probably never reached their base.

Reference 8(d) above, the survey for these equipments had been made but their installation had not begun when the war started.

Reference 8(f) above, although the R.A.S.C. performed wonders in organising improvised transport and the few regular drivers were never off the road for days and nights on end, the general desertion of local enlisted Chinese drivers (usually after putting their vehicles out of action) was a very serious factor both from the tactical and maintenance aspects.

9. I wish now to make it perfectly clear that I fully appreciate that the demands of Empire strategy made it impossible at the time for full provision to be made for my forces, and I only make these points so that those who may be writing history or wish to criticise the conduct of my forces may be in full possession of the true facts. Further, I submit that although I and my forces may have been a hostage to fortune, we were a detachment that deflected from more important objectives, such as the Philippines, Singapore, or perhaps even Australia, an enemy force that consisted of two first line divisions, one reserve division, corps artillery, about eighty aircraft and a considerable naval blockade force. Strategically we gambled and lost, but it was a worth while gamble.

10. *Appendix A.*

In this Appendix will be found the full account of the events. It was prepared shortly after our capitulation under considerable difficulties. The war diary and messages to and from Battle Headquarters were naturally all destroyed before and after capitulation; Japanese interest in all written matter necessitated various methods of subterfuge to retain anything, and the main credit for whatever has been compiled must go to my G.S.O.I.—the late Colonel L. A. Newnham, G.C., M.C.—who took the most meticulous care to make this account tally with the true events. There are naturally a few blanks owing to the fog of war and the inability to gain contact with all the survivors, but with more information that will become available from formation and unit war diaries it is to be hoped that finally there will be little left for the imagination to fill in.

11. Although this Appendix gives a very full account of events, I would like to comment on several points.

Japanese Tactics.

The salient points of the Japanese tactics were:—

(a) *Nightwork.*

The division which made the initial advance over the frontier and those troops that first landed on the island had reached a high standard of efficiency in nightwork. All were provided with rubber soled boots that made movement very silent, systematically they used the smallest of paths and avoided all the more obvious lines of advance, and their patrols were very boldly handled.

(b) *Rapidity of Advance.*

The pace of the advance was surprisingly fast, the troops were lightly equipped and must have been very fit to accomplish the marches undertaken.