

*Order of Battle—24th December, 1941.*

267. At this stage of the campaign the disposition of squadrons and their approximate strengths in serviceable aircraft were as follows:—

*Bomber Squadrons :*

Blenheims	...	...	...	No. 34 Squadron	...	10	...	Tengah
				No. 62 Squadron	...	9	...	Tengah
Dutch Glenn Martins	...	...	...	Two Squadrons	...	15	...	Sembawang
Wirraways	...	...	...	One Flight	...	6	...	Kluang

*T.B. Squadrons :*

Vildebeestes	...	...	...	No. 36 Squadron	...	16	...	Seletar
				No. 100 Squadron	...	13	...	Seletar
Albacores	...	...	...	One Flight	...	5	...	Seletar

*Fighter Squadrons :*

Buffaloes	...	...	...	No. 21 Squadron R.A.A.F.	...	} reorganising
				No. 453 Squadron	...	
				No. 243 Squadron	...	
				No. 488 Squadron	...	
				Dutch Squadron	...	
Night Fighter (Blenheims)	...	...	...	No. 27 Squadron	...	... reorganising
						Kallang

*G.R. Squadrons :*

Hudsons	...	...	...	No. 1 Squadron R.A.A.F.	5	...	Sembawang
				No. 8 Squadron R.A.A.F.	8	...	Sembawang
				No. 205 Squadron	4	...	Seletar

*Miscellaneous :*

No. 4 A.A.C.U. Swordfish	...	...	...	One Flight	...	4	...	Tengah
Sharks	...	...	...	One Flight	...	4	...	Tengah
M.V.A.F. (Various)	...	...	...	Recce. Flight	...	—	...	Kahang
M.V.A.F. (Various)	...	...	...	Comm. Flight	...	—	...	Kallang
Dutch Squadron (Glenn Martins)	...	...	...	One Squadron	...	9	...	Pakanbaroe (Sumatra)

*Reinforcement Situation*

268. From the 8th December onwards many messages had been interchanged between the Air Ministry and the Far East on the subject of reinforcements, which, commencing with a long-range policy of supply, developed, with the steady advance of the Japanese Army, into an emergency arrangement of diverting to the Far East squadrons from other Commands which it was hoped could arrive in time. By the 25th December, the position as understood by A.H.Q. was:—

*Hudson II's*—6 arrived from Australia on 25/12 to reinforce Nos. 1 and 8 (GR) Squadrons, R.A.A.F.

*Hudson III's*—52 to be flown out from England commencing about 20/12.

*Blenheim IV's*—12 from Middle East—7 arrived by 25/12: remainder en route.

*Hurricanes*—51 in crates with 24 pilots en route by sea due on or about 8th January, 1942. These had left England as reinforcements for the Middle East but were diverted to Singapore whilst at sea.

*Catalinas*—4 en route with 2 spare crews. The Plan for their disposition was:—

*Hudson III's*—to (a) re-equip No. 62 (B) Squadron: and

(b) reinforce Nos. 1 and 8 (GR) Squadrons R.A.A.F.

*Blenheim IV's*—to be absorbed into No. 34 (B) Squadron.

*Hurricanes*—to be used from Kallang and Johore in defence of Singapore: it was anticipated Buffalo Squadrons would be whittled away by the time these Hurricanes arrived.

*Catalinas*—One to remain at Ceylon, remainder to reinforce No. 205 (FB) Squadron at Seletar.

Thus some air reinforcements, urgently wanted, were now on their way despite the still critical state of the war in Europe from which they had had to be diverted to Singapore

NARRATIVE FROM 25TH DECEMBER, 1941, TO 30TH JANUARY, 1942

*Changes in Higher Command*

269. Before proceeding further with the narrative, it is appropriate to mention some changes in the Higher Command in the Far East which were about to take place during the next few weeks.

On 27th December, General Sir Henry Pownall relieved Air Chief Marshal Sir Robert Brooke Popham as Commander-in-Chief, Far East. The former's instructions differed from those of the latter, as described in para. 3. General Pownall was instructed to deal with "matters of major military policy and strategy", but that it was not the intention that he should "assume operational control". These instructions were given before the outbreak of the Japanese war, which occurred however whilst he was en route. As their consequence, the system described in para. 3, under which G.H.Q. was responsible for the control of operations, now came to an end.

270. On 1st January, 1942, the small Fighter Control H.Q. in Singapore was expanded, albeit on a restricted scale. It became known as No. 224 (F) Group. Group Captain E. B. Rice remained in command. Circumstances, however, did not permit full administration of its units and stations being transferred to it from A.H.Q.

271. On 4th January, Air Vice Marshal P. C. Maltby arrived in Singapore as Chief-of-Staff