

(c) *Anti-Tank Defence*.—Forward^d field guns to be used for anti-tank and anti-personnel roles. The necessity for a physical obstacle, to be covered by fire, wherever it was intended to stop tanks was stressed.

304. *Commanders*.—At the request of the Commander 3 Indian Corps I appointed Brigadier Key to command the 11 Indian Division in place of Major-General Paris. The reason for this was that we considered that an Indian Army Officer was now required to pull together and re-establish confidence in what remained of the 11 Indian Division. Brigadier Lay, who had now returned to duty, was appointed to command the 8 Indian Infantry Brigade and Col. Challen took over command of the 6/15 Indian Infantry Brigade in lieu of Brigadier Moorhead.

305. *The Withdrawal of 3 Indian Corps*.—At 0600 hrs., 9th January, the 1/14 Punjab Regiment on the right of the Batang Berjuntai position was suddenly attacked and suffered considerable losses. In the afternoon the 6/15 Brigade Group fell back to the Batu Arang area. On the West Coast road our troops after some skirmishing fell back to a position about three miles north of Klang. On the main road the 28 Brigade Group occupied a position at Serendah without being pressed.

306. For the withdrawal of 3 Indian Corps there were in the West Coast area two main roads available, i.e., the main trunk road Kuala Lumpur—Seremban—Tampin—Gemas—Segamat, and the coastal road Klang—Morib—Port Dickson—Malacca. The 9 Indian Division had the tortuous and little-used road Bentong—Durian Tipus, thence either via Kuala Pilah or Bahau to join the main trunk road two miles south of Tampin.

In the States of Selangor and Negri Sembilan and the Settlement of Malacca through which the withdrawal was to take place the roads are much more numerous than they are in the States of Perak and Pahang. The beaches also are sandy and more suitable for landings. These facilities conferred on the enemy greater freedom of action and made our task more difficult.

307. The plan was for the 11 Indian Division and L. of C. Troops to occupy two delaying positions during the withdrawal, the one covering Seremban and Port Dickson and the other covering Tampin and Malacca. The existence of the lateral road Kuala Pilah—Seremban and the convergence of the two divisional routes at Tampin made it necessary that the 9 Division should be clear of Kuala Pilah and Tampin respectively before the first and second delaying positions were vacated by the 11 Division.

308. Soon after dawn on the 10th January the enemy attacked the 28 Brigade Group at Serendah and, adopting his usual tactics, quickly enveloped both flanks. Some fierce fighting went on during the day, our troops gradually falling back to Sungei Choh Village, which they found already in possession of an enemy force which had come from the West. They managed to force their way through, however, though suffering severe losses, and late in the afternoon embussed for Tampin leaving behind a party to cover the engineers working on road demolitions.

The 6/15 Brigade Group, which had been withdrawn the previous night from the Batu

Arang area, followed the 28 Brigade Group through Kuala Lumpur. The last bridge in the Federal Capital was blown at 0430 hrs. 11th January and the Brigade, leaving a small force to cover further demolitions, moved to the Labu area west of Seremban.

309. The 12 Indian Infantry Brigade, now only some 600-700 strong, was already in position guarding the Mantin (Setul) Pass, a narrow hilly defile a few miles north of Seremban. A battalion of the newly arrived 45 Indian Infantry Brigade had also been sent forward with requisitioned transport (it's own having not yet arrived) to the Sepang area.

310. On the coastal road Port Swettenham was evacuated on the afternoon on the 10th January and the big bridge at Klang was rather ineffectively blown at 2030 hrs. that night. After some local engagements with the enemy, all troops were withdrawn during the night 10th/11th January to positions covering Port Dickson.

311. During the 11th and 12th January there was no contact on the front, though the Japanese aircraft were active on both days reconnoitring and bombing. On the night 12th/13th January the 6/15 Brigade withdrew to the Alor Gajah area and the remnants of the 12 Brigade entrained at Gemas for Singapore. On the coast road the L. of C. troops fell back to a position covering Malacca. The 9 Indian Division moved in conformity.

312. On the evening of the 13th January, the final stage of the long withdrawal started. As there is only a ferry crossing over the broad river at Muar, all wheeled transport had to pass through Segamat which thus became a bad bottleneck. By the 14th January, however, all troops of 3 Indian Corps were clear and the command of the forward area passed to the Comdr. Westforce. The Commander 3 Indian Corps assumed responsibility for South Johore at 2000 hrs. 14th January.

313. During the withdrawal demolitions were carried out on all roads. In particular gaps were blown in all bridges over what might constitute an anti-tank obstacle.

314. On completion of the withdrawal the formations of 3 Indian Corps were disposed as under:—

Headquarters 3 Indian Corps, Johore Bahru.

Headquarters 11 Indian Division, Rengam.
6/15 Indian Infantry Brigade and 11 Divisional Artillery, Kluang.

28 Indian Infantry Brigade, Pontian Kechil.

3 Indian Cavalry, Independent Company and one Company Malay Regiment, Batu Pahat.

315. On the 13th January the Supreme Commander South West Pacific visited Malaya. At Segamat he discussed the defence dispositions with the Commander Westforce.

SECTION XXXV.—THE ADMINISTRATIVE SITUATION, 15TH JANUARY, 1942.

316. As a result of our rapid withdrawal from North and Central Malaya there had naturally been losses in material and reserve stocks. This was particularly the case as regards petrol, which required more transport for its removal than was available. On the