

The Commander 3 Indian Corps was informed that, in the event of an advance into Thailand, this Brigade Group would immediately be moved North and placed under his orders. The Commanders 3 Indian Corps and A.I.F. were instructed that, in the event of this Infantry Brigade Group being committed to operations, they must be prepared to replace it with another infantry brigade group if called upon to do so.

(f) *Borneo.*—(i) *Kuching (Sarawak) Detachment.*—(Lt.-Col. C. W. Lane). Responsible for the defence of the Kuching air landing ground.

Troops—

One Indian Infantry Battalion (less one company).

The Sarawak Rangers.

The Sarawak Volunteers.

Administrative detachments.

(ii) *Miri Detachment.*—Responsible for the denial, in case of necessity, of the Miri and Seria Oilfields and of the Lutong Refinery, to prevent them falling in a serviceable condition into the hands of the enemy.

(iii) *British North Borneo, Labuan Island, Brunei.*—In these States no regular military forces were maintained, though in British North Borneo there was a small Volunteer Force. The Senior Civil Officials were responsible for internal security.

(g) *Christmas Island.*

Troops.—A Coast Artillery detachment manning a section of 6 in. guns. Responsible for the protection of the phosphate deposits.

(h) *Command Troops—*

Base and Other Administrative Units. Command Troops units and a number of Base and other units, for the maintenance of all troops in the Malaya Command, were located in the Singapore area and elsewhere in Malaya.

The Order of Battle of Malaya Command on the 8th Dec. 1941, is given in detail in Appendix B attached to this Despatch.

The Plan for the Defence of Malaya was contained in the Malaya Defence Scheme, which was supplemented as necessary by special instructions for the conduct of the defence in the various areas. In view of the wide area covered by the Malaya Command and the possibility of operations developing simultaneously in different parts of that area I considered it advisable to decentralise responsibility for the control of operations as far as possible. Every effort, therefore, was made to ensure that the Defence Scheme and pre-war Instructions should be as comprehensive as possible, so that subordinate formation commanders would be in a position to conduct operations with only such supplementary and amending orders and instructions from higher authority as the development of the situation might demand.

51. Special Operations.

(a) Early in 1941 an Independent Company, with a strength of about 300 partly British and partly Indian, was formed. It was accommodated first at Kuantan and then in Kedah, and was trained under Headquarters Malaya Command in amphibious operations and for special operations in enemy territory.

(b) In the summer of 1941 a Branch of the Ministry of Economic Warfare was started in Singapore. It suffered from an excess of secrecy and from a lack of knowledge on the part of the gentlemen responsible as to how to set about the work. Thus valuable time was lost. Later, however, some very useful work was done by this organization.

SECTION VII.—TRAINING.

52. Apart from the garrison of Singapore Fortress and the Command Reserve, of which most units had been in Malaya for some time, there were in 1941 very few trained units in Malaya. Practically all the Indian Army units had suffered severely from the rapid expansion of that Army which had only been commenced a year after the outbreak of the war. Officers and N.C.O.s had been withdrawn to meet the needs of this expansion until the lack of leaders, and even of potential leaders, reached a dangerously low level. Few units had more than two or three senior officers with experience of handling Indian troops and of the junior officers only a proportion had had Indian experience. The great majority of the troops were young and inexperienced.

The Australian units were composed of excellent material but suffered from a lack of leaders with a knowledge of modern warfare. The same applied in some degree to the British units in which there were few men with previous war experience.

No units had had any training in bush warfare before reaching Malaya. Several of the units had in fact been specially trained for desert warfare.

53. In June, 1941, the C.-in-C. Far East, in addition to ordering the construction of defences to cover the main road to Thailand, laid down a scale for the material defences on all defended beaches, to include anti-boat, anti-tank and anti-personnel defences. As an early outbreak of hostilities then appeared probable, he issued instructions that these defences were to be completed as early as possible. On the east coast a great deal of work remained to be done.

54. A balance, therefore, had to be struck between the employment of troops on defence work and their field training. I decided that the proper course was to build up a foundation of good individual and sub-unit training, which could be done concurrently with the construction of defences. If hostilities did not break out in the autumn I hoped that we might then expect a period of three months (December/February) during which we could concentrate on higher training.

I therefore issued instructions that individual, sub-unit and unit training was to be carried out during the period July/November, when possible in bush country, under the direction of formation and unit commanders and that formation exercises would be held during the period December/February. During the latter period I also arranged for two exercises without troops to be held to study problems connected with the defence of Malaya as a whole. In the event, the political tension which existed in August and September prevented much training being done by units in the forward areas. The 1st Contingent of the A.I.F. and the Command Reserve, however, carried out some very