

471. Work was continued on the Serangoon and Jurong Switch lines (see Section XLV).

472. In view of an anticipated air-borne landing similar to those which had been so effective in Crete special steps were taken for the defence of aerodromes. In particular the Seletar and Sembawang aerodromes were strongly defended. Instructions were issued as to the form such air-borne landings might take and the best methods of countering them.

473. The Rear-Admiral Malaya arranged for naval craft to patrol the sea approaches to Singapore Island. Local naval craft were also made available for in-shore patrol work as required by Area Commanders. Naval Liaison officers were attached to the headquarters of each Area.

474. The tasks allotted to the Royal Air Force Fighter Squadron were, firstly, to co-operate with the ground defences in the protection of the Singapore Fortress area against attacks by hostile aircraft and, secondly, to reconnoitre the main arteries of communications in South Johore with a view to ascertaining the area of the enemy's concentrations. This squadron was now based on the Civil Airport at Kallang.

475. On the administrative side, certain changes were made. The duties of Martial Law Administrator passed from the Commander, Singapore Fortress, to the G.O.C., Malaya. All Army field units were ordered to hold seven days' reserve rations in addition to the emergency ration, as a reserve in case they should find themselves cut off from the normal supply. To economise petrol and avoid traffic congestion only those vehicles actually required were to be kept in use. All others were to be parked in the open spaces about Singapore Town.

All ships and small craft under control of the Royal Navy were now based on Singapore Harbour instead of on the Naval Base.

476. The Operational Headquarters Malaya Command remained at Sime Road with Administrative Headquarters at Fort Canning. The Headquarters Royal Navy and Royal Air Force were also at Sime Road.

477. The dispositions adopted by the Area Commanders and their subordinates were in outline as under:—

Northern Area.—

Right.—18 British Division (Major-Gen. Beckwith Smith) less 53 Brigade Group.

This Division had the 54 Infantry Brigade (Brigadier Backhouse) on the right and 55 Infantry Brigade (Brigadier Massy Beresford) on the left.

Left.—11 Indian Division (Major-Gen. Key).

This Division had the 6/15 Indian Infantry Brigade (Lt.-Col. Morrison) on the right, and the 28 Indian Infantry Brigade (Brigadier Selby) on the left. The 8 Indian Infantry Brigade (Brigadier Trott) was in divisional reserve. The 6/15 Brigade was after a few days relieved by the 53 British Infantry Brigade from Area reserve and went into reserve.

Reserve.—53 British Infantry Brigade (Brigadier Duke), later relieved by the 6/15 Brigade. To re-equip the 53 Brigade a large number of weapons had to be withdrawn from the remainder of 18 Division as there were now few in reserve.

Southern Area.—

Right.—1 Malaya Infantry Brigade (Brigadier Williams) with attached troops.

Centre.—*The Singapore Town Area.*—The Straits Settlements Volunteer Force (Col. Grimwood).

Left.—Exclusive Singapore Civil Airport to inclusive Changi and also including Pengerang Area and Tekong Island, 2 Malaya Infantry Brigade (Brigadier Fraser).

Western Area.—

Right.—27 Australian Infantry Brigade (Brigadier Maxwell) less one battalion.

Centre.—22 Australian Infantry Brigade (Brigadier Taylor).

Left.—44 Indian Infantry Brigade (Brigadier Ballantine).

Reserve.—One battalion 27 Australian Infantry Brigade, plus one machine gun company and detachments from administrative and reinforcement units.

478. *The Spirit of Attack.*—The following is an extract from an Instruction issued to all formation Commanders on the 3rd February:—

“All ranks must be imbued with the spirit of the attack. It is no good waiting for the Japanese to attack first. The endeavour of every soldier must be to locate the enemy and, having located him, to close with him.”

SECTION XLIX.—THE PERIOD OF PREPARATION 31ST JANUARY-8TH FEBRUARY, 1942.

479. *Public Announcement.* I published an announcement which stated that the Battle for Malaya had concluded and that the Battle for Singapore was now beginning and called upon all ranks and all civilians to play their part in the defence of Singapore. A copy of this announcement is attached as Appendix “H” to this Despatch.

480. *The Far East War Council.*—The Council, under the chairmanship of the Governor, continued to meet at 0900 hrs. daily at the house of the Secretary, Mr. Dawson.

481. *Withdrawals to the Netherlands East Indies.*—In accordance with instructions received from the Supreme Commander South-West Pacific certain units and individuals were despatched to the Netherlands East Indies. The units included an Australian Motor Transport Company and certain Anti-Aircraft units. Among the individuals were senior officers required for Headquarters South-West Pacific and technicians no longer required at Singapore. I was also instructed by the Supreme Commander South-West Pacific, in view of the shortage of trained staff officers both in the N.E.I. and in India, to evacuate to the N.E.I. all staff officers who were no longer required and in particular to consider whether I could now dispense with any of the Indian Army formation headquarters in view of the reduction of the fighting strengths of those formations.

Some mechanical transport destined for Singapore was also retained in the N.E.I. or returned there without being discharged from the ships.

482. *Re-Organization of Formations and Units.*—As a result of two months of almost continuous day and night operations on the mainland, it was only to be expected that a great deal of re-organization had now become