

The Brigadier General Staff, the Brigadier i/c Administration and the Deputy Adjutant General Headquarters Malaya Command.

The Director General of Civil Defence.

The Inspector General of Police Straits Settlements.

A Staff Officer Northern Area.

The formation Commanders reported verbally on the tactical situation in their respective areas.

I then gave a summary of the administrative situation in accordance with reports received that morning. The Director-General of Civil Defence, in reply to enquiry, repeated that the water position was critical, that the rate of breakage of mains and pipes exceeded repair, and that the meagre water supply still available could not now be guaranteed for more than about 24 hours; further, that if total failure took place it would at the best take several days to obtain piped water again.

The general situation as regards food was that the military food reserves under our control had now been reduced to a few days, though there were large reserves in the Bukit Timah area then under Japanese control. There were also civil supplies.

There were adequate reserves of small arms ammunition, but 25-pounder field gun ammunition was very short and the reserves of Light Anti-Aircraft (Bofors) ammunition were almost exhausted. The Alexandra magazine was practically in the front line and fires had prevented any ammunition being withdrawn from there the previous day.

As regards petrol, the only petrol which now remained, apart from one small dump, was what was in vehicle tanks.

576. A discussion on the general situation followed. The danger of the water situation, particularly as it affected the Indian troops and the vast civil population, was stressed. There was also the danger of a break-through into the crowded Town area if the Japanese delivered another determined attack. It was clearly no good remaining on the defensive as we were. As I viewed the situation, the alternatives were either (a) to counter-attack immediately to regain control of the reservoirs and of the military food depots and to drive back the enemy's artillery with a view to reducing the damage to the water supply system, or (b) to capitulate immediately. Formation Commanders were unanimously of the opinion that in the existing circumstances a counter-attack was impracticable.

I could see no immediate solution for the critical water situation and decided to capitulate. The other members of the conference concurred unanimously with this decision.

577. A discussion on the method of implementing the decision followed. It was decided that a joint military and civil deputation should proceed into the Japanese lines as soon as possible and that it should consist of the Deputy Adjutant General, the Colonial Secretary and an Interpreter. The deputation was instructed (a) to propose to the Japanese a cessation of hostilities as from 1600 hrs. 15th February, (b) to invite a Japanese deputation to visit Singapore to discuss terms. This procedure was in accordance with an arrangement previously made with the Governor in anticipation of an emergency arising.

578. Orders were issued for the destruction before 1600 hrs. of all secret and technical equipment, ciphers, codes, secret documents and guns. It was deemed inadvisable at this stage to destroy personal weapons in case the Japanese should not agree to a cessation of hostilities or should attack before an agreement had been reached.

579. At about 1145 hrs. I reported to the Governor at the Singapore Club.

580. The following is an extract from a telegram received from the Supreme Commander South-West Pacific on the morning of the 15th February:—

"So long as you are in a position to inflict losses and damage to enemy and your troops are physically capable of doing so you must fight on. Time gained and damage to enemy are of vital importance at this juncture. When you are fully satisfied that this is no longer possible I give you discretion to cease resistance. . . . Inform me of intentions. Whatever happens I thank you and all your troops for your gallant efforts of last few days."

In reply to the above I notified him of the decision to cease hostilities.

581. In the afternoon the deputation returned with instructions that I was to proceed personally with my staff to a given rendezvous. The meeting with the Japanese Commander (Lt. Gen. Yamashita) took place in the Ford Factory north of Bukit Timah Village. There is not, and never has been, any copy of the terms of surrender in my possession. As far as my recollection goes, only one copy was produced by the Japanese and this was retained by them. Certainly no copy was handed to me. The actual terms of surrender cannot therefore be recorded accurately. The main conditions were, as far as my memory goes, as under:—

(a) There must be an unconditional surrender of all Military Forces (Army, Navy and Air Force) in the Singapore area.

(b) Hostilities to cease at 2030 hrs. British time, i.e. 2200 hrs. Japanese time.

(c) All troops to remain in positions occupied at the time of cessation of hostilities pending further orders.

(d) All weapons, military equipment, ships, aeroplanes and secret documents to be handed over to the Japanese Army intact:

(e) In order to prevent looting and other disorders in Singapore Town during the temporary withdrawal of all armed forces, a force of 100 British armed men to be left temporarily in the Town area until relieved by the Japanese.

As regards paragraph (d) above I informed the Japanese Commander that there were no ships or aeroplanes in the Singapore area, and that the heavier types of weapons and some of the military equipment and all secret documents had already been destroyed under my orders. This he accepted.

582. Orders for the cessation of hostilities were issued to all formation Commanders soon after 1900 hrs. Hostilities finally ceased at 2030 hrs., 15th February, British time.