

556. Throughout the 13th February both the Japanese aircraft and artillery were active. About midday there was a particularly heavy and accurate air attack on the Orchard road area, the main thoroughfare connecting Singapore Town with the Tanglin area. The Alexandra Ammunition Magazine came under shell and mortar fire and at midnight deliveries had to be temporarily suspended owing to fires. Our own artillery was also active throughout the day. Most of the field artillery was now sited on open spaces in the Singapore Town area. All remaining batteries in the Faber Fire Command of the Fixed Defences came into action and themselves came under enemy artillery fire. A number of enemy planes were shot down by our anti-aircraft defences.

557. On this day the Rear-Admiral Malaya, after consultation with me, gave orders for the destruction of the large oil stocks on Pulau Bukum. These comprised both naval fuel and lubricating oils and the Asiatic Petroleum Company's petrol reserves. I had previously opposed the destruction of these stocks on account of the adverse moral effect which I anticipated it would have on both the troops and the civil population. I now informed the Rear-Admiral Malaya that, though I would do my utmost to prevent the enemy seizing Pulau Bukum, I could no longer guarantee the security of the stocks there. The Rear-Admiral who was personally responsible for the destruction of the naval stocks, felt that he could not risk further delay. The demolition was carried out that afternoon. It was partially, though not entirely, successful.

558. The effect of the collapse of civil labour now began to make itself more and more felt. At the Docks all civil labour had disappeared and the Harbour Board Staff was no longer in control. In the Town area debris from the bombing and shelling remained untouched, the dead remained unburied and water ran to waste from the mains from lack of labour to clear the demolished buildings.

559. In the afternoon the Governor moved his headquarters from Government House to the Singapore Club in the centre of Singapore Town.

560. I regret to have to report that the flotilla of small ships and other light craft which, as stated above, left Singapore on the night 13th-14th February encountered a Japanese naval force in the approaches to the Banka Straits. It was attacked by light naval craft and by aircraft. Many ships and other craft were sunk or disabled and there was considerable loss of life. Others were wounded or were forced ashore and were subsequently captured.

Included in this flotilla was a patrol boat on which were the Rear-Admiral Malaya and his party and the Air Officer Commanding Far East. This boat was driven ashore on a deserted island by a Japanese destroyer and its engines dismantled. After some weeks on the Island the Rear-Admiral and the Air Officer Commanding Far East both died.

I wish here to pay a special tribute to the loyalty of Air Vice-Marshal Pulford, the Air Officer Commanding Far East. Though at liberty to leave Singapore at any time on or after the 5th February he preferred, from a

sense of duty and of personal friendship to myself, to remain there until the 13th February and would have remained longer had I wished him to do so. This gallant officer's self-sacrifice cost him his life.

SECTION LV.—EVENTS OF THE 14TH FEBRUARY, 1942.

561. During the day the Japanese renewed their attacks. Their main thrust was again made against the western front of the Southern Area. Here very heavy fighting at close quarters went on throughout the day in which the Loyal Regt. and the Malay Regt. especially distinguished themselves. By the end of the day our troops had been driven back by the weight of the attack to the line Alexandra—Gillman Barracks—Keppel Golf Course. Further north the enemy reached the Alexandra Hospital area but were prevented from making further progress by the 5 Bedfordshire and Hertfordshire Regt. and a composite Royal Engineer Unit. The 44 Brigade took up a position on the line of the Tanglin road in the Mount Echo area.

Japanese troops entered the Alexandra Military Hospital and attacked some of the staff and patients. Later many of the staff and patients were removed from the hospital by the Japanese and were massacred in cold blood.

562. On the A.I.F. front there was little activity, though some bodies of the enemy moving down the railway were engaged by artillery and small arms fire and dispersed.

563. On the front of the 18 British Division the 1 Cambridgeshire Regt. continued to hold its position west of Adam road where it had shown great determination in resisting enemy attacks during the last two days. To the right of this battalion the enemy developed a strong attack, supported by artillery and tanks, at about 1800 hrs. and succeeded in advancing nearly a mile until they were held up by defences on the line of the Mount Pleasant road. A deep dent in our line was thus created.

At the junction of Braddell and Thomson roads east of the MacRitchie Reservoir the enemy gained some ground but was driven back again by counter-attack. Further to the right, the left flank of the 53 Brigade was driven back south of Braddell road, but the right flank succeeded in maintaining its positions north of the road.

On the Serangoon road front the enemy attacked strongly from the direction of Paya Lebar Village but was stopped by units of the 11 Indian Division after advancing to within a few hundred yards of the vital Woodleigh Pumping Station.

564. On the eastern front of the Southern Area there were some local engagements between troops of the 1 Manchester Regt. and enemy detachments.

565. During the day there was fairly heavy shelling of selected areas by the enemy artillery which now had the advantage of observation from the Bukit Timah hills. Our own field artillery with due regard for ammunition economy, replied whenever suitable targets presented themselves.

566. Several enemy aircraft were again brought down by our anti-aircraft guns but casualties in the Town area were heavy.