

382. Included in the convoy was Headquarters ship H.M.S. BULOLO which carried Air Vice-Marshal Bandon and his advance H.Q. 224 Group staff who moved ashore to Kelanang airfield on September 10th; Telok Datok on September 14th; Kuala Lumpur on September 18th and Singapore on September 22nd.

383. The landing at Port Dickson, some fifty miles south of Swettenham, went forward as planned and without untoward incident.

384. On the eve of the 11th September, the D-plus-3 convoy dropped anchor among the great concentration of shipping already lying off Morib Beach. The scene, with every vessel twinkling lights, resembled more a Cowes regatta than one of the largest amphibious operations of the campaign.

385. The landings at Morib cannot be described as attaining the same degree of success as those experienced at Ports Swettenham and Dickson—due principally to the difficulties encountered on the water-covered beaches which, at that part of the coast, are nothing more than mud brought down by the Klang River. Morib is some 20 miles south of Port Swettenham and 30 miles north of Port Dickson. While there was much to commend Port Swettenham and Port Dickson for landings by a fighting force, this unfortunately, could not be said of Morib. A number of M.T. vehicles which were driven off the landing craft by their Army drivers into what was considered axle-deep water, later plunged into slime and mud while negotiating the shore and remained fast. There were several casualties.

386. These are important factors which might well have produced serious consequences had "Zipper" been mounted against opposing forces on dry land at this part of the coast.

SOME ASPECTS OF THE OCCUPATION OF SIAM, F.I.C. AND HONG KONG.

387. On the occupation of Siam, the Don Muang airfield at Bangkok provided two important functions. It enabled released Allied prisoners-of-war to be evacuated by our aircraft to Rangoon and Singapore, while it also formed a valuable staging post to Saigon in French Indo-China as well as a refuelling point for aircraft lifting there.

388. In Bangkok, the Siamese Air Force was found to be extraordinarily co-operative and markedly pro-R.A.F., since many of them had, in fact, been trained in England.

389. An unusual document, giving an outline of the activities and organisation of the Siamese Air Force, and also emphasising its attitude of passive resistance to the Japanese throughout the enemy's occupation of Siam, was handed over by the Siamese Air Force to R.A.F. Intelligence.

390. History must judge this document for itself. Whatever may have been happening politically behind the scenes in the Far East, in these dark days of December, 1941, there seems to be no doubt that units of the Siamese Air Force, on December 8th, took the air to resist the Japanese invader, only to be outnumbered and overwhelmed by units of the more superior Japanese Air Force. While this commendable spirit of resistance by the Siamese Air Force may have been evident, they

were to learn sadly, the same day, that the Siamese Government in Bangkok was actually negotiating with the Japanese Ambassador.

391. "From outer appearances we played up to mislead the Japanese", is one comment in the Siamese document when discussing the defence of Siam during the period of Japanese occupation. In their participation in the defence of Don Muang airfield and Bangkok against Allied aircraft, it was maintained by the Siamese Air Force that "we just did it in a formal fashion. The United Nations aircraft would fly one way and our aircraft the other way, or at different heights. If by rare chance we had to meet we carried on just for appearances sake."

392. Such are some of the statements by the Siamese Air Force. But it is on fact, rather than on professions of loyalty, that any final assessment must be made. In this respect, there is one incontrovertible fact concerning Allied prisoners-of-war, which does reveal the silent co-operation rendered by the Siamese Air Force from the time of their first prisoner-of-war—William MacClurry, an American pilot from the American Volunteer Group (Tiger Squadron), who bailed out at Cheing Mai at the onset of the war in the Far East, and whose custody by the Japanese was vigorously contested by the Siamese Air Force, until they finally confined him themselves to ensure his better treatment and safety.

393. It must also be marked to the credit of the Siamese Air Force that they did, to our knowledge, assist in furthering liaison and communication work within Siam, which included the conveyance of passengers in and out of the country; rendering assistance to, and providing safeguard for Allied personnel sent into Siam to gather information, and also indicating for our benefit, precise targets in the hands of the Japanese. Such acts of co-operation were fraught with grave risk, and it is not surprising that the Japanese ultimately adopted an attitude of suspicion.

The occupation of Saigon.

394. The outward welcome accorded to the Allied Forces from both the French and Annamese alike on our entry into French Indo-China was decidedly embarrassing. Our Forces obviously found themselves in a divided house.

395. The main R.A.F. party flew into Saigon from Burma on September 12th, and was given a demonstrative reception by the French. At the same time, there were banners throughout Saigon's streets erected by the Annamese which welcomed the Allies but bore caustic anti-French slogans.

396. R.A.F. reconnaissance parties who inspected Japanese Air Force installations at Than Son Nhut and Saigon, found them most disappointing. Comparatively few aircraft were discovered, and none, indeed, were serviceable. It appeared that all serviceable aircraft had either been withdrawn for the defence of Japan or flown to Phu My aerodrome, twenty miles east of Saigon, after the cessation of hostilities. The majority of Japanese Air Force personnel previously at Saigon had also been withdrawn.

397. The Saigon-Than Son Nhut area was the maintenance and repair unit base for the Japanese in French Indo-China, but, since only