

Japanese savagery in Borneo. They were consequently reluctant to continue guerilla resistance in Java in the circumstances in which they finally found themselves. It was only then, when the British wanted to go on fighting after the general capitulation in Java, that differences arose as to the best line to pursue.

686. Nevertheless, I want to express my thanks to the Dutch. Their wish to help was unbounded. They fulfilled their planned undertakings to the full. Special recognition is due to those of them who, as a result lost their lives in Malaya's defence. When arrangements had to be made to transfer the R.A.F. to the N.E.I., their Army, Air Force and Civil Administration placed everything at our disposal. As a community the Dutch refused the British nothing—labour, materials, money and help of every kind were ungrudgingly given—frequently at considerable sacrifice. The devotion of their doctors and nurses to our sick and wounded was outstanding. The Royal Air Force owes a debt of gratitude to these people.

*Recommendations for meritorious service.*

687. I have already reported to the appropriate branch of the Air Ministry the names of those whose services were particularly meritorious, and whom I recommend for honours, awards and mention in despatches. But I want to bring to your notice here the units mentioned hereunder, and also to name a few individuals who rendered particularly meritorious service but who, I regret to report, are no longer alive.

*Air Vice-Marshal C. W. Pulford, C.B., O.B.E., A.F.C.*

688. This officer, despite ill health, worked unceasingly and uncomplainingly to overcome the many difficulties with which he was faced when preparing his Command for war and after hostilities had broken out. He never flinched from meeting an overwhelming situation with very inadequate means. No man could have striven more wholeheartedly to carry a burden which was far beyond one man's capacity. All his decisions were reached with complete disregard for self and entirely in the interests of what he felt to be his duty according to the situation and to his instructions.

689. He refused to leave Singapore himself until all his men had been evacuated. He lost his life in a last-minute attempt to follow his Command to the N.E.I. (see para. 394). His selfless devotion to duty and his loyalty to all those around him, both senior and junior, were an inspiration to all.

*Personnel of the R.A.F. Far East Command.*

690. I am confident that the late Air Vice-Marshal Pulford would wish me to place on record the praiseworthy manner in which the personnel, of all ranks, under his Command carried out their duties. I know how deeply he appreciated the loyal support they gave him.

*Aircrews.*

691. The aircrews of our squadrons, of the Royal Air Force, Royal Australian Air Force and Royal New Zealand Air Force alike, consistently met the calls that were made upon them despite the enemy's great superiority in numbers and equipment, especially in the

matter of fighters. Their own aircraft, on the other hand, were many of them obsolete and old, and were difficult to maintain owing to technical shortages and poor facilities for overhaul work. Their aerodromes possessed little protection against air attack, sometimes none at all. They flew long distances by night over jungle-clad country in the face of violent tropical thunderstorms with the help of only rudimentary navigational aids; towards the end with none at all. It is difficult to overstate the cumulative effect of the hazards which they faced. They deserve the very greatest praise for the way in which they consistently carried out their missions despite these hazards and despite casualties.

692. At the risk of selecting examples which may prove invidious to other units, against whom no reflection is intended, I would particularly mention the following:—

*Fighter Defences of Singapore.*

693. Credit is due to the spirited leadership of the late Group Captain E. B. Rice, Fighter Defence Commander of Singapore, and of the late Wing Commander R. A. Chignell, his Chief Air Staff Officer. Both were outstanding in their selfless devotion to duty. They were primarily responsible for the good morale which the small fighter force at Kallang maintained throughout the campaign in the face of a numerous and better armed enemy. The steadiness of the ground personnel of this fighter station is also worthy of mention.

*No. 4 Photographic Reconnaissance Unit.*

694. This flight, flying unarmed and unarmoured Buffaloes, unfailingly carried out their photographic missions deep into enemy territory dominated by a very superior enemy fighter force. Its service throughout the Malayan campaign was most valuable.

*No. 232 (F) Squadron.*

695. This unit, under the leadership of the late Squadron Leader R. E. P. Brooker D.S.O., D.F.C., who volunteered to take command at a critical moment, was in constant action from the time it arrived in Singapore in mid-January 1942 until fighting ceased in Java. It inflicted severe casualties on the enemy in the air, in landing craft and on the ground. It volunteered to remain in Java as the last fighter squadron. Great credit is due to all ranks of a magnificent squadron, drawn as they were from the ranks of several different fighter units.

*Nos. 36 and 100 (TB) Squadrons.*

696. These two squadrons attacked the enemy landing at Endau on 26th January, 1942, covered as it was by numerous Zero fighters, whereas their own fighter escort was unavoidably small. They pressed home their attacks on their obsolete Vildebeeste torpedo-bombers regardless of casualties, amongst whom I regret to report were lost the Commanding Officers of both squadrons, the late Squadron Leaders R. F. C. Markham and I. T. B. Rowland. After being reorganised into a composite squadron in Java, and after having patched up their old aircraft, they again pressed home attacks against the enemy convoys which were invading that island, this time at night, again suffering casualties and the loss of their squadron commander, the late Squadron Leader J. T. Wilkins. Such gallant conduct speaks for itself.