

services in South East Asia that no matter how long the struggle against the Japanese might have taken, victory would be with us in the end. In South East Asia we had good reason to remember that unequal contest during the dark days of 1941 and 1942, when the enemy, powerful and well prepared, swept through Malaya, occupied Singapore and later Burma. But their ultimate and decisive defeat—when the tide turned against them, must surely have caused them to remember the sting of our air forces which, in due course, swept clear the skies over Burma, and disorganised the land communications of the Japanese army as the ground troops rolled the enemy back through Burma during the advance from Imphal to Rangoon.

346. The Instrument of Surrender was drawn up in English—the only authentic version. In case of doubt as to the intention of our meaning in that Instrument of Surrender, the decision of the Supreme Allied Commander was unequivocal and final.

347. Under the terms of surrender, all Japanese Army, Navy and Air Forces in South East Asia passed to the control of the Supreme Allied Commander.

348. I was much impressed by one noticeable characteristic on the part of our enemies which was in striking contrast to their previous behaviour in this Theatre—some of it an exhibition of unmitigated barbarism. After the surrender there was a widespread attitude of subservient willingness by the Japanese to obey our orders. In Singapore, as in other parts of the Command, I observed that the Japanese, officers and men alike, conducted themselves with strict discipline in our presence. They were super-punctilious too, when paying respects to members of our forces. While this was no doubt correct, it did appear somewhat unreal.

349. If, at Singapore, the Japanese myth of invincibility still lurked in the midst of the more fanatical Japanese elements, the Supreme Allied Commander must have corrected sharply any such belief which was held, in so far as it concerned the campaign in South East Asia. Admiral Mountbatten made it clear and emphatic to Itagaki during the surrender ceremony that it was not a negotiated surrender, but complete capitulation by the Japanese, after total military defeat. He informed Itagaki that not only did he possess superior naval, military and air forces at Singapore, but, in addition, he had a large fleet anchored off Port Swettenham and Port Dickson where, three days previously, on September 9th, considerable forces had started disembarking at daylight. On the 10th, the strength of that force was 100,000 men ashore. Indeed, at the very time of the Japanese signing the Instrument of Surrender at Singapore, R.A.F. units were firmly established at strategic points throughout the vast territories of this Theatre which, a few weeks beforehand, had been held by the Japanese.

350. It was also emphasised at the Singapore ceremony that the invasion of Malaya would have taken place on September 9th whether the Japanese had resisted or not, and it was stressed for the particular benefit of General Itagaki, therefore, that the Japanese were surrendering to a superior Allied force in Malaya.

PART IV.

THE RE-OCCUPATION OF JAPANESE OCCUPIED TERRITORIES ON SURRENDER.

OPERATIONS "TIDERACE" AND "ZIPPER".

351. South East Asia Command's assault on Malaya, planned for 9th September, 1945, was forestalled by Japanese surrender, thus bringing about a last minute change in plan involving more than 500 aircraft of the Strategic, Tactical and General Reconnaissance units of the R.A.F. which had been assembled in India, Burma, Ceylon and the Cocos Islands for the attack.

352. While Operation "Zipper" went forward on 9th September as arranged, it did so on a much modified scale, having quickly transferred a proportion of its original strength to Operation "Tiderace" and leaving itself more in the nature of a display to show the flag.

353. The sudden capitulation of Japan on August 14th had brought with it the gigantic task of effecting rapid occupation of the principal key points throughout the Japanese occupied territories in South East Asia and further afield.

354. South East Asia, in this respect, bore no comparison to the situation in Europe where, on the eve of Germany's capitulation, the armed might of the Allied forces could roll along the roads of the Reich to Berlin, and the Air Forces sweep over Germany at will from their bases behind the victorious troops. In South East Asia, the Japanese occupied territories were vast. They covered Siam, French Indo-China, the Tenasserim Coast of Southern Burma, Malaya, Singapore Island, Sumatra, Java and Borneo. Even far off Hong Kong became a commitment.

355. Headquarters, Air Command, South East Asia, based at Kandy, Ceylon, was 1,500 miles distant across the Bay of Bengal from its principal air bases in Burma. Yet, such was the flexibility of air power, and despite the many and intricate formalities with which the Command was confronted in implementing the surrender terms on the eve of the planned invasion of Malaya, that air formations occupied bases at Penang on September 5th, Singapore on the 6th, Bangkok on the 5th and Saigon and Hong Kong on September 12th.

356. More vital still was the fact that the air forces of my Command had also launched upon one of the greatest missions of mercy of the war—the relief and liberation of thousands of Allied prisoners-of-war from the misery and privations of their prison camps, and assisting in their transportation westwards.

The Advent of "Tiderace" for Occupation of Singapore.

357. Capitulation by Japan naturally rendered planning and preparations for the assault on Malaya somewhat abortive. But this was only on a limited scale.

358. At the end of July, the mounting curve of Allied air assaults on Japan was such that it did seem reasonable to presume that an early collapse was a distinct possibility. Accordingly, emergency planning was put in preparation for the rapid occupation of Singapore