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The Tartan Tenko – Life and Death of the Scottish Soldier in Singapore 1937 – 1942

Submitted by:

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Submitted in fulfilment of the requirements
for the Degree of Ph. D. School of
Humanities

College of Arts University of Glasgow

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The Tartan Tenko
Life and Death of the Scottish Soldier in
Singapore 1937 – 1942

Cover Illustration – A toy soldier, in Gordon Highlander's uniform, found during the archaeological surveys of the Adam Park battlefield and POW Camp in 2012.

Abstract

The Fall of Singapore on 15th February 1942 is the greatest military defeat in British history. It resulted in the largest capitulation of British and Commonwealth troops to date, with over 100,000 troops surrendering in a matter of hours to the Japanese. Uniquely the Prisoners of War (POWs) were left to look after themselves by their captors and tasked to create their own prison camp on the battlefield they had just fought over and among the quarters and barracks they had once called home. Tragically thousands of men would go on to die along the 'Death Railway' in Thailand and Burma or in the 'Hellships' transporting troops around the Japanese empire.

In 2011, researchers at the National Archives in Kew found what they described in the press at the time as the 'Holy Grail' of documents relating to the internment of POWs in the Far East. The papers, raised by administrators of the Bureau of Record and Enquiry (BRE) at the Changi POW Camp in Singapore, detail the movement and fate of all prisoners who passed through the gates. Among the files were those raised by the battalion adjutants of three Scottish units; the 2nd Argyll & Sutherland Highlanders, the 2nd Gordon Highlanders, and the 155th Field Regiment (Lanarkshire Yeomanry), Royal Artillery.

The aim of this research is twofold. Firstly, to use the BRE data to review the transition of the Scottish soldier from combatant to captive. Secondly, to determine what it was to be a soldier in a Scottish Regiment and how this affected a man's chance of survival in battle and imprisonment. The analysis of the BRE records revealed new evidence on previously neglected narratives that both shapes and challenges the accepted histories. This thesis provides a detailed insight into the lives of the men who fought in the Scottish regiments, and who, for reasons beyond their control, found themselves at the edge of a crumbling empire, fighting a new and ruthless enemy in an unforgiving and alien terrain.

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Abbreviations

The following is a list of frequently used abbreviations:

A&SH	Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders
A/c, AC	Armoured Car
AA	Anti-aircraft
ADC	Aide de Camp
Adjt	Adjutant
AF	Army Form
ATk	Anti-tank
Bde	Brigade
Bdr	Bombardier
Bn	Battalion
Brig	Brigadier
Bty	Battery
Capt	Captain
Cmds	Commanders
CO	Commanding Officer
COFEPOW	Children of Far East Prisoners of War
Col	Colonel
Comd	Command, Commander, Commanding
Comm	Communication
Coy	Company

Cpl	Corporal
CQMS	Company quarter master sergeant
CSM	Company Sergeant Major
DAA	Deputy Assistant Adjutant
Dr	Driver / Drummer
Ech	Echelon
Fd	Field
FEPOW	Far East Prisoners of War
FM	Field Marshall
FMSVF	Federated Malay States Volunteer Force
FSPB	Field Service Pocket Book
Gd	Guard
Gen	General
Gnr	Gunner
GOC	General Officer Commanding in Chief
Gp	Group
Hosp	Hospital
HQ	Headquarters
i/c	In Charge
IA	Indian Army
IJA	Imperial Japanese Army
INA	Indian National Army

Inf	Infantry
IO	Intelligence Officer
L/Bdr	Lance Bombardier
L/Cpl	Lance Corporal
L/Sgt	Lance Sergeant
LO	Liaison Officer
LOC	Line of Communication
Lt	Lieutenant
Lt Col	Lieutenant Colonel
Lt Gen	Lieutenant General
Maj	Major
Maj Gen	Major General
MC	Military Cross / Motorcycle
MG	Machine Gun
MGH	Malaya General Hospital
mih	Miles in the hour
MO	Medical Officer
mph	Miles per hour
MT	Mechanical Transport or Motor Transport
Mtd	Mounted
NAAFI	Navy Army Air Force Institutes
NCO	Non-commissioned Officer

OC	Officer Commanding
OiC	Officer in Charge
OR	Other Ranks
OTC	Officer Training Corps
Para	Paragraph
pdr	Pounder (measurement of calibre of gun)
Pl	Platoon
Pnr	Pioneer
POW	Prisoner of War
Pt	Point
Pte	Private
QM	Quarter Master
QMG	Quarter Master General
QMS	Quarter Master Sergeant
RAF	Royal Air Force
RAMC.	Royal Army Medical Corps
RAP	Regimental Aid Post
Recce	Reconnaissance
Ref	Reference
Regt	Regiment
Res	Reserve
Rlwy	Railway

RQMS	Regimental Quarter Master Sergeant
RSM	Regimental Sergeant-major
RT	Radio Telephony
S Sgt	Staff Sergeant
SAA	Small arms ammunition
Sec	Section
Sgt	Sergeant
Sig	Signal
SM	Sergeant-major
SO	Staff Officer
Spr	Sapper
SQMS	Staff Quarter Master Sergeant
Sqn	Squadron
SSM	Staff Sergeant-major
TO	Transport Officer
Tp	Troop
Tpt	Transport
Tptr	Trumpeter
VI	Vehicle Interval
vtm	Vehicles to the mile
WE	War Establishment
WT	Wireless Telegraphy

Chapter 1 - Introduction

1.1 The Greatest Burden

The fall of Singapore, according to Winston Churchill, was the greatest military defeat in British history.¹ The battle for the island lasted seven days in which Malaya Command, including three Scottish regiments, faced the full force of the Japanese assaults. After the surrender, over 100,000 Allied troops were sent into captivity of which approximately 3,000 were Scots.²

As soon as the word of the surrender had reached London, the British public demanded an inquiry as to why the men in Singapore had been so badly let down. A special sitting of the House of Commons was convened for 23rd April 1942 and Churchill rose to address the house:

'I do not at all wonder that requests should be made for an inquiry by a Royal Commission, not only into what took place upon the spot in the agony of Singapore but into all the arrangements which had been made beforehand. I am convinced however that this would not be good for our country, and that it would hamper the prosecution of the war.....'

*'We have enough trouble on our hands to cope with the present and the future, and I could not consent to adding such a burden, for a heavy burden it would be, to those who have to bear.'*³

This statement epitomises the problems faced by the historians over the subsequent decades. Delaying the enquiry effectively consigned the embarrassing truths and painful memories to the archives before they could be judged. The enquiry was postponed until after the war but by then Churchill had been removed from power and any government blame would fall upon Clement Attlee's new cabinet.⁴ However, as the British government turned its attention to fighting in the Mediterranean during the summer months of 1942, there was much speculation and argument in the POW camps of Singapore as to how and

¹ Churchill, 1951. p43. Winston Churchill in his memoirs described the fall of Singapore as 'The worst disaster and largest capitulation in British history'. Havers observes that the accolade had a marked effect on the POWs and intensified their feeling of guilt for having surrendered (Havers, 2003. p18).

² Precise figures for those killed, captured, or missing on 15th February are difficult to finalise as men who were reported missing in action or during the evacuation were in fact imprisoned in Java or Sumatra. Others appeared in camp weeks after the capitulation after hiding out within the local population. See Chapter 8.

³ Arnold, 2011. pp255-256.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p257.

why the soldiery had been let down. Rumours were rife and were so often repeated that they were eventually taken as historical fact.⁵

At the end of the war, the surviving POWs returned home under orders from the authorities not to speak about their sufferings so as not to upset their loved ones.⁶ Many others chose to remain quiet out of choice.⁷ Veterans who did speak out related tales of the atrocities and inhumane treatment and focused on the most traumatic experiences of the fighting and captivity.⁸ Any recollections about the experience in the camps was exaggerated in the retelling and the prevalent, acceptable rumours were reinforced within their peer groups.⁹ So popular and stirring were those accounts that the public perception of the Far East Prisoner of War (FEPOW) story in the intervening years has been based on their sensational retelling through film and television.¹⁰ As such, the more mundane accounts of captivity, especially the time spent in Singapore preceding the campaign and the internment in Changi before the move onto the Thai – Burma Railway, have been relegated to the footnotes of the popular histories.¹¹

As the years have passed and the veterans died, there has been a growing dependency on the written record to further the research into the subject. There was an enduring belief that the little paperwork that had been raised, under the watchful eye of the Japanese guards and the threat of punishment, had been destroyed or mislaid during the ensuing years.¹² However, in 2011, FEPOW researchers in the National Archives at Kew, uncovered the ‘lost’ papers raised by the administrators of the Bureau of Record and Enquiry (BRE) in the Changi POW camp. At the time the newspapers described the discovery as the ‘*Holy Grail*’ of FEPOW history.¹³ The bulk of the material reputedly listed by name, rank, and number every man who had passed through the gates of the camp. It also detailed their arrival in Changi, their postings in 1942 and their fate beyond Singapore. Records for all

⁵ Warwick, 1994. At 08:12 to 09:24. Arnold, 2011. pp62-65. Lane, 2011. p26. Farrell, 2006. p135, pp257 – 358.

⁶ Blackburn, 2009. p234. Newman, 1944. p9. Braddon, 1958. p58. Shepherd, 1996. p3.

⁷ Swallowe Not Known. Chap 2. p16.

⁸ Header, 2007. p2.

⁹ Blackburn, 2009. p233.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p3.

¹¹ Blackburn and Hack 2008. p31.

¹² Parkes and Gill, 2015. pp12 -14.

¹³ van der Klugt, 2011. Times Newspaper, 11 July 2011.

three Scottish regiments who fought in the campaign were among the collection. It is to be these records that are to form the basis of this study.

1.2 Appraising the Transition into Captivity.

The surrender of the Allied Army in Singapore was an exceptional event in British military history. Never had so many men laid down their arms in such a short period of time. This was only the second occasion a British garrison had surrendered to the Japanese and never in such numbers.¹⁴ Unlike in Northern Europe and the Mediterranean in the early stages of the war, the vast majority of the POWs marched in less than a day into their new prison camps, housed in what were once their own barracks and then allowed access to the battlefield to liaise with their old neighbours and friends on the island. All this was carried out under the instruction of their own command with little interference from their captors.

The primary focus of this thesis is to review this unique transition from combatant to captive from the perspective of the Scottish soldier through the data sourced from the battalion records. Fortunately, the three Scottish units involved in the battle offer a surprisingly varied and enlightening sample. The two regular infantry battalions, the Argyll & Sutherland Highlanders (A&SH) and the Gordon Highlanders (Gordons), were garrison troops stationed out in the Far East before the war. This peacetime residency conditioned the men to the demanding climate and integrated them into the local society. In contrast, the Lanarkshire Yeomanry, a Royal Artillery field regiment, were attached to the ill-fated 11th Indian Division and arrived in theatre two months before the Japanese invasion. They had little time to acclimatize and no understanding of fighting in the jungles of Malaya. Their narrative acts as a yardstick by which to compare the experience of their fellow Scots in the Highland infantry battalions. Comparisons will also be made with other Allied units fighting in the Malaya campaign although the analysis of the rolls have not necessarily been carried out to the same extent as it has the Scottish battalions.

The nationalistic approach to the research for this thesis revealed the intriguing and persistent premise that being a 'Scottish' soldier affected the chances of surviving the transition into captivity. Barrack room banter between Australian, English, and Scottish soldiers suggest that each nationality would outlive the other. Where one patriotic

¹⁴ The garrison of 12,000 troops had previously surrendered in Hong Kong on 25th December 1941. (Lindsay 2005 pp135 – 143)

memoirist implies that the Scottish soldier benefitted from a rugged life in the snow-covered foothills of the Highlands, there would be another antipodean advocating they could never take the heat of the Tropics.¹⁵ Other partisan observers contest that the prisoner's survival was determined by the relative bonds created between English 'pals and muckers', the Australian concept of 'mateship' or Scottish 'clannishness'.¹⁶ This may seem at first view a ridiculous notion, but it does raise the question as to whether a pseudo national identity, propagated by military dogma, played any role in surviving the ordeal. This thesis aims to reveal how being considered 'a Scot' affected the soldier's chances of survival.

1.3 The Scope and Structure of the Enquiry

This study has been split into nine distinct chapters chosen to best illustrate the transition of the Scots into captivity in 1942. Although primarily ordered chronologically, there are certain themes that persist throughout the narrative. The unique circumstance of the campaign and surrender, the use of Scottish allegory, and the importance of regimental identity are recurrent themes which ably illustrates the life of the Scottish soldier in Singapore and shows how the Scots looked to their pre-war existence to inspire and regulate their post combat imprisonment.

Geographically the study will focus on the campaign in Malaya and Singapore and will not extend the discussion to other concurrent areas of the conflict in the Pacific purely to maintain clarity and focus. By the end of 1942, the Scottish contingent in these other theatres consisted primarily of those few escape parties and evacuees that had been lucky enough to make it out of Singapore before being captured. Likewise, and somewhat reluctantly, the plight of the 2nd Royal Scots in Hong Kong has been excluded from the discussion to maintain emphasis on the unique circumstances surrounding the campaign in Malaya and the fall of Singapore.¹⁷

As for the temporal constraints to be imposed on the study, for reasons to be explained in the literature review, the focus was always to be on what could be termed the 'missing year' of 1942. However, as the Gordons and the A&SHs had experienced life in Singapore

¹⁵ Braddon, 1955. p139. Hearder, 2009. p153. Stewart, 194. p145.

¹⁶ Parkes & Gill, 2015. p83. Braddon, 1953. p146. Hearder, 2009. p153.

¹⁷ For a comprehensive account of the fall of Hong Kong and the role played by the 2nd Royal Scots see Lindsay, 2005.

for many years before the invasion it was deemed necessary to expand the scope to as far back as 1937.

The study opens with a review of pertinent literature in Chapter 2 and will consider the range of the historiography as well as assess the reliability of the existing texts. The review will encompass the portrayal of the Scottish soldier in the popular war movies, along with the autobiographical accounts on which the screenplays were based, other first-hand accounts as well as the biographical works based on oral interviews and personal recollections. The chapter will also consider the value of published battalion histories, both those written soon after the war by members of the regiment and the more modern works completed by military historians. Each review will consider the circumstances under which the literature was written and the pitfalls of using such works as source material. It will also identify topics omitted from the historiography that are to be addressed in this thesis.

The evaluation of sources continues in Chapter 3 where the unique primary material to be found in the National Archives and various Regimental Museum collections is reviewed. It will consider the circumstance and motivations behind the compilation of such documentation and reflect on how this affects the relevance and reliability of the source. The review will also consider the transformation of pre-war documents into the wartime accounts which were then reconstituted within the POW camp regime as essential administrative paperwork. Particular attention is paid to the role of the adjutants in each battalion and the men of the Bureau of Record and Enquiry (BRE) in the Changi POW camp who were the custodians of the paperwork and responsible for the subsequent submission into the post-war archives.¹⁸

The following chapters will focus on the transition of the Scot from soldier to captive in Singapore. Chapter 4 will set the scene with a review of garrison life for the Scots from 1937 to the eve of war in December 1941. Reference will be made to the local newspaper reports that reflect upon the social life of the regiments. Emphasis will be placed upon the regimental exploitation of their Scottish traditions to ingratiate themselves and facilitate integration into the local community. The chapter will conclude with a review as to how

¹⁸ Nelson, 2012. pp29 - 35.

the Scottish soldier felt about living in Singapore and comment on their motivation when it came to protecting their new home.

Chapter 5 will consider the time and effort put in by the Scottish regiments into readying their troops for war. The lack of training has often been cited in the post war despatches as being a primary reason for the demise of the British Army in Malaya.¹⁹ However, by the time of the outbreak of hostilities the A&SH had established a fearsome pre-war reputation for training in the jungle and were proud to be nicknamed 'The Jungle Beasts'. They believed themselves to be the best trained unit in Malaya. Much post-war commentary has been made as to the suitability of that training, as well as a dearth of appropriate equipment, and the apparent indifference in the Malaya Command to endorse and commit to this peculiar type of warfare.²⁰ Ultimately this meant many units started the first weeks of the war with little experience of fighting in the forests and plantations. Some troops had never faced a tank, and a few had never fired their rifles. The accepted history under question in this section is that despite years of residency, the British garrison troops, including the two Scottish infantry battalions, were not prepared for the onslaught.

This chapter will address the reason for this apparent shortfall in preparations by looking at pertinent topics in the battalion war diaries and BRE records which illustrate the unique style of warfare to be fought by the Scots in Malaya. Consideration will be given to the nature of the training undertaken, the equipment provided to the battalions, the importance of transport and the impact of integrating new equipment at short notice. The chapter will also address the apparent impasse between those advocating a strategy of 'jungle warfare' and those supporting the concepts of a modern European war based on the rapid movement of forces along the transport networks to man fixed defence lines. It will conclude with an assessment as to the readiness of the Scots for the subsequent campaign.

The battalion histories for the units, written from notes drafted during or immediately after the conflict, provide a valuable insight into the battle and more recent histories have expanded upon these narratives.²¹ However, it is the Battalion Rolls that were raised before the fighting and maintained throughout the captivity which become the primary focus of

¹⁹ Grehan & Mace 2015. pp21 - 22, pp175 – 176, pp327 – 328, p486.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, pp178 – 179, pp324 – 325, pp480 – 481. Moreman, 2005. pp21 – 22. Woodburn-Kirby, 2004. pp165 – 169.

²¹ Stewart (1947), Miles (1961), Mitchell (2012), Moffatt & McCormick (2003), McEwan & Thomson (2013), (2015).

this study in Chapter 6. They provide remarkable detail as to the nature of the combat, including lists of casualties and details of wounds. This chapter will compare the data extracted from the rolls with the existing battalion histories across all three Scottish units. It will conclude with an assessment as to the combat efficiency of each unit at the end of the battle and determine the character and morale of the soldier at the point of surrender.

Chapter 7 reflects upon the capitulation of the Scottish soldier to the Japanese. The fall of Singapore is a unique event in British military history which illustrates the impact of surrender, both physically and psychologically, on the defeated soldier. However, in the context of this thesis, it is also the critical point in the narrative in which being in one of the Scottish regiments significantly affects the process of the surrender and the likelihood of survival. The surrender of the A&SH units in Malaya makes for tragic reading, and the experience sits uneasily alongside the internment of most troops in Singapore. This chapter closes by explaining how circumstance and training can impact the process of capitulation, sometimes resulting, as in the case of the A&SH in Malaya, in the unnecessary deaths of many men.

Chapter 8 makes best use of the records raised during the first 12 months of imprisonment. The days served in these workcamps conditioned the men to life in captivity and although they did not know it at the time, lessons learnt in the first year determined, to some degree, the chances of survival on the Thai Burma Railway and across the Japanese territories in the following years.²² The chapter opens with a study of the first few months of captivity as the Scots settle into new homes on the Changi peninsula and dispels the myth that the camp was in some way a 'Hell on Earth'.²³

Chapter 9 marks the end of the transition into captivity and covers the neglected incarceration in the POW workcamps scattered around Singapore and Malaya in 1942. The analytical study reveals a significant contrast between POW welfare in two camps beyond Changi, in which Scots at some point, were incarcerated. The Adam Park camp was established in a government housing estate and run by the Australians. Over 3,000 POWs were housed for much of 1942 in the remains of the nineteen bombed out bungalows while working on the construction of a Shinto Shrine in the heart of Singapore. As it turned out

²² Havers, 2003. p2.

²³ Grant, 2015. pp15 - 16

the nine months spent in this camp were to be the best experienced by the POWs throughout their internment.

Those Scots unfortunate enough to be captured in Malaya were in comparison subjected to a hellish existence in Kuala Lumpur's Pudu Gaol. Good use will be made in this section of the BRE documents as well as camp adjutants' reports and medical records which provide informative insights into life in the jail. The contrast between the two scenarios is profound and illustrates how things could go badly awry should the transition to captivity be complicated by extenuating combat conditions. The chapter closes with an assessment of the role 'Scottishness' and regimental camaraderie played in the survival of the Scottish POW.

This thesis will conclude with an evaluation in Chapter 10 as to the pertinence and usefulness of the BRE records when used in conjunction with other primary sources. It will review the transition of the Scots from soldier to captive in Singapore in 1942. The chapter will also reflect on how this experience sheds new light on the greater narrative of the campaign and the often-overlooked initial phase of internment on the island. Finally, it will consider what exactly it was to be a Scottish soldier, defined if not by your place of birth, then by your adopted regiment, and how 'Scottishness' pervaded through every facet of army life to an extent where being a 'Jock' could at times aid your survival or in some cases, assure your death.

Chapter 2 – Literature Review

Historically, very few Far East Prisoners of War (FEPOWs) have spoken out about their time in captivity or on campaign. Many survivors simply obeyed directives from the repatriation staff and refused to share their experiences so as not to upset their next of kin. Others declined to speak through shame of being a part of Britain's greatest military disaster or were unable to verbalise the horrors they had seen, preferring to internalise their feelings.²⁴ Many more simply believed their story was not worth telling or felt unworthy to put pen to paper, intimidated by the process of publishing a book. Whatever the reason, the apparent absence of reportage and the lack of interest shown by the authorities and historians alike immediately after the end of the war labelled the returning FEPOWs as a 'Forgotten Army'.²⁵

This is not to say the prisoners were not creating a written record in captivity. POWs regularly graffitied accommodation blocks and work areas. They buried diaries, unposted letters, and subversive memoirs for future recovery. The adjutant staff created and then maintained battalion rolls, meticulously hiding away several copies to ensure the records would survive should the master document be lost during the deployments abroad or confiscated by inquisitive guards.²⁶ Those lucky enough to escape the island of Singapore wrote copious reports on the campaign and the reasons for defeat. The creation of a permanent record and a lasting remembrance amongst the POWs helped fight the growing sense of melancholy and despair that plagued the first few months of captivity.²⁷

As the 80th anniversary of the fall of Singapore draws near and the last of the FEPOW veterans pass away, we approach a cusp as we move on from a dependence on recently gathered oral histories to a re-examination of old written text for our new sources of primary material. This chapter reviews the choice of primary and secondary sources relating to the conflict in Singapore and Malaya and the life of FEPOWs in the early months of captivity in 1942, as well as work specifically relating to the experience of Scottish troops in the garrison of Singapore.

²⁴ Shepherd, 1996. pp1 – 3.

²⁵ Thompson, 2006. p362. Bayly & Harper, 2005. p1.

²⁶ MacArthur, 2005. p6.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, p32.

2.1 The Agony of Singapore Through Film and Fiction.

Wartime and post war film directors were constantly on the lookout for deeds of daring do to promote the ‘*Boys Own*’ image of military service. Eventually even the great military defeats of the early war years were no longer considered taboo subjects and the darkest hours of the war could provide stories of resilience, British ‘pluck’ and the belief in the ultimate victory.²⁸ Prisoner of war films made in the 1950s and ‘60s, influenced by prevailing political agendas, were also popular with cinema goers who, in times of post war depression, needed reminding of what all the sacrifice had been for. Films based on the exploits of POWs in Europe were common, but the fall of Singapore and the FEPOW experience remained relatively unexplored until the mid-1950’s.²⁹

In 1957, the film producer Sam Spiegel and the director David Lean teamed up to make a ‘blockbuster’ film about the plight of POWs along the Thai Burma Railway. The resulting Oscar winning movie, *The Bridge on the River Kwai* was based on the novel of the same name written by Pierre Boulle.³⁰ Spiegel & Lean’s intentions were to make a box office success through the dramatization of the story at the expense of historical accuracy already loosely portrayed in Boulle’s book. FEPOW veterans did not react well to the release of the film.³¹ Francis Houghton, in his work on the impact the film had on the subsequent publications, concludes that the FEPOW memoirists were deeply affected by the release of the movie. He suggests that the memoirs of Hastain (1947), Coast (1946) and Braddon (1955) demonstrate the authors’ ability to portray a remarkably honest range of human emotions and captive behaviours, unburdened as they were by the anxiety felt by post-Kwai memoirists who battled to correct the parody of their experiences depicted in the movie. The film placed the FEPOW historian on the defensive and the persistent need to reference the screenplay resulted in a form of ‘*cultural circuit*’ that appeared to be almost unbreakable.³²

²⁸ Ramsden, 1998. pp36-39. Cull, 2002. p283

²⁹ Cull, 2002. 285, p4. War films based on the European POW experience include *The Captive Heart* (1946), ‘*The Wooden Horse*’ (1950), ‘*Stalag 17*’ (1953), ‘*Break to Freedom*’ (1953), *Albert RN* (1953), ‘*The Colditz Story*’ (1955). Films about imprisonment in the Far East in the same period are limited to ‘*Three Came Home*’ (1950) and *Escape to Burma* (1955) which primarily depicted the plight of civilian internees.

³⁰ Boulle, 1952.

³¹ Hack & Blackburn, 2008. pp152 – 162.,

³² Houghton, 2014. p234.

The subsequent release of productions such as *King Rat* (1965), *Merry Christmas Mr Lawrence* (1983), the BBC's series *Tenko* (1981 – 1984), *To End All Wars* (2001), ABC's miniseries *Changi* (2001) and most recently *The Railway Man* (2013) have habitually revived the interest in the FEPOW narrative, all be it at the expense of historical accuracy.³³ Sensationalising and condensing the historic account to meet filmgoers' expectations created a genre of FEPOW films promoting a considerably different narrative from those recalled by the veterans and this need for memoirists and historians to '*put the records straight*' persists for generations.³⁴

2.2 The Perceived Lack of Primary Sources

If we cannot rely totally on the post war cinematic productions or the subsequent memoirs spawned in its wake for an accurate appreciation of FEPOW life, then it could be assumed that the most dependable source would be material written at the time or immediately after the war. However, there are a few points to consider when consulting such works.

Meg Parkes and Geoff Gill (2015) in their assessment of the historiography of FEPOW material in their work on starvation, disease and survival in the Japanese prison camps suggest that their investigations were inhibited by the dearth of primary material written in the camps, particularly when compared to the amount of information available from POW camps in Europe. This is reflected in the regional disparity in the numbers of books on the POW experiences published soon after the war.³⁵

Gill and Parkes suggest that this scarcity of accounts could be put down to the dread held by the FEPOWs that they would have been killed by the Japanese had they been caught keeping diaries.³⁶ This perceived fear forced the diarists to hide their journals in various underground caches around the camps.³⁷ Only on release did the survivors then return to the locations to recover the hidden scripts. Many of these works were subsequently lost on the death of the diarist or the inability of their owner to return to the location of the hide.³⁸

³³ Hearder, 2009. p35.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, p226.

³⁵ Parkes & Gill, 2015. p12.

³⁶ Coast, 2014. pxv.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, pxvi.

³⁸ MacArthur, 2005. p6.

Other accounts simply rotted away in the warm and wet conditions of the hiding place before they could be retrieved.³⁹

Diarists were also influenced in their writings by the fear of the work being discovered. Pte Lloyd Ellerman of the 8 Division Signals AIF kept his diary throughout his stay at the Adam Park POW camp in 1942. He also ran one of the many illegal radios held in the camp. His diary is naturally devoid of any reference to the news he heard on the broadcasts or the workings around the operation of the radio in fear of the diary being found by the Japanese. In fact, the diary is quite a mundane account of the everyday life of a prisoner working away from Changi. It provides an excellent reference of diet, work, and leisure. However, if read in isolation, Ellerman's involvement in the running of the radio and the impact it had on moral of the prisoners would be lost to the researcher.⁴⁰

The production of memoirs and diaries in the first few months of captivity was also severely limited by the lack of stationery.⁴¹ Many men came into the camps with only the clothes they stood up in and those who did manage to recover their personal kit often threw away redundant items to lessen the load before any long march or journey, including heavy books and journals. Therefore, the later foraging parties sent out of Changi, both official and unofficial, scoured the public offices and abandoned military sites for suitable loot, including paper and writing materials.⁴² Exercise books and jotters were recovered from local schools and libraries. Ingenious methods were found to make ink and pens despite many having been seized by the Japanese at the time of capture or bartered for food. Every square centimetre of the paper was used. In the later years, the men were trained in book binding in the Changi workshops and by 1945 experiments were underway to produce paper.⁴³

The accuracy and detail of diary entries were subject to the prevailing health, wellbeing, and mental state of the writer. One of the reservations Weary Dunlop, an Australian doctor and camp commander at Chungkai Hospital Camp, had in publishing his own diaries was that they were a '*hymn of hate written in a mood*' and would therefore be in some way flawed.⁴⁴ Similarly, a pocket diary of a private soldier of the 18th Division now held in the

³⁹ For hidden caches see Cooper 2016, p214.

⁴⁰ Cooper 2016, p277, p278.

⁴¹ Farrow, 2007, p9. Havers, 2003. p10.

⁴² Wigmore, 1957. p526. Nelson, 2012. p76.

⁴³ Grant, 2015. p109 & p198.

⁴⁴ MacArthur, 2005. p6.

Changi Museum sums up the most eventful day of his time in combat with a single line entry ‘*Today I took a bullet*’, inferring he had been shot. Clearly the lack of space in the diary and the fact he had other things on his mind on the day of his wounding meant his retrospective entry was sadly lacking in valuable information. However, in this case the writer intended to survive the war and to use the diary as a reference for further narratives. As Havers (2003) suggests, diaries are written primarily for the benefit of the diarist and are duly edited to serve this purpose.⁴⁵ Such an absence of detail tends to be augmented in the subsequent post war memoirs by the inclusion of unsupported comment, tentative memories, and common hearsay. Parkes does however suggest that diaries do have value as, although they may be biased to the views of the author, they benefit from being written at the time and therefore not subject to altered memory in later life.⁴⁶

The reportage was also influenced by social class and military rank of the author. Parkes suggests that officers were more likely to write diaries than the other ranks as they had more time and generally better health.⁴⁷ It may also be that they were commonly better educated and more used to putting pen to paper. Officers were also expected to write up military reports and maintain logbooks as part of their official duties. They therefore had access to stationery and could request a resupply through official channels.⁴⁸ A review of paperwork held in museum collections would support this theory. For example, out of the twenty-six essays written in Changi for the proposed ‘Changi Book’, thirteen were written by officers.⁴⁹

What remains therefore is a selection of accounts limited by the reluctance of authors to take on the risk of authorship, a restricted availability to resources, a tendency to allow prevailing emotions to influence the work and the inherent profusion of accounts by the officer class. These would appear far from ideal circumstances in which to produce a comprehensive account of POW life.

⁴⁵ Havers, 2003. p10.

⁴⁶ Parkes & Gill, 2015. p13.

⁴⁷ Parkes & Gill, 2015. p12. Coast, 2014. pxlvii.

⁴⁸ Havers, 2003, p10.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, p10. Grant 2015, pp6-8.

2.3 Credible Witnesses

The majority of FEPOWs were expected to wait several weeks before being repatriated from the camps at the end of the war. During this time MI9 officers were sent out to begin collecting evidence of war crimes. However, the FEPOWS were reluctant to recall their experiences in the camps and the authorities seemed unwilling to detain them for any longer than they had to. This is reflected in the poor take up on the opportunity to fill in a Liberation Questionnaire (Form MI9 / Jap) as part of the repatriation process set out by the War Office.⁵⁰ Every FEPOW was meant to be interviewed by MI9 on their return and were asked to fill out a report listing their personal details, movement between camps and a set of questions relating to escapes attempts and sabotage. Any evidence of specific cases of brutality and torture was transcribed to a ‘Form Q’ and attached to the questionnaire. Limited studies into the efficiency of the processing of FEPOWs on their return to Britain suggest that many men were not given either an MI9 interview, repatriation advice or a meaningful medical.⁵¹ Out of the 56,000 FEPOWs returning to the UK just over half filled in the forms and the vast majority gave no further information beyond their personal details and the camps they had been in.⁵² Parkes and Gill however note the powerful impact for the veterans and their next of kin when shown their paperwork many years later, suggesting that it provided a tangible link to the past for them as well as a useful guide to the dates, names and places that were so difficult to recall decades later. The ‘Q Forms’ were later used in war crimes trials and in the search for missing personnel.⁵³

Returning POWs were also put off recalling their war time experiences to the authorities by the guilt of surrendering and surviving. With so few resources, little could be done to save a comrade had he been struck down by an arbitrary epidemic or sunk at sea.⁵⁴ This

⁵⁰ War Office, DPW. 1945 p1

⁵¹ Shepherd, 1996. p1. Swallowe, No date. Ch 1.

⁵² COFEPOW Website viewed at https://www.fepow-community.org.uk/html/liberation_questionnaires.htm on 03/03/2021. Parkes & Gill (2015) state that just over 30,000 questionnaires can be found in 98 files in the Kew Archives alongside the Camp Record Cards held by the Japanese which provide similar information.

⁵³ Parkes & Gill, 2015. p157.

⁵⁴ Over 21,000 allied POWs were killed in the sinking of ‘Hellships’ by Allied submarines throughout the war (Michno, 2001. App 1). Nelson estimates that over 12,200 POWs died on the Thai Burma railroad (Nelson, 2012. p217).

lottery of survival was not something the public back home could comprehend, and survivors feared they would be blamed in some way for the death of their comrades.⁵⁵

They also believed they would be branded as cowards and shirkers by a British public buoyed by the victory in Europe, by now used to the return of POWs from captivity in Germany and somewhat ambivalent towards the inevitable success in the distant Far East. Little was known of the appalling conditions in which the men were being held, whereas life in the camps in Europe was well understood with regular letters through the Red Cross and testimonies appearing in newspapers from escaped POWs to the living conditions the men were experiencing.⁵⁶

Survivors also feared their family and friends would believe the rumours that they could have only survived by collaborating with the enemy. Subsequently, any stories of everyday life that were relived were embellished to promote a sense of passive resistance. Personal memoirs are often dotted with communal accounts of how POWs set about humiliating the Japanese overseers at every opportunity. Petrol stealing for example was often described as taking place right under the noses of the unsuspecting Japanese driver where in fact many of the Japanese either took a cut to look the other way or were the masterminds behind the scam and acting as the fence for the ill-gotten gains.⁵⁷ Likewise, accounts of the few attempted escapes are regularly recalled despite the writer having no direct involvement in the endeavour, thereby demonstrating how futile any escapes would have been and justifying why the author made no attempt to get away.⁵⁸

The result of this myth building, and selective recall of camp life is that the public was given a false impression of the internment which subsequent FEPOW narrators were reluctant to contradict. In 1988, Hank Nelson reflecting on the way Australians recall the history of Changi described the public's understanding of the Australian FEPOW experience as a compound of 'Hogan's Heroes' and 'A Town Like Alice' with '*great gaps in their memories and popular knowledge*'.⁵⁹

⁵⁵ These feelings were not solely the domain of FEPOWs. Many POWs heading home from internment in Europe faced the same worries. (Rollings, 2008. p364. Cochrane, 1946. pp282 – 284. Newman, 1944. pp8 – 10).

⁵⁶ MacArthur, 2005. pp257 – 262. Nelson, 201. p26. Tett, 2002. p371.

⁵⁷ Cooper, 2016. pp270 – 271. MacArthur, 2005. pp44 – 45.

⁵⁸ Coast, 2014. p15.

⁵⁹ Nelson, H. 2001. p4.

Men who had been unwilling or unable to keep a diary yet still felt the need to talk about their experiences began to relate their stories to family members or interested historians on their return home at the end of the war and then throughout their remaining years. This subsequently posed issues as to the reliability of the memoirs.

Meg Parkes writing on her experiences in gathering oral histories from FEPOWs in the UK observed:

*'The events they recalled happened a long time ago and memory can dull as well as excite the recall of events. It can also alter them, which should be borne in mind when reading oral history testimonies. That is not to imply they are not valid. Some memories fade into insignificance others remain vivid; each interview is simply what the individual recalls.'*⁶⁰

Rosalind Hearder (2008) in her article entitled '*Memory, Methodology, and Myths*' also addresses some of the issues around the collection and interpretation of oral histories from FEPOWs. She highlights three systematic challenges that threaten the accuracy of veteran's first-hand recollections.

Firstly, she addresses the problem of remembering similar incidents across diverse locations. She infers those distant memories often blur across places and swap meaning when recalled in the wrong context. Veterans will often recall the same event in different locations thereby collectively inferring specific incidents such as massacres, beheadings, and crucifixions, were more commonplace than they were.

Secondly, Hearder considers the effect trauma has on the memory. She gives an example of a young FEPOW stating that he was hit only once while in captivity, but his diary written at the time and therefore considered a more accurate record of events, states he was struck several times. When confronted with this evidence the man concludes.

*'By suppressing it I made it disappear and therefore it didn't exist and therefore I didn't have to worry about it.'*⁶¹

Finally, Hearder goes on to suggest that the lack of available writing material and the fear of being caught ensured that there is little collaborative evidence for oral statements. Without the supporting documents, FEPOW recollections are left uncontested. This issue

⁶⁰ Parkes & Gill, 2015. p9.

⁶¹ Hearder 2008, pp2 - 6.

is compounded by the fear that any attempt to correct a veteran's account by the interviewer will be regarded as disrespectful and therefore inhibit future research.⁶²

Header concludes by discussing the issue of national identity and military camaraderie as an obstacle to accurate recounting. She suggests that survivors are often reluctant to criticise each other due to group loyalty and when they do, they rarely give identifying information. However, she also adds that this only applies when it comes to the Australians '...it is always open season on British or Dutch prisoners!'⁶³

This sense of national identity, a common unbreakable bond between men of the same regiment and nation, can sway the narrative and perpetuate a common accepted history which the modern historian is happy to propagate. However, Kevin Blackburn suggests that there is a flip side to this '*fictive kinship*' where men have memories that contradict the shared narrative. In this case, witnesses willing to share their experiences as a part of their PTSD therapy, are unwilling have that memory publicised or attributed to them as they fear exclusion from the group and in extreme cases, retribution.⁶⁴

Hank Nelson advocates that the power of established stereotypes is so strong that recent popular writing, films, and speeches are likely to confirm rather than modify them. Veterans, conscious of the public expectation as to what they are going to say, find it difficult to disassociate themselves from the cumulative impact of their comrades' words.⁶⁵ Once expectations have been established it is difficult to reset the record. Ex POWs feel the pressure not to relate the mundanity of life in their memoirs nor to contradict what has already been said by their fellow veterans. Former POW, Ray Tyrrel said that when people asked him casually about being a POW or a journalist wanted to interview him, he chose to say as little as possible. He thought that if he spoke openly, he would appear to be contradicting the testimony of other prisoners, diminishing the suffering of the many and appearing to excuse the crimes of the guards.⁶⁶ However, keeping quiet simply reinforces the accepted narrative.

⁶² *Ibid.*, pp2 - 6.

⁶³ Header, 2008. p3.

⁶⁴ Blackburn, 2009. p245.

⁶⁵ Nelson, 2012. p31.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, p31.

2.4 FEPOW Experience Misrepresented by Editorial Demands

Those veterans who were willing talk about their experiences and go on to write about them, faced not only the problem of meeting public expectations but also complying to the demands of the publisher not wanting to dilute the established narrative for the fear of losing sales.

Tony Pollard, editor of '*Life on the Death Railway*' by Stuart Young alludes to the editorial pressure to comply with a genre stereotype in his forward to the book that was published in 2013. He states that the original title for the book, '*Blood, Sweat and Dysentery*' and the writer's own choice, was a good one but perhaps not commercially enticing enough to attract sales.⁶⁷

During a conversation with Campbell Thomson, the co- author of *Death was their Bedmate*, in February 2018, it was mentioned that the publisher had heavily edited the original draft of the book to focus the reader on the captivity of the men rather than the combat or pre-war life. The thought was that the targeted reader would be more interested in the account of life on the Thai Burma Railway than they would be about the men in combat.⁶⁸

These comments prompted a high-level review of the literature to see whether certain periods of the narrative gained a disproportionate amount of page space in comparison to the period addressed.

⁶⁷ Young, 2013. pxii.

⁶⁸ Interview Cooper / McEwan & Thomson 27th Feb 2018.

Table 1- A table comparing the number of pages dedicated to each period of the campaign and captivity.

	Subject	Time Period					
		Pre-War 1 Year	Malaya Campaign	1942 Time in Singapore	1943	1944	1945
Book Title / Year of 1 st Publication	Total No. of Pages/	No. of pages / % of total					
Railroad of Death / 1946	290	0	0	63	211		16
		0	0	21.7%	72.8% (24.2% per year)		5.5%
To End All Wars / 1963	228	9	1	50	146		22
		3.9%	0.4%	21.9	64.0% (21.3% per year)		9.6%
Spotlight on Singapore / 1965	301	31	83	109	49		29
		10%	28%	36%	16%		10%
Life on the Death Railway / 1970*	138	16	7	23	82		5
		11.6%	5.0%	16.7%	59.4% (19.8% per year)		3.6%
Where Fate Leads /1983	266	121	15	25	92		13
		45.5%	5.6%	9.4%	34.6% (11.5% per year)		4.9%
Kept the Other Side of Tenko / 1984	192	2	16	54	114		6
		1.1%	8.3%	28.1%	59.4% (19.8% per year)		3.1%
Tamajao 241 /1987	177	0	0	9	160		10
		0	0	5.1%	90.4% (30.1% per year)		5.5%
The Railway Man / 1995	276	58	11	20	119		77
		21.0%	4.0%	7.2%	43.1% (14.3% per year)		25.3%
Line of Lost Lives / 1998	198	5	13	33	134		9
		2.5%	6.5%	16.7%	67.7% (22.5% per year)		4.5%
Out of the Depths of Hell / 1999	138	13	21	24	56		9
		9.4%	15.2%	17.4%	40.6% (13.5% per year)		15.3%
Beyond the Bamboo Screen / 1999	148	1	2	19	118		8
		0.7%	1.4%	12.8%	79.7% (26.6% per year)		5.4%
Moon Over Malaya / 2002	347	69	172	33	48		25
		19.9%	49.6%	9.5%	13.8% (4.6% per year)		7.2%
Forgotten Highlander / 2010	303	67	13	23	151		34
		22.1%	4.3%	7.6%	49.8% (16.6% per year)		11.2%
Prisoner without a Crime / 2011	107	28	5	9	37		28
		26.1%	4.6%	8.4%	34.6% (11.5% per year)		26.1%
Scattered Under the Rising Sun /2012	166	32	25	13	69		27
		19.2%	15.1%	7.8%	41.6% (13.8% per year)		16.2%
Death Was Our Bedmate / 2013	190	32	27	10	112		6
		16.8%	14.2%	5.2%	58% (19.3% per year)		3.1%
Time period in months			2 months	10 months	12 months	12 months	9 months
Time Period as percentage of the total			4.4%	22.2%	26.7%	26.7%	20.0%
					73%		

**Life on the Death Railway* by Stuart Young was based on manuscripts written in the 1970's under the unpublished title of '*Blood, Sweat and Dysentery*' and was only published in 2013.⁶⁹

⁶⁹ Young, 2013. pxii.

As expected, the bulk of the text details the three years spent on the Thai Burma Railway and subsequent work camps. It would also appear that authors writing soon after the war were happy to recount the events of 1942 to an audience of appreciative fellow veterans and knowledgeable, understanding public. However, since 2000, it seems editors and writers have begun to downplay those months in captivity in Singapore and have preferred to concentrate the narrative about life on the ‘Death Railway’.⁷⁰ The time spent in Singapore in 1942 represents nearly 22% of the POW’s stay in the Far East, yet later publications only take up on average 7.7% of the page count for this topic.

Hank Nelson attempted to explain why no matter the motivation, writers and editors will selectively edit the historic narrative. He concedes that it is understandable that most word count is given over to the events where the conditions were worse and that the extremes of human behaviour make a compelling narrative. The challenge is to make the mundane existence of the majority worthy of note and thereby redress the disparity:

‘We have claimed that the ‘hell of Changi’ is a misleading slogan, but we have not provided the detail to show that it is untrue.’⁷¹

Lachlan Grant in his introduction to *‘The Changi Book’* (2015), states that it was his intention to provide that very ‘detail’ mentioned by Nelson in his review of material and documents relating to Changi held at the Australian War Memorial. He agrees that many myths persist about the wartime treatment of prisoners held by the Japanese and that the view of Changi as a prison ‘hell’, expressed within many popular historical works and often repeated in the media, is an interpretation derived from the knowledge of the horrific conditions on the Thai Burma Railway. He concludes his argument that prisoners returning from the railway considered Changi to be more like ‘heaven’.⁷² His work goes on to describe life in Changi through a selection of essays written by inmates and a study of the artefacts and documents and effectively dismisses the myth of the ‘*Hell of Changi*’. The same theme was adopted by Havers (2003) with a detailed account of life in the Changi camp which effectively dismisses many of the preconceived ideas of the Changi internment. Hack & Blackburn (2008) expand this dialogue by editing a collection of

⁷⁰ Hack & Blackburn, 2008. p35.

⁷¹ Nelson, 2012. p3.

⁷² Grant, 2015. p16. Harrison, 1966. pp1702 - 1703.

papers entitled '*Forgotten Captives in Japanese Occupied Asia*' in which they look at some less well-known aspects of the Japanese internment of SE Asians '*by juxtaposing such a wide variety of captivity experiences.*'⁷³ Gillies (2011) extends this remit to comparing the FEPOW with those in Europe and in particular the social history of the camps recreating the daily lives of the prisoners and comparing the '*tedium of the Stalags and the brutality of the Japanese camps.*'⁷⁴ These works are indicative of a prevailing trend to re-assess the FEPOW narrative and look beyond the accepted sources. Historians are now returning to the archives, to root out 'lost' material and the re-evaluate the persistent narratives in the light of new data.

Sarah Kovner's publication entitled '*Prisoners of the Empire*' (2020), is the latest and perhaps the most controversial work which sets out to reassess the FEPOW narrative. She states that her study is the first to explain why so many suffered and offers an alternative explanation as to why the Japanese acted towards the prisoners as they did. She suggests that the Japanese High command in Tokyo had little interest, experience, or cause to care about the wellbeing of the FEPOWs. As such, it was the lack of planning, poor training and bureaucratic incoherence at the camps that were to blame for the worst treatment and not a systematic policy of humiliation and abuse sanctioned by the Tokyo government.⁷⁵ The study has been generally well received, however Kovner was subjected to a degree of hate mail claiming she was refuting the role of the Japanese command in instigating the horrors of Nanking. The vitriolic abuse meted out on the Twitter pages was overwhelmed by messages of support, however the incident does illustrate that the revision of such popular and established histories will always have its detractors. The tyranny of the popular narrative can still invoke tremendous hatred and resentment.⁷⁶

2.5 The Endless Field - The Campaign Histories

If life in Singapore immediately after surrender has been squeezed out of the memoirs, then the fighting on the island tends to retain its page count. (See Table 1). The Singapore

⁷³ Hack & Blackburn, 2008. Synopsis.

⁷⁴ Gillies 2011, Cover Jacket

⁷⁵ Kovner, 2020. p3.

⁷⁶ Harris, 2018. 3:06.

campaign was the worst defeat in British military history and perhaps the greatest victory for the Japanese. As such prisoners, aimlessly swapping opinions down at the boreholes (latrines) of Changi, wanted to know why the army had surrendered and more importantly who was to blame. The tendency was to accuse those who were higher in rank and notably no longer there, General Wavell and Lieutenant General Bennett for example.⁷⁷ Others pinned the blame on the men at the top back in Whitehall including Churchill.⁷⁸ A few gave credit where credit was due, citing the Japanese's superior tactics and training as being the main reason for their victory. Many more asserted that the Japanese victory was purely because they outnumbered the Allies and the enemy had in some way not played by the rules.⁷⁹

The '*Borehole News*' however was confined to the readers of the prison paper, those who attended the military lectures at Changi University or banter in the mess hall.⁸⁰ Commanding officers within Changi set about setting the records straight by addressing their troops both through speeches and distributing typed despatches.

A good example of these potted campaign histories is Lt Col Carpenter's address to the men of the 1st Battalion Cambridgeshires, now held in the Cambridgeshire Regimental Archive. The Cambridgeshires had arrived as part of the 18th Division on 30th January 1942 and fought on the island for two weeks before being captured. They, like so many of the 18th Division, demanded some reason as to why they had been pitched into a battle which was by that time all but lost. Typed onto manuscript paper, with no paragraph separation or margins to conserve paper, Carpenter relates to his men a brief history of the grander campaign. He tells of the rough time had by other Allied units up country before and that the demise of the RAF airfields had condemned the troops in Singapore to inevitable defeat. He is quick to state the numbers of Japanese invading the island and their use of specially adapted equipment such as motor launches and aircraft. He overstates the Japanese casualties inflicted by his battalion and blames the surrender on the higher command, stating the Cambridgeshires would have still been able to fight on, although surrounded. He pours praise onto his men's performance in the face of '*seasoned soldiers*'

⁷⁷ Felton, 2008. p83. Wavell left Singapore on 10th February 1942. Bennett escaped from Singapore on 15th February 1942.

⁷⁸ Arnold, 2011. p11.

⁷⁹ Wigmore, 1957. p511.

⁸⁰ The POWs in Changi created several prison papers which followed a similar theme to the pre-war regimental magazines limited only by the lack of news from outside the camp, the lack of paper and the enthusiasm of the volunteer contributors.

of the I.J.A and cites receiving ‘*a number of great compliments*’ as to which they all could be justly proud. The latter half of the document goes on to tell the men what needs to happen now they are interned. Keeping up morale and putting down all ‘*grumblers*’ is recommended. Finally, to justify their sacrifice, he recalls exactly what the British Empire means to Britain and how the ‘*Yellow Peril*’ must be stopped.⁸¹

Many similar leaflets were circulated from all levels of command to their men in Changi in the first few weeks of internment to explain away the prevailing circumstances and how the campaign had been lost. Troops read the despatches with a degree of scepticism but with little news from the outside and minimal reports coming in from the hidden radios, there was scant more for the men to go on and it would be these exaggerated histories that would form the basis of the veterans’ memoirs in years to come.

As the battle for Singapore came to an end, directives were sent out for official escape parties to be raised from each of the battalions to ensure the lessons learnt from the mishandling of the campaign were not lost. Many of the commanding officers chosen for the escape parties felt uneasy about abandoning their men in the final hours of the battle and followed the order reluctantly. Others simply ignored the directive, were unable to escape or died in the attempt. Some such as General Gordon Bennett, officer commanding the Australian forces in Singapore, managed to make the perilous journey to freedom only to be met at home by a hostile reception from their superiors.⁸²

According to Lodge, writing Bennett’s biography, the general received a mixed reception by the Australian public and high command.⁸³ His escape was applauded by those who felt his job in Singapore had been completed and it was his duty to try and effect a perilous escape. Others felt Bennett had deserted his troops in the face of combat. The response from his superiors was to post Bennett to what proved to be a dead-end job as commander of III Corps in the defence of Western Australia before being then transferred to the reserves in 1944. Bennett in reply set about writing his account of the Malayan Campaign which was published the same year. His work entitled ‘*Why Singapore Fell*’ proved to be as controversial as his escape had been, calling into question many of the actions of the

⁸¹ Carpenter, 1942. Viewed at <http://www.adamparkproject.com/virtual-museum/mm006.html> last viewed on 06/04/2020.

⁸² Wigmore, 1957. p384.

⁸³ Lodge 1993. p1.

British High command and the performance of Lieutenant General Arthur Percival, General Officer Commanding Malaya, in particular.⁸⁴

Percival (*War in Malaya*, 1949) also went on to publish his own account of the campaign after his release from imprisonment, in part in response to the criticism levelled by Bennett, as well as the reproach he received from the higher echelons of the government, in his handling of the Malayan campaign.⁸⁵ Although enlightening as to the workings of the high command in Singapore, its accuracy is always prejudiced by the circumstance in which it was written.

In way of contrast to Bennett's work and notably for this thesis, the battalion history of fellow escapee, Lt Col Ian MacAlister Stewart of the Argyll & Sutherland Highlanders, was received with great acclaim.⁸⁶ Stewart served as the officer commanding the 2nd Battalion from 26th August 1939 to the outbreak of the war at which point, he was promoted to the role of officer commanding the 12th Brigade, 11th Indian Division and as such led his men right through the Malayan campaign. He was selected for an escape party personally by Percival and was evacuated out of Singapore on HMS Durban on 11th February 1942, primarily to retain his knowledge and experience of fighting the Japanese in the jungle.

Stewart was considered as an expert in jungle warfare by many of his peers and contemporaries prior to the outbreak of the Malaya campaign.⁸⁷ He enthusiastically embraced the challenge of training his men in jungle and plantation warfare in Malaya. Stewart's reputation as a jungle fighting expert and his loyalty to his regiment influenced his writing of the book. Stewart states in his preface that it had been difficult not to personalise the account and glorify the achievements of the battalion. He does however include many examples of exemplary behaviour and names individuals as a means of acknowledging their bravery and skill. He attempts to mitigate his consistent praise by suggesting such behaviour was commonplace amongst the regiment.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, p1.

⁸⁵ Percival, 1949.

⁸⁶ Stewart, 1946.

⁸⁷ Moffatt & McCormick, 2002. pp68-72.

*'Individuals of all ranks have been named in these pages. I would emphasize that all have been chosen, not because their actions were necessarily exceptional, but rather because they and their stories were typical of many others.'*⁸⁸

Regardless of Stewart's insistence that the battalion also made mistakes, little comment is made of misdemeanours, poor behaviour or substandard performance and no wrongdoers are denounced by name. Despite Stewart's best intentions the book reads like a tribute rather than a detailed unbiased analysis of the campaign. Field Marshal Wavell in the foreword aptly describes the work as a '*record of exploits*' rather than a critical evaluation of the regiment's performance or life in the ranks.⁸⁹ However, in the context of this work the account is a valuable contribution to the understanding of the role a Scottish regiment played in the fighting.

Immediately after the war, Commonwealth governments encouraged the publication of military histories by senior officers who they believed could provide a measured and unbiased account of the war in the Pacific. However, inevitably these authors were also influenced by the prevailing circumstances. The very fact that they were employed by the government meant that there was the political pressure to name and shame political enemies who had presided over the disaster.⁹⁰

Major General S Woodburn Kirby, Deputy Chief of the General Staff, India, in 1942, dedicates the first book of the five-volume series to the war against the Japanese, up to the fall of Singapore and Hong Kong. Woodburn Kirby began his work in 1950 at the time of Attlee's Labour government's narrow victory over Winston Churchill's Conservative party. J R M Butler, the editor of the series, alludes to government coercion in his editorial. He talks of a government directive that requests, among other things, that the authors '*provide a broad survey of events from an inter service point of view*'.⁹¹ He goes on to add that the authors of the work had deliberately written a military and not a political history and '*comment on the conduct of British foreign policy does not lie within its scope*'. Thus, Woodburn Kirby focusing on the military failings of the campaign rather than those of the

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, pix.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, pvi.

⁹⁰ Farrell, 2006. p444.

⁹¹ Woodburn Kirby, 2004. pxiii.

government meant that he could disassociate himself from any of Attlee's criticism of Churchill's role in the affair.

However, Butler also concedes that this '*broad history*' advocated by the government was not always adhered to by the authors. He admits that Woodburn Kirby takes it upon himself to go into the campaign of Singapore and Hong Kong in detail to make up for the lack of information about the fighting.

*'There is the further consideration that the paucity of records and the long captivity of so many of the men who had survived the catastrophe have made the discovery of the facts particularly difficult, so that funding of such information as available was seemed justified.'*⁹²

Butler goes on to state that the lack of British records and the involvement of so many other Commonwealth and Allied forces forced the authors to seek help from international historians, each with their own political agenda. Among the Australian historians Woodburn Kirby collaborated with was Lionel Wigmore, from the Federal Department of Information and formerly their representative in Malaya, having been based in Singapore before the war. Wigmore was responsible for ensuring AIF personnel were kept in touch with news from home and as such had several terse exchanges with Bennett who was unable to understand the need for the role. Wigmore was evacuated out to Australia before the fall and spent the rest of the war working as an administration officer in Canberra.

In 1948, Wigmore was appointed as the official historian for the campaign in Malaya and the fate of the Australian POWs by the work's editor Gavin Long.⁹³ It was no easy task, and contrary to Woodburn Kirby's protestations, Wigmore found that the number of Australian records available to him was overwhelming and he was unable to analyse all the material available.

*'Voluminous reports of the prisoner of war period were studied. Information drawn from these was checked with and supplemented by the large number of diaries kept by the prisoners and the many interviews collected by officers of the Repatriation of Allied Prisoners of War and Internees organisation, which are now systematically catalogued in the library of the Australian War Memorial.'*⁹⁴

⁹² *Ibid.*, pxiii.

⁹³ MacIntyre, 2012. p1.

⁹⁴ Wigmore, 1957. pxii.

According to Wigmore's biographer Darryl MacIntyre, Wigmore and Woodburn Kirby worked well together, coming to a mutual agreement on many of the more controversial facts and respecting the other's opinion when their findings differed. Wigmore's work also drew the attention of Bennett who set about discrediting the history. Undeterred, Wigmore persisted with his writing and the book, *'The Japanese Thrust'*, was published in 1957 to favourable reviews.⁹⁵

2.6 Campaign Histories in the 21st Century

Alan Warren in the introduction to his work on the campaign for Singapore (2007) states that it is:

*'the first professional history of the tactical campaign, drawing on both British and Australian archives since the official histories of 1957'*⁹⁶

He warns that previous military histories written by the defeated are not necessarily the best but makes no suggestion as to why this is so. He goes on to posit that memoirs and regimental histories are also often vague and narrow in focus. The inspiration for his own work and subsequently a sentiment echoed in a flurry of future campaign histories that followed, was the release of new material from the Public Record Office (PRO) and the Australian War Memorial (AWM) fifty years after the campaign in 1992.

Brian Farrell (2006) echoes Warren's substantiation, noting that the release of declassified material in 1972 excluded those relating to the fall of Singapore. The British government insisted that the full 50-year embargo on the release of papers would be enforced, and Farrell concludes this was because governments still felt the threat of recriminations half a century after the event. He also concurs with Parkes and Warren that many of the contemporary records were destroyed in Singapore as part of the surrender process, and the decision by the Australian and British governments to hold on to the few remaining records until the 1990s meant that up to that point historians were depending on:

⁹⁵ MacIntyre, 2012. p1.

⁹⁶ This statement dismisses the work by Owen (1960), Barber (1968), Leator (1968), Simson (1970), Falks (1975), Callahan (1977), Allen (1977), Holmes & Kemp (1982) and Elphick (1995).

*'constricted official histories and incomplete or unreliable memories.'*⁹⁷

Subsequently, these later works (Warren 2002, Farrell 2006, Thompson 2006, and Arnold 2011) focus on the grand strategy of the outbreak of the war in the Far East and how this determined the loss of Singapore, no matter how incompetent the generals proved to be in the subsequent campaign. Farrell's work is notable for his depiction of the indifference and ineptitude demonstrated at all levels of the Allied command. He goes on to state that the grand strategy was irrevocably tied to the inadequacies of the commanders and that it was the failure of the total military system that led to the disaster. Arnold, in comparison, pulls no punches in laying the blame squarely at the doorstep of Churchill and Roosevelt.⁹⁸ There follows sixteen chapters detailing exactly where the fault for the failure lay.

In contrast, Colin Smith's *Singapore Burning* (2006) engulfs the reader with personal anecdotes of the fighting interwoven among the battlefield tactics and campaign strategies. Smith based much of his work on the oral histories he gathered from survivors, but also refers the reader to what he calls '*an enormous historiography of the Malayan Campaign*' much of it out of print and quite a lot privately published.⁹⁹ He also alludes to a helpful campaign history written in Changi by Colonel Charles Kappe, Bennett's chief signals officer, who had the advantage of being locked up for many years with many of the authors of the primary sources.¹⁰⁰ Smith does offer a word of warning when using Kappe's work which is relevant to many of the contemporary histories written by FEPOWs.

*'Typed on the back of procurement forms and a naval signals' pads with hand written inserts, it is an invaluable document, though at times one needs to bear in mind that, when things go wrong, people tend to blame somebody else.'*¹⁰¹

Warren (2007) is surprisingly confident that by the turn of the millennium all the official records were in the public domain.

*'Anyone now writing an account of a Second World War Campaign, and seeking to reconstruct events from the bottom upwards, now benefits from access to as complete a set of records as is ever to be available.'*¹⁰²

⁹⁷ Farrell, 2015. p8.

⁹⁸ Arnold, 2011. pp11-15.

⁹⁹ Smith, 2006. p569.

¹⁰⁰ Farrell, 2015. p472.

¹⁰¹ Smith, 2006. p569.

¹⁰² Warren, 2007. pxii.

This proved not to be quite the case however for Singapore. In 2011, archivists and FEPOW researchers uncovered the documents created by the Bureau of Record and Enquiry (BRE) established in Changi at the beginning of the internment. This included battalion rolls and adjutant returns from all the units held in the camp. According to Captain David Nelson, the officer in charge of the administration team, the records had been shipped to India at the end of the war and had been ‘lost’ thereafter.¹⁰³ At the time the newspapers reported the finds as the ‘*Holy Grail*’ of FEPOW history.¹⁰⁴

The discovery of these records and the digitisation of the Commonwealth War Graves Commissions (CWGC) database provided a new source of data which has been exploited by several historians. In 2012, the father and son team of Justin and Robin Corfield published a substantial book entitled *The Fall of Singapore – 90 Days: November 1941 – February 1942*. This 743-page publication is primarily a compilation of the enhanced CWGC database with all the aberrations and inconsistencies that entails. The daily lists of casualties are interspersed with brief accounts of the days fighting along various sectors of the front, interspersed with break out pages detailing specific events and characters. As Justin himself admits:

‘For those who want a long continuous prose with incidents summarised succinctly with conclusions drawn and blame given, this is not your book.’

Unfortunately, the very nature and size of the book format makes the data difficult to manipulate and analyse. However, this publication ably demonstrates the considerable amount of material both in the archives and the libraries that is now available to researchers and historians on this subject.¹⁰⁵

The same material was referenced in the work of Stewart Mitchell (2012) and McEwan & Thomson (2013) who set about compiling lists of casualties to illustrate their work on their chosen Scottish regiments. Mitchell went one step further by analysing the database of personal details to draw conclusions on the recruitment patterns and morbidity of the men from the Gordon Highlanders.¹⁰⁶ McEwan and Thompson satisfied themselves with a detailed list of names, personal details, and photographic portraits of the men of the 155th

¹⁰³ Nelson, 2012. p193.

¹⁰⁴ van der Klugt, 2011. Times Newspaper, 11 July 2011.

¹⁰⁵ Corfield states that in 2001 his bibliography listed 4262 works connected with the campaign, an increase of three hundred since 1988.

¹⁰⁶ Mitchell, 2012. p27, p123.

Field Regiment (The Lanarkshire Yeomanry) who fought in Singapore. This information was drawn from their previous publication 'The Fireside Sojers' (2015). Both these works will be referenced throughout this thesis.

2.7 The Experience of the Scottish Soldier in the Far East

The contribution of the Scottish troops in the campaign and their experiences in captivity are particularly well served through memoirs and regimental histories. Notably three autobiographies have become bestsellers, two of which were subsequently made into films. *The Railway Man* written by Eric Lomax (1995) had the most success at the box office in 2013. But the movie came under a barrage of criticism for the apparent divergence from the original account. Likewise, the film *To End All Wars*, released in 2002, was based on the memoirs of Ernest Gordon. Gordon, a Scot, who ended his working career as the Presbyterian dean of the Chapel at Princeton University, served as an officer in the 2nd Battalion Argyll & Sutherland Highlanders and fought with them throughout the campaign in Malaya and in Singapore. He went onto spend three years as a prisoner on the Thai Burma Railway. This screenplay was also strewn with historical inaccuracies and misinterpretations, forcing Gordon to add a new introduction in the 2002 reprint in which he alludes to the manipulation of the narrative by the film's producers and defends the accuracy of the book.¹⁰⁷

Alistair Urquhart's *Forgotten Highlander* (2010) is perhaps the most well-known autobiographical account of the experience of Scottish soldiers in the Far East.¹⁰⁸ Urquhart's introduction suggests that the motivation behind the book was to bring to account those in Japan responsible for the atrocities and highlight the failure of successive governments to face up to their predecessor's crimes.¹⁰⁹ Urquhart not only writes as a historian but also as a victim seeking retribution and justice. His account of the experience of a Scottish soldier in Singapore, Thailand, and Japan, is tailored to support his case for recognition of the crime and recompense for the suffering incurred.

¹⁰⁷ Gordon, 2002. pvi.

¹⁰⁸ Urquhart was subsequently interviewed by Channel 5 who produced a documentary of his story entitled the *'Luckiest Man of World War 2'* in 2011.

¹⁰⁹ Urquhart, 2010. p6.

All three works follow a similar narrative. They describe the author's life before the war, training and deployment, their experience of the fighting before going onto relate their time in captivity. Only Lomax re-counts his post war endeavours in tracking down camp guards and the reconciliation on meeting his former overseer, although Gordon's reunion with his captor is shown in the film.

What is important for this study are the references to the influence the authors' nationality had on their experiences in the Far East. Gordon and Urquhart regularly attest to how their Scottish upbringing shaped their character and helped them to survive.¹¹⁰ There is however no sense of them believing they survived solely because they were Scottish, or that others died because they were not, although they advocate that being Scottish gave the men a shared upbringing, common bond and collective memories which became a source of comfort, inspiration, and moral strength.

Like many similar auto biographical accounts written by FEPOW veterans after the war, coverage of the months in Singapore after capitulation is proportionally limited (See Table 1). Additionally, Urquhart and Lomax are both unable to make much comment on the Scottish regiments in combat simply because they were not there, having to man a desk at the Fort Canning HQ instead. This isolated and surreal highly pressurised environment is deftly evoked in their accounts but also sheds an element of doubt on the accuracy of any of their comments about events taking place beyond the bunker. Their only direct knowledge was taken from fleeting glances at transient messages and interrupted signals traffic, strategic speculation among the command centre staffs, and post combat analysis both in Changi and among the FEPOW community in the intervening years.

The history of the Scottish regiments at war in the Far East is however the focus of Jonathan Moffat and Agnes McCormick's book entitled *Moon Over Malaya*. This is an incredibly detailed account of the role of the 2nd battalion of the Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders and the Royal Marines detachment in the fighting in Malaya and Singapore. McCormick, a civilian evacuee from Singapore, had previously worked on the BBC production entitled '*Kilts in Warfare*' and has family links with the Argyll Regiment.

¹¹⁰ Gordon, 2002. p102, pp121 -124, p133, p166, p200, p214; Urquhart, 2010. p44, p53, p55, p146, p193, p213, p248, p251, p285.

Moffatt's connection was more with the Royal Marines, being a member of their historical society and a regular contributor to the regimental journal, *Sheet Anchor*.

Moffatt and McCormick focus the best part of the text on the military campaign. The narrative is distracted from the Scottish theme by the introduction of the story of the Royal Marines, shipwrecked after the destruction of the *HMS Prince of Wales* and *HMS Repulse* and attached to the remaining Argylls during the latter stages of the campaign. However, the combination of the thorough accounts taken from personal recollections, oral histories and unpublished memoirs, newspaper reports as well as a plethora of published works, creates an incredibly detailed and readable account of combat and captivity in Singapore.

Markedly, the opening chapters deal with recruitment and time spent on the island before the war. This includes incidents recalled by the men that appear in the battalion paperwork. It provides a very personal account from a soldiers' perspective of life on the island. The sections detailing the first few months in captivity in Changi are also professionally researched and documented but these only take up a few pages.

Moffatt and McCormick do not dissect the statistics found in the battalion paperwork in the same manner as Mitchell in his work on the Gordon Highlanders, preferring to allow the generalisations made by the contributors illustrate the point rather than a graph or statistical analysis. They do, however, rely heavily on oral histories and written memoirs for their more personal narratives, with the original notes held in the A&SH museum in Stirling Castle.

2.8 The Scots in Residence - Singapore 1938-1942

Life of the Scots in Singapore out with the war years is a little harder to review. Colonial life is often depicted in fiction as stereotypical upper-class families who are caught up in the turbulence of the time and forced of face the horror of internment. Plotting this precipitous downfall is the backdrop for some of the most well-loved works of fiction set in Singapore. JG Farrell's *Singapore Grip* (1978), Shelley's *Island in the Centre* (1995) and *People of the Pear Tree* (1998) and the Man Booker prize winner of 2014, *The Narrow Road to the Deep North* by Richard Flanagan, exploit this powerful narrative. These tales provide an embellished insight into the community which the pre-war garrison officer was

a part of. However, for the common private, such an egotistical lifestyle was about as far removed from their experience as it was the average Singaporean. Barrack room life and the socialising in Singapore are more clearly depicted in Leslie Thomas's *The Virgin Soldiers* (1966). The book is based on Thomas's own experiences as a national serviceman through the tale of a platoon of men on their tour in the Far East on the backdrop of the Malay Emergency in the 1950s. Although not contemporary to the 1940s the scenes are set in the Selarang barracks, home to the Gordon Highlanders prior to the invasion and ably reflects the boredom of continual training, stress from sporadic clashes with the enemy, homesickness, and the effects of the tropical climate among the young soldiers. Barrack life for Scottish regiments is also vividly portrayed in James Kennaway's *Tunes of Glory* (1959) in which he depicts life in the Argylls in post war barracks in Stirling Castle, showing how the effects of post war trauma and regimental traditions could suffocate men trying to come to terms with life in the army after the war.

What these works have in common is their portrayal of a community living in isolation and disconnected from their surroundings. Shennan (2015) in her work on the British in Malaya suggests that the bad press the colonials gained for exploiting the local communities and '*partying in Raffles*' as the Japanese advanced on Singapore was more down to the British press at home, jealous of the apparent idyllic and peaceful existence, than the professed grievances of the Malay and Singaporean people. In her mind, the hard working and innovative engineers, planters, architects, and businessmen were the driving force of the colony and contributed more to the society than they took out of it. This perception of colonial mismanagement and military incompetency was reinforced by the new post-independence governments in the region to promote national identity and to set the new regimes apart from the old.¹¹¹ Modern historians, Shennan suggests, looking back at the colonial life in Malaya have therefore submitted to this stereotypical image. She also contests that there is an enormous gulf between the social norms of the 21st Century and those of Imperial Britain which makes it difficult to take an objective view.

'Not surprisingly 'protection' has become 'occupation', 'responsibility' is dismissed as 'hypocrisy', 'employment' as 'exploitation'.¹¹²

¹¹¹ Shennan, 2015. p24.

¹¹² *Ibid.*, p24.

If Shennan is right, then we must see the role of the pre-war garrison soldier as the guardians of ‘*a well-ordered society served by a code of liberal Western values*’, and not enforcers of tyrannical colonial overseer.¹¹³

2.9 Conclusion

The history of the fall of Singapore is wrapped up in its own myths fuelled by film and fiction.¹¹⁴ Initial attempts to recall the events were honest accounts written by, and for, those who had been there. As survivors looked for explanations, ‘*Borehole News*’ took on a resemblance of truth. Stories turned into facts, which turned into legends and ultimately, screenplays and plotlines. However, as the clamour for cinematic and fictional blockbusters took hold, veterans spent more time ‘*putting the records straight*’ than recalling their own experiences. Those historians looking beyond the rhetoric and hearsay faced two notable issues.

First was the apparent lack of alternative primary sources. It was expected that FEPOWs, under such an oppressive regime, would understandably be reluctant to maintain written records. It was also assumed that bookkeeping under such ‘hellish’ conditions would be too difficult. It was thought that the paperwork that was created would have been destroyed in combat, confiscated in internment, or abandoned during the return home and with so many veterans still around, it was arguably the priority to ask them for information and leave the search of the archives until later.

This led to the second issue of the over dependency on oral histories and written memoirs as the primary source. Capturing and interpreting oral histories and fading recollections has been a popular methodology in recent years especially as the opportunities to do so decline as the survivors grow older and pass away, but the process is fraught with problems. Memories are defused by time and space. FEPOWs who have witnessed a common encounter tend to ‘borrow’ memories and ‘share’ experiences. Any witness with an anecdote that bucked the accepted narrative felt obliged to remain silent. Selective editing of the memoirs and oral histories is compounded by the imposition of the publishers and producers to create a popular history, sensationalising the storyline at the expense of the

¹¹³ *Ibid.*, p24.

¹¹⁴ Farrell, 2006. p8.

mundane. In doing so, the dramatic takes precedence and the ordinary is relegated to the margins or expunged from the narrative altogether.

This thesis will attempt to mitigate these issues, by primarily drawing on the data analysis extracted from the recently discovered BRE records and the associated battalion paperwork. The aim is to shed new light on the neglected history of the FEPOWs in 1942 with the Scottish soldier as the focus of the enquiry. This is by no means the first study of a Second World War campaign to make use of the battalion statistics, and neither can it be claimed to be the definitive account of the Scottish experience in Singapore as new primary sources are regularly being discovered, but it should be regarded as a steppingstone along the path to a fuller understanding of the greater events. However, before any new claims can be made and conclusions drawn, it is vital to consider how these 'new' documents came to be and how much one can trust their content.

Chapter 3 –The Primary Sources

3.1 Introduction

Chapter 2 has established the strengths and weaknesses of the various sources often cited in previous studies into the fall of Singapore and the subsequent internment of the POWs. It would be unfair to dismiss out of hand any genre completely as each adds context and commentary to the narrative. However, it is important to understand the circumstances under which the material was compiled and motivation of the writer to identify the partiality and the inaccuracies inherent in any source. The same assessment must also be given to the relatively new material to be consulted in this study.

This chapter reviews the content of the battalion paperwork and the conditions under which it was created by the adjutant and his staff. It was these documents that were invariably used as the starting point for each investigation and case study addressed in the ensuing chapters. It is therefore vital to understand the provenance of each source and be aware of any inconsistencies that may undermine any conclusions that might be forthcoming. In fact, this chapter, and the more detailed analysis of the primary sources in the subsequent case studies, will demonstrate that the documents are often riddled with inaccuracy and bias, however, the researcher must accept that it is flawed, mitigate the interpretation accordingly and combine it with the other sources to reach a consensus of understanding.

Army administrators were usually on the receiving end of battalion banter, often portrayed as being ‘*armchair commandos*’ with no role to play on the front line.¹¹⁵ However, as the invasion of Singapore progressed and the troops fell back to the city, many support staff faced the perils of battlefield operations alongside the fighting battalions. Adjutants and the HQ Company clerks in the frontline units fought beside their colleagues as positions were systematically overrun and they were often targeted by the enemy who considered them vital communications staff and command personnel.¹¹⁶ If there was to be a benefit to being under fire, then the Adjutant could be reassured the amount of paperwork required in combat was drastically reduced from their peacetime obligations.

¹¹⁵ Rottman, 2007. p128.

¹¹⁶ WO 1940 *The Field Service Pocket Book, Pamphlet 2, 1939*, pp10 – 11.



Figure 1 a, b, c, and d - Pre-war footage of an Australian artillery field regiment on exercise

These images show the temporary nature of the staff facilities including trestle tables, notepads, pinboards and order pads. This unit has mounted the command post in the back of a truck. (Viewed at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ax91_O6dU64 on 03/05/2021).

The Field Service Pocket Book (FSPB), the infantryman's guide to everyday practices, states:

*'Office work in the field is to be restricted to what is absolutely indispensable; no office work will be transacted with a unit on service in the field that can possibly be dealt with at a stationary office.'*¹¹⁷

However, Form L1398-11, a checklist of items required for deployment, lists 43 individual entries and over 4.5k individual items, including files, forms, books, typewriters, pens and pencils, and even the special boxes to carry it all in.¹¹⁸ This stationery and paperwork were all to be transferred into the front line to run the Battalion HQ office in the field. The whole facility was to be shipped in at least one truck with the staff following on in the accompanying personnel transport. It is difficult to imagine how such a facility operated in the heat and humidity of the Malayan jungle, never mind while in combat.

3.2 The War Diary (C2118)

Among the daily despatches to be raised in the front line were the 'War Diaries and State Reports' by which the fighting condition of the unit could be assessed. Notably for historians making use of these records, the FSPB ominously recommends:

'Punctuality in rendering it is more important than extreme accuracy.'

The daily strength state, declaring losses incurred, reinforcements received, and total strength, was to be sent regularly at 0600 hrs to Brigade HQ who would then acknowledge their receipt and forward copies onto the higher echelons.

The FSPB entry states that the document is used to:

*'Furnish an historical record of operations and a record of raising new units, as well as to provide data on which to base future improvements in training, equipment, organisation, and administration.'*¹¹⁹

The War Diary was to be kept in duplicate from the first day the unit was mobilised and maintained by the unit commander. Entries were to be made daily using Army Form

¹¹⁷ WO 1940 *The Field Service Pocket Book, Pamphlet 11, 1939*, p12.

¹¹⁸ War Office, 1942. AF L1398.

¹¹⁹ WO 1940 *The Field Service Pocket Book, Pamphlet 11, 1939*, p15.

C2118 with each being initialled by the officer detailed to keep it.¹²⁰ Each monthly edition of the diary would then be enclosed in a folder (C2119) ready for onward transmission and filing.

According to FSPB, the following entries were to be recorded in the diary:

1. Important orders (including verbal orders), instructions, reports messages, or despatches received and issued, and the decisions taken. These should be summarised in the diary as well as being attached as part of the appendices.
2. Daily location report providing details of movements during the last 24 hours and the current dispositions. March tables and field returns (AF W 3008 and AF W 3009) were to be added as required.
3. Important matters relating to the duties of each branch of the staff.
4. Detailed accounts of operations with exact hour of important occurrences, factors affecting operations, topographical and climatic conditions. Clear sketches showing the positions of troops at important phases of the operation. Conditions of the roads and ground. Maps used and map references.
5. Nature and description of field engineering works constructed, and quarters occupied.
6. Changes in the establishment strength or armament. As regards to casualties the names and ranks of officers and number of other ranks or followers and of vehicles and animals were to be noted. Any changes were to be consolidated into a statement for the commanding officer to sign off.
7. Meteorological notes were to be added into the special column on the form.
8. A summary of important information received whether military or political.

¹²⁰ In practice the writing of the diary could be allocated to a junior rank with the adjutant reviewing the entry and signing off the work later.

9. The original copy of all maps and sketches would be attached to the War Diary as appendices.¹²¹

It was very much down to the Adjutant as to how these instructions were to be interpreted. Different authors gave different priority to the type and quality of content. Ultimately the standard of narrative was assessed by the commanding officer and the Adjutant advised should the content be found wanting, but as a rule the quality of the record keeping was dependent on the diligence of the author. Filling in the report each day during peacetime may well have been a tedious pursuit, however meticulously updating the documents while on the frontline was an altogether more difficult task and would have been simply impractical at times. It is therefore not unusual to find that the adjutants would retrospectively complete the report based on their handwritten notes transcribed from their own pocketbooks.¹²²

Otherwise, in times of relative normality, diaries were sent up the line for appraisal and filing at the end of each month. Original copies were to be sent to the GHQ 2nd Echelon for dispatch to higher authorities. The duplicate copies were to be dispatched within two months for onward transmission to the regimental record office at Regimental HQ at the base depot.¹²³ Many of the diaries from the Singapore garrison were sent to the U.K. on the last ships to leave the island in January 1942.

The war diaries were classified as secret documents and the guidelines recommend that no plans for future operations or ‘Top Secret’ information should be added until the events had been played out or the information had been downgraded. However, it was still important to ensure that the War Diary did not fall into enemy hands and every effort was to be made to destroy the files before surrender.¹²⁴ Many eyewitness accounts relating events before the fall of Singapore note the Battalion HQ staff were busy destroying or burning classified paperwork before surrendering to the Japanese.¹²⁵ This situation was compounded by an order from the IJA forbidding the retention of all regimental records, civilian passports and diaries and demanded the destruction or surrender of any such

¹²¹ WO 1940. *The Field Service Pocket Book, Pamphlet 11, 1939, Section 5.* p15.

¹²² Farrell, 2015. p471.

¹²³ WO8457 1949 *Staff Duties in the Field.* p224.,

¹²⁴ Nelson, 2012. pp29-30.

¹²⁵ Urquhart, 2011. p92. Cooper, 2016. p202. Wigmore, 1957. pp378 – 379. WO 1940 *The Field Service Pocket Book, Pamphlet 11, 1939,* p14.

material forthwith.¹²⁶ Though, once established in Changi, Battalion HQs began a systematic process of recompiling lost documents often at the behest of the Japanese camp commanders.¹²⁷ The War Diaries redrafted in the camp were habitually written in the same format as the official pre-war records but with a fair degree of retrospective comment and consolidation.¹²⁸

WAR DIARY

Army Form C2118.

Instructions regarding War Diaries and Intelligence Summaries are contained in P. S. Regs., Part II, and the Staff Manual respectively. Title pages will be prepared in manuscript.

INTELLIGENCE SUMMARY.
(Erase heading not required.)

Place	Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information	Remarks and references to Appendices
Singapore	14 th 1942	3 rd	B Coy. commence preliminary musketry	ML
		4 th	C Coy and detachment H.Q. Coy. proceeded to Nursing School for training	ML
		7 th	A Coy. complete section training	ML
		8 th	A Coy. commence platoon training	ML
		11 th	Orders received for Captain P.H.H. Buckingham to return to the U.K. immediately by air	Ampt.
		16 th	B Company finished preliminary musketry	Ampt.
		18 th	C Company returned from Messing Camp - B Company proceeded to Messing Camp for training	Ampt.
		19 th	Captain P.H.H. Buckingham departed by air for the United Kingdom having been ordered by the War Office to return immediately	Ampt.
		25 th	A Coy. completed platoon training	ML
		27 th	Junior N.C.O.s. Run gun cadre commenced.	ML

J.H. Lawrence
ADJUTANT, 2nd Bn. THE GORDON HIGHLANDERS

(4/3/72) W1 W225/P56 606/01 12/17 U. D. & L. Sch. 22a. Form C2118/3.

Figure 2 - The War Diary of the Gordon Highlanders

The form number (C2118) is given at the top right of the sheet. The columns are headed 'Place', 'Date', 'Hour', 'Summary of Events and Information' and 'Remarks and References to Appendices'.

¹²⁶ Nelson, 2012. p29.

¹²⁷ According to the Japanese Army Regulations for Handling Prisoners of War Article 11, each unit capturing prisoners was to prepare a roster containing the name, age, rank, home address, unit and place and date of wounding, a prisoner of war diary and an inventory of artefacts confiscated or held in deposit. (Bartlett-Kerr, 1985. p336.)

¹²⁸ Farrell, 2015, pp 471-472.

Army Form C. 2118
 Instructions regarding War Diaries and Intelligence Summaries are contained in the Staff Manual respectively and will be prepared in manuscript.

20th ECHELON
 9 JAN 1942

Sheet I WAR DIARY
 or
 INTELLIGENCE-SUMMARY
 (Erase heading not required)

December 1941

Summary of Events and Information

Place	Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information	Remarks and references to Appendices
CHANGI	1		Message services received. This means Deployment of Battalion. Beach Defences D1 day second D-1 Day for Battalion. Zero hour fixed for 1300. Bn ordered to supply guard of 181 for RAF establishment. Bukit CHUNANG to proceed in RAF Water Transport at 0900 hrs second.	WR
CHANGI	2	0440	Deployment of Bn commences in accordance with Defense Scheme. Time Table.	WR
PENGERANG		1210	B. H.Q. opened at PENGERANG.	WR
		1600	Deployment of Bn completed.	WR
		1725	All leave in Malaya cancelled unless on exchange.	WR
	4		Compassionate Grants instructions received that fences be erected on all sides of minefields except rearwards. Additional wire to be placed between double apron fences to complete to triple inverted concertina. Mine high wire obstacle to be laid in the sea.	WR

Figure 3 - The War Diary of the Gordon Highlanders for 1st – 4th December 1941.

This is a considerably more detailed entry. This copy has been dispatched from Changi (Selarang Barracks) and has, according to the stamp, arrived at the second echelon on 9th Jan 1942.

As to whether the diaries provide an accurate record of events remains debateable, but it must be remembered that the diary could be used to assess the performance of the unit. It is noticeable in some of the diaries considered in this study that there are several occasions where additions to the entries have been written which have clarified or enhanced previous comments or supported ongoing agendas within the command hierarchy.

Lids are hard to get on, and a large amount of time is spent as a result.

21.10.40. Singapore Force "EMU" ceased to exist. This Bn., 5/2 PUNJAB and 4/19 HYRAD now constitute 12th Indian Inf. Bde., and other Units of EMU now have nothing to do with 12 Ind. Inf. Bde.

25.10.40. Singapore 49 men of last Draft who are Reservists and more or less trained men were posted to Rixia Coy. for duty.

26.10.40. Singapore C.O. wrote a letter to HQ. 12 Ind. Inf. Bde. re Tank Hunting.

0930hrs 30.10.40. Singapore C.O. attended a Conference at 12 Bde. HQ. to discuss the formation and training of Tank Hunting Teams in Bns.

Appx "A" (No. 93/S/17/3)
 Appx "H"

CONT. 8.4/

Figure 4 - The war diary for the A&SH for October 1940.

This has been retrospectively annotated with an extra entry that states the CO, Lt Col Stewart, had sent a letter to the HQ of the 12th Infantry Brigade reference 'tank hunting,' with a copy being attached as Appendix A.

John Keegan (1976) writing about warfare on the Somme in 1916 provides a judicious word of warning when depending on a War Diary for research material. He confirms that the principal source of a unit's history is the war diary yet at times the contents may be sketchy and during conflict the reporting may run for days in arrears only to be written up later '*for form's sake from a single second-hand, memory of events.*'¹²⁹

3.3 Regional Guidelines and Tactical Notes.

Among the tasks allotted to the Adjutant was the procurement, distribution and utilisation of training pamphlets and instruction booklets. Regional variation to standard operating procedures for the military can be traced through the production of theatre specific guidelines. Unfortunately, at the start of the Malayan Campaign there was little local guidance for combat troops and even less for the resultant administrative functions. Therefore, troops arriving in Singapore had to simply do the best they could with systems and measures designed for conflict in Northwest Europe and adapt the procedure to local conditions as they saw fit. Jungle training was notoriously absent for many units but those commanders who insisted on taking their men up country, were able to submit exercise reports to their higher echelons which ultimately resulted in changes to the training doctrine and the publication of accompanying pamphlets.¹³⁰

However, the existing manuals were, according to Major Angus Rose of the A&SH

*...pompous, heavy, often platitudinous and otherwise equivocal.*¹³¹

He concluded that if anybody had the persistence to read the booklets, they could interpret them in any way they liked and therefore each reader had a completely different tactical appreciation of the subject or else no knowledge at all.

The arrival of allied reinforcements into Singapore hastened the issue of a pamphlet entitled '*Tactical Notes for Malaya 1940*'. This publication, written by Lt Gen Lionel Bond of GOC Malaya Command, was greatly influenced by the training being undertaken by the A&SH and the 12th Indian Brigade under the guidance of Lt Col Stewart, although

¹²⁹ Keegan, 1976. p262.

¹³⁰ Moreman, 2005. p18.

¹³¹ Rose, 2017. p46.

certain sections harked back to pamphlets issued in pre-war years for military operations in East Africa.¹³²

Other pamphlets issued by the Indian Army also arrived in theatre. The authors of *MTP No.9 (India) Extensive Warfare: Notes on Forest Warfare* encouraged aggressive patrolling by mobile infantry columns operating from well defended and well sited supply bases that could be resupplied by air or with highly trained porters. This proved to be more akin to future operations undertaken by the Chindits (77th Indian Infantry Brigade) in Burma in the latter years of the war than the defensive line mentality employed in Malaya and there is doubt as to whether these pamphlets were ever distributed to any effect among the British units in Malaya.¹³³ Certainly, there is no evidence that the strategic use of long-range patrols working deep behind enemy lines and supplied by air and mule was ever contemplated by Malaya Command as a viable option in the forthcoming campaign.

Otherwise, regional alterations to army regulations were often evolved through trial and error during time spent in theatre. Garrison troops, posted to the region for many months preceding the outbreak of hostilities, had an advantage over the later reinforcement in that they had adapted army regulations to cope with regional conditions. Uniform regulations, working hours, medical procedures, food, and hygiene directives had all been adjusted to meet local working environments. The ‘by the book’ procedures adopted by the reinforcements on arrival sometimes proved the undoing of the unit and the experienced NCOs from the garrison battalions were temporarily assigned to the new units to help them acclimatise to the Singapore way of doing things in quick time.¹³⁴

3.4 Battalion Muster Rolls and the BRE

The Muster Roll has been in use since the creation of the British Army and those records found in the U.K.’s National Archives go back as far as 1760 for many of the infantry regiments. Each battalion would be expected to raise and update a roll on a regular basis, and these were then utilised by the pay office, medics, catering, and disciplinary bodies to monitor the service life of the individual during his time with the unit.¹³⁵

¹³² Moreman, 2005, pp17 - 18.

¹³³ *Ibid.*, p19.

¹³⁴ *Ibid.*, p20.

¹³⁵ Spencer, 2008. p48.

The movement of over 52,000 allied troops into the abandoned military camps and gaol on the Changi peninsula proved to be an administrative conundrum. Many units had followed their instructions and burnt their Muster Roll or hid them away for retrieval at the end of their captivity.¹³⁶ However, it was quickly realised that to maintain health and welfare of the troops, the administrators would need an accurate list of men held in the camp. This was particularly important when it came to agreeing food allowances and constructing more permanent accommodation.

Captain David Nelson, an engineering officer in the Singapore Volunteers Force and former civil servant, was asked to take on the administration task. He selected a small team of trusted and efficient bookkeepers and set about tackling the problem of creating a database of the camp population. They called themselves the Bureau of Record and Enquiry (BRE), a suitably understated title that would deter further investigation by the IJA authorities.¹³⁷

The task of raising the records was made even more difficult by the constant arrival of other POWs from Java and Sumatra and the seemingly spontaneous creation of work parties that were sent into town. The IJA insisted on moving personnel between camps without documenting the transfer or demanding the POWs took with them their own personal registration card, effectively leaving no indication of their existence in their previous camp. This meant that any man lost in transit would simply disappear without trace.¹³⁸ Problems were compounded when men sent to workcamps along the Thai Burma Railway were unable to establish a reciprocal administration function which meant the Changi office was effectively the only unit tracking the movement of POWs across Southeast Asia and were totally dependent on survivors returning to Changi and being able to update the lists.¹³⁹

The first thing Nelson required was a nominal roll of every man in theatre as of the commencement of hostilities on 8th December 1941. A directive, endorsed by Senior Executive Officer at the Headquarters Malaya command, was sent out to all commanding

¹³⁶ Coast, 2014. p7.

¹³⁷ Nelson, 2012. p32.

¹³⁸ *Ibid.*, p32.

¹³⁹ Japanese army established a POW information bureau in December 1941 followed by a POW Management Division in March 1942, however they had little authority over regional military commanders. Much of the POW card index was later lost in allied bombing raids on Japan (Sturma, 2019. p13.)

officers drawing attention to the proposals and requesting their co-operation in creating the lists and adding particulars of every casualty, secondments, movements etc. up to the date they handed in the roll to the Bureau.¹⁴⁰

To ensure that the units conformed to a specific layout, Nelson sent out a template and enough paper, cut from targets acquired from a local firing range. Each table would consist of details of regimental number, rank, name, initials, and next of kin details. The right-hand column was to be left blank for the inclusion of agreed abbreviations and dates which would detail any further movement in and out of Changi. All details about deaths, secondments, and other pertinent comments on the fate of individuals were to be added to the back of each sheet. All rolls were to be raised in duplicate.¹⁴¹

The initiative was met with general enthusiasm, but some units deferred the task for more important affairs and were later reminded of their duty. None the less, a steady flow of returns was received into the office and one by one they were copied and returned to their unit. Each copy was then bound with a brown paper or target card cover and the unit title carefully printed on the front. Each unit was given a reference number and the file stored in a green kit locker. Duplicates were kept in remote hides around the camp and were to be updated on a regular basis as individuals were posted out or returned to the unit. Two 40-gallon drums were kept at hand adjacent to the local air raid trenches alongside a supply of pitch. Should the bureau be raided or moved at short notice the copies of the records were to be loaded into the barrels which were then sealed with the pitch before being buried in the slit trenches.¹⁴²

Updating the records was originally left to the nominated unit representatives, however there was a mixed degree of enthusiasm for this and there was varied success in keeping the records current. The initial lack of paper, stationery and typewriters held by the battalion adjutants compounded the issues. Eventually the BRE took it upon themselves to interview returning POWs and update the records. Units passing through Changi *enroute* from Java to Thailand were encouraged to leave records in hiding before heading to the

¹⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, p31.

¹⁴¹ *Ibid.*, p31.

¹⁴² *Ibid.*, p34.

railcars. Weary Dunlop agreed with the idea for his Java party but demanded the use of typewriters and typists to ensure copies of ‘essentials’ could be taken with him ¹⁴³

Initially records were compiled in secret as it was feared the IJA authorities would not look favourably on any organised administration function, particularly considering their orders to hand in any such documents at the time of surrender had been, on the whole, ignored.¹⁴⁴ It was generally accepted that Japanese guards would not be interested in the activity of the BRE but the officers were carefully watched and any unannounced visits were preceded by a suitable alarm allowing the more controversial records to be hidden away. However, as the records were being put to good use addressing camp administration issues, the Japanese authorities once aware of the operation, decided to turn a blind eye to the data gathering.¹⁴⁵



Figure 5 – Murray Griffin’s sketch of the Education Centre at Changi dated 8th February 1943.

This image illustrates the amount of stationery and office equipment obtained by the POWs in the first year of captivity. (AWM ART26486)

¹⁴³ Dunlop, 1990. p146.

¹⁴⁴ Tsuji, 2007. p200.

¹⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, p32. Japanese Army Regulations for Handling Prisoners of War states in Article 12 that the Japanese were required to prepare a roster containing the name, age, rank, home address, home unit and place and date of wounding, a prisoner of war diary and inventories of articles gathered during the search. (Bartlett-Kerr, 1985. p336).

The Bureau's efforts resulted in the compilation of the most accurate record of POW movements in the theatre. In doing so they considerably assisted the smooth running of the Changi POW camp. They also provided the yardstick by which the tragedy along the Thai Burma Railway could be measured and the war crimes committed by IJA personnel could be reckoned. However, much to Nelson's regret, the British Army records were not put to any great use immediately at the time of the Japanese surrender. There was a great reluctance by the authorities to believe the records were accurate. Ultimately many of the files for the British units were despatched to the South-East Asian Command (SEAC) in Kandy, Ceylon, where they were misinterpreted and misused. Nelson and his team were awarded no credit for their three years of work. Ironically, the records were eventually 'lost' in filing by the SEAC administration.¹⁴⁶

In 2011, researchers looking for material on FEPOWs in the National Archives at Kew came across files that resembled those described by Nelson in his personal diary and identified them as the missing collection. This included the rolls for the Scottish regiments in Singapore. The work Nelson and his Bureau undertook can now be carefully considered and credit duly given.¹⁴⁷

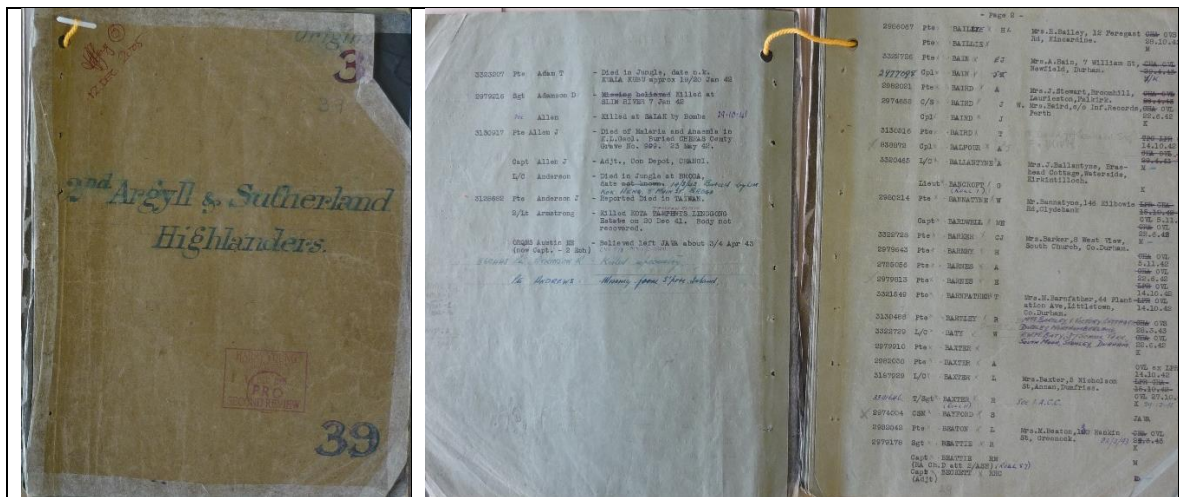


Figure 6 a and b - The BRE Muster Roll for the 2nd Battalion of the A&SH.

This document is now held in the National Archives in Kew showing the original cover and the page layout as prescribed by Capt Nelson and the BRE team.

¹⁴⁶ Nelson, 2012. p193.

¹⁴⁷ van der Klugt, 2011. The BRE material is held under the file reference WO/361. There are 2,279 files held under this reference which is entitled 'War Office: Department of the Permanent Under Secretary of State: Casualties (L) Branch: Enquiries into Missing Personnel, 1939-45 War' but not all relate to Singapore.

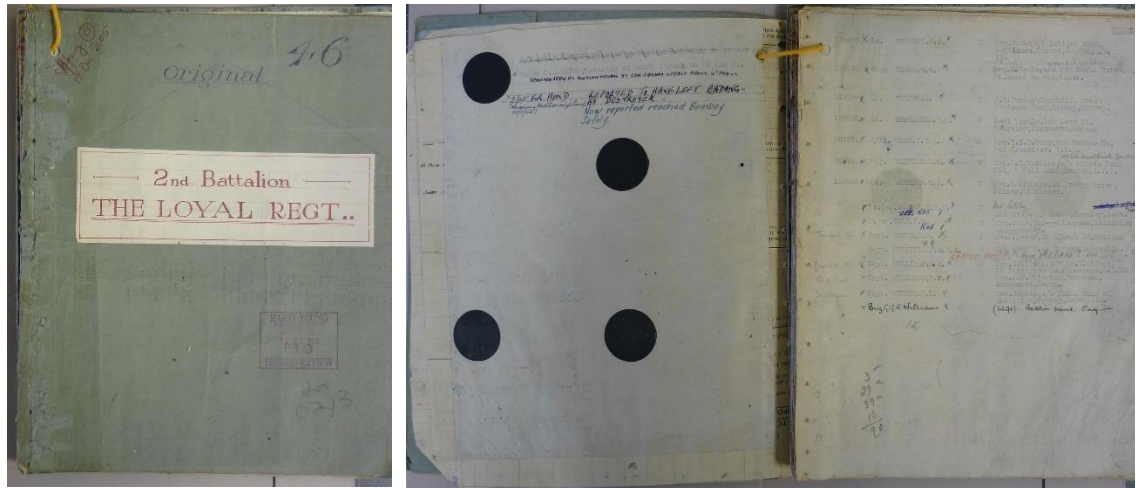


Figure 7 a and b – The BRE Muster Roll for the 2nd Battalion of the Loyal Regiment.
This document is typed onto the original target paper acquired by the BRE.

Service Number	Rank	Surname	Initials	Page	Address	Notes
3132838	Pte	CLARK		Page 7	7 WENLOCK ST, HULL, YORK	
3322698	L/C	CLARK	X B		Mr. B. Clark, 15 Blackness St, Dundee.	LPR CHA 15/10/42
2979630	Pte	CLARK	X J		9. Clarence St., Paisley, Scotland.	OVL 27.10.42 PAL
	L/C	CLARKE			Doncaster	M
2979730	Pte	CLARKE	X F			CHA OVL 28.6.42
2983517	Pte	CLARKE	X M		Mr. Clarke, 119 Greenfield St., HULL	LPR CHA Died 5.10.42
2979160	Pte	CLARKE	X R.J.			OVL 28.4.43 CHA OVL?
3322699	Pte	CLARKSON	X GR		560, Keppochhill Rd., Springburn, Glasgow.	PAL
3322763	Pte	CLASPER	X H		Mrs. Clasper, 1 Ferry Boat Rd, S. Milton, Sunderland.	LPR CHA 15.10.42
2979795	Ppr	CLEMENT	X J		Mrs. Clement, 49 Castle	OVL 5.11.42 LPR CHA

Figure 8 - Close up of a page for the A&SH Muster Rolls.

The updates to the right-hand column reflecting the movement of individuals around the camps. Standard abbreviations were specified by the BRE.

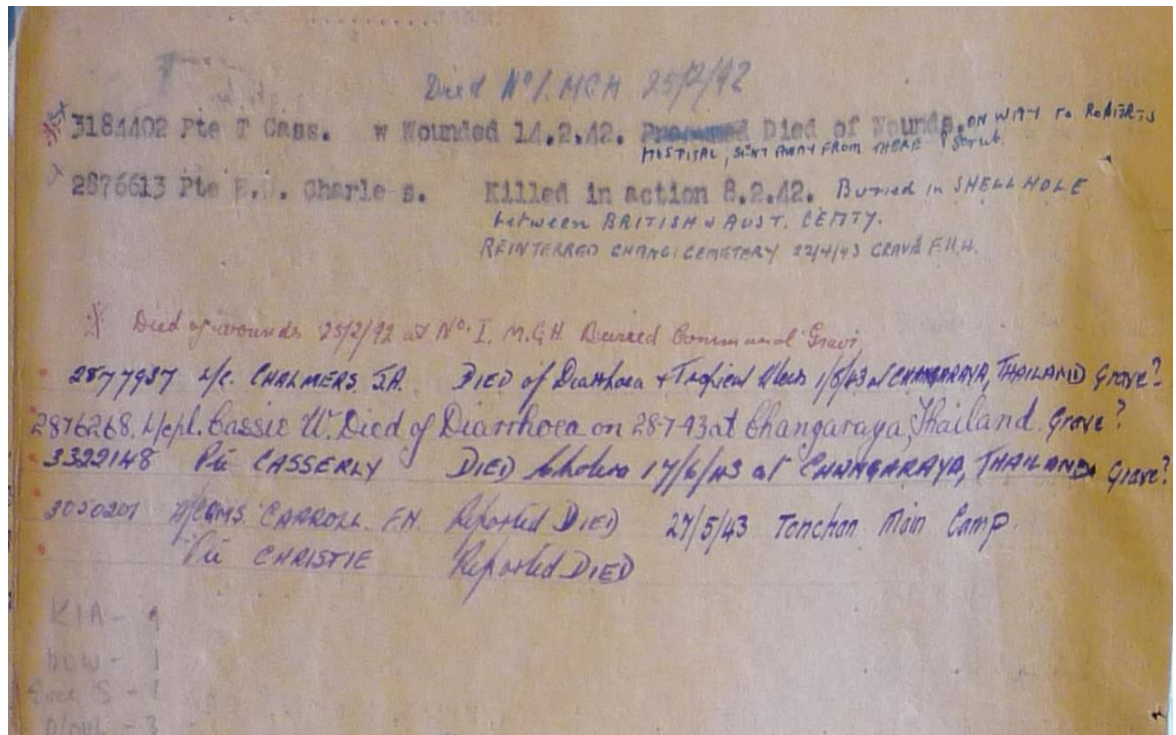


Figure 9 – The detail of the reverse side of a page of the roll for the Gordon Highlanders.

This list shows the casualties sustained during the campaign typed at the top of the page. Details are taken from the 'Burial Record Card' raised by the burial party. This includes specifics of date of death, location of death, nature of death and location of grave. Sometimes the locations are given as 6 figure OS map references. Details of subsequent deaths while in imprisonment and new information has been written in later.

Once the BRE staff updated their records, the master copy of the Muster Roll was handed back to the battalion representative to care for and update. Remarkably both the books for the A&SH and Gordon Highlanders survived the war and have been preserved by their respective regimental museums.

Stewart Mitchell (2012), in the forward to his book on the history of the Gordons in the Far East, states that the Muster Book was originally raised by the battalion administration staff in Selarang Barracks around 1940. It lists in alphabetical order every officer and enlisted man together with information on their rank, next of kin and transfers. Later during the fighting new notes were added detailing the battalion casualties. Subsequently after the surrender, the book was entrusted to Sgt Archibald 'Dick' Pallant who continued to annotate the entries with the details of the POW movements and deaths for the captivity.

Mitchell goes on to relate how Pallant managed to maintain the record throughout his internment and suggests that the keeping of such books was prohibited by the Japanese stating that they were opposed to the upkeep of records, including personal diaries, and the

Nominal Roll would have had to be kept secret. Pallant assumed responsibility for the Roll and hid the book in his bedding. Pallant was helped in his task by CSM Angus Collie who kept hold of the book after the two had been moved to the Thai Burma Railway. Collie was also one of the team who provided Pallant with updates as news came in from other camps as to the wellbeing of their fellow Gordon Highlanders.¹⁴⁸

Mitchell concludes his narrative by adding that the book was handed over to Colonel Stitt for safekeeping as the end of the war approached. Then, at the time of the Japanese surrender, Stitt had taken Collie to the war cemetery at Kanchanaburi where they recovered much of the battalion paperwork hidden in jars and bottles and buried alongside the POW dead. Pallant was later cited in recognition of ‘*gallant and distinguished services*’ after the war.¹⁴⁹

Likewise, the Muster Roll for the A&SH also made it home to the regimental museum archives. Inside the front cover is a typed account of the remarkable narrative behind its journey up onto the Thai Burma Railway. The account is written by QSM G Aitken and dated 24th September 1946. Aitken opens by stating that this book had also been raised before the fall of Singapore and had been left in the 2nd Echelon HQ at the time of surrender. According to Aitken the Japanese had demanded that all documentation was to be gathered in one central location and that all the clerks would be searched before marching off to Changi. In his words ‘*Anyone found in possession of official documents would be treated with measures of severity*’.¹⁵⁰

¹⁴⁸ Mitchell, 2012. p2.

¹⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, p3.

¹⁵⁰ The A&SH Muster Roll inside front cover. Stewart, 1947. App V. pp142 – 143.

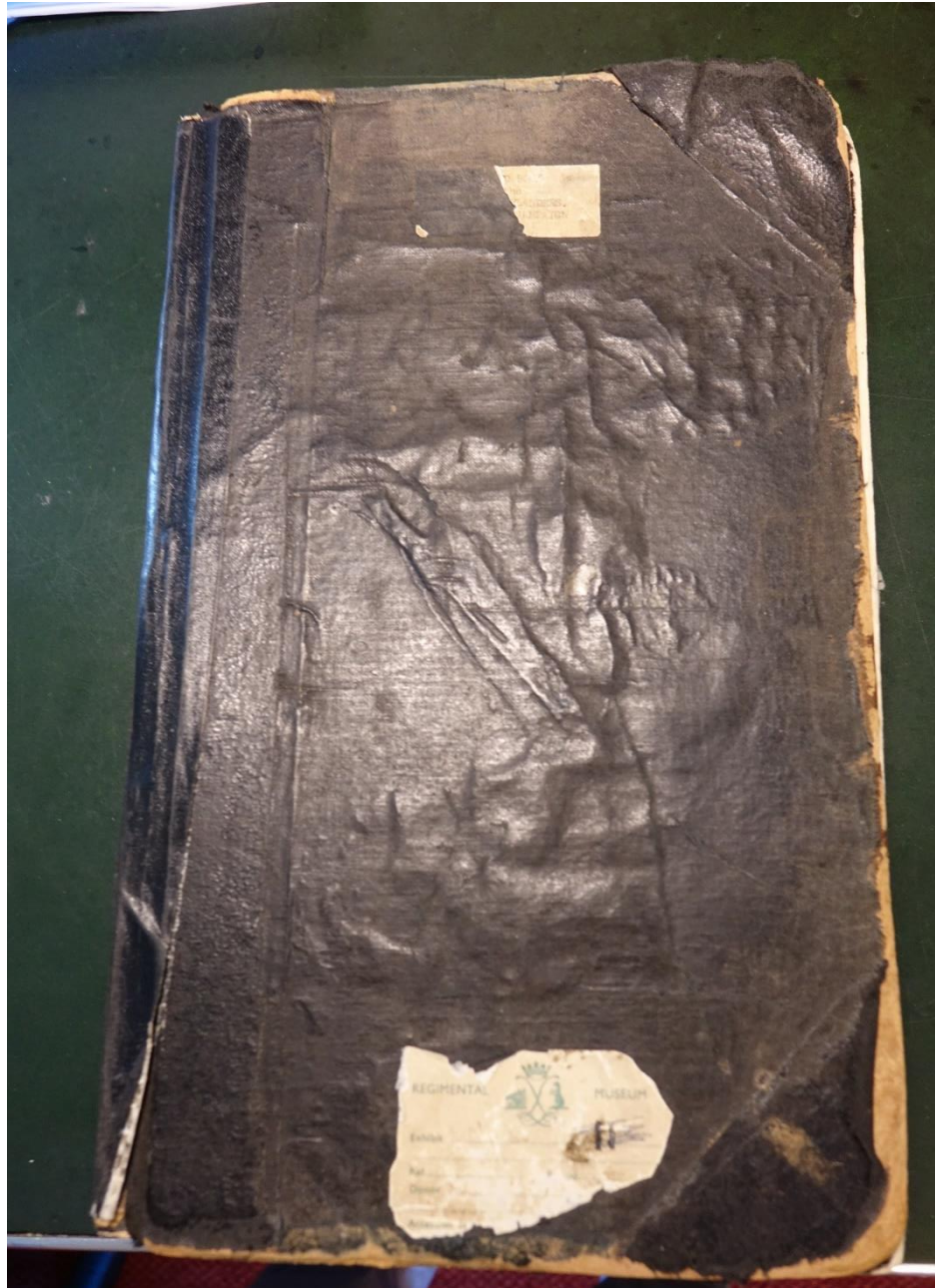


Figure 10 - The A&SH Roll Book

In April 1942, two months after the move to Changi, Aitken decided to retrieve the document as this was the only accurate record of the roll and he felt it was his duty to recover the book and keep it up to date as far as possible. Aitken returned with other members of Malaya Command who were on a hunt for stationery for the POW camp and found the book where he had left it, apparently untouched by the apathetic Japanese.

Aitken admits that there was ‘*very little done during the period 15th Feb 42 to 22nd June 42 owing to lack of information*’. However, Aitken notes that on the 22nd June, he and 100 men of the A&SH under Major Hyslop were moved as part of a 600 strong work party to

Banpong in Thailand before eventually moving on to No.2 Camp in Siam.¹⁵¹ Later, another 160 Argylls under Captain Boyle arrived from Kuala Lumpur into a camp nearby and Aitken took it upon himself to meet with CSM McTavish to find out what had happened to them in Pudu and update the roll accordingly.

In late November Aitken was also sent up from Banpong to No.2 Camp where he started to produce nominal rolls in various categories for the officers to comment on before updating the master copy. C/Sgt Baird facilitated this task by keeping Aitken off work parties so he could maintain his health and keep the administration function working.

Aitken travelled between camps when he could, taking the book with him and updating it as he spoke to various officers and SNCO's he found on his travels. It was not until the middle of February 1945, as the war was ending, that the Japanese authorities started to '*tighten things up considerably*'. Rumours spread that the officers and men were to be separated and:

*'Any person found with such things as paper, pencils etc. were usually subjected to some form of punishment.'*¹⁵²

Aitken agreed with Capt Slessor that the book would be safer with the officer's party. Aitken was proved correct as he was soon sent on to Chienmai and underwent several searches at which point the book would have been undoubtedly confiscated.

Not that Aitken got away without any punishment for his work. He notes that on two occasions he was caught, and the book seized, after searches of the POW accommodation in No2 Camp. The first occasion only warranted a few kicks on the shins and slaps across the face, however on the second arrest Aitken was made to stand outside the guardroom for 24 hours with the book balanced on his head. On both instances the book was returned to him on the cessation of the punishment suggesting someone in the Japanese chain of command recognised the importance of keeping such a record or felt that the book posed no threat to the running of the camp.

¹⁵¹ Nelson, 2012. p206.

¹⁵² Stewart, 1947. pp142 – 143.

*'I had visions of losing the book but was eventually dismissed WITH [his capitalisation] the book and a boot to help me on my way.'*¹⁵³

In his conclusion, Aitken thanks all those men who were involved in the compilation and security of the book and re-iterates the threat of severe punishment for 'any man for carrying scraps of information.'

Aitken's time outside the guard room with the book perched on his head is shocking, but it is not out of place among all the other barrack room justice handed out to POWs for many minor infringements. The fact that the book was returned to him suggests that it was not the upkeep of the records that was at fault but that he had made the effort to hide the book during a search.

Likewise, since Aitken returned to the Command HQ two months after the capture and recovered the A&SH Muster Roll from the same location where he had left it suggests there was little interest by the Japanese in the recovery of such information and no systematic search had taken place. It must be also noted Aitken was allowed into the building as part of an official work party looking for stationery to run the administration function at Changi.

Nelson attests that the work of the BRE was tolerated and later encouraged by the Japanese authorities as a means to assisting in the running of the camp and the logistics of sending men out on the work parties. In his postscript, he personally thanks several Japanese guards and officers for their '*courtesy, tolerance and understanding*' in sourcing materials and facilitating the running of the BRE.¹⁵⁴

However, there are numerous comments in the memoirs of FEPOWs on the perceived risk of keeping personal diaries, paperwork, and otherwise illegal written material into which the Muster Rolls were considered as qualifying. Many recall the great effort that was made to hide such documents, as witnessed by Cassie and the recovery of the Gordon's paperwork from the graveyards of Kanchanaburi.¹⁵⁵ For example, a muster roll of the men held at Pudu Gaol was at one point transcribed onto toilet paper in such small print that it could only be read under a magnifying glass, for it to be hidden easily and transported

¹⁵³ *Ibid.*, p143. Capitals appear in the primary source.

¹⁵⁴ Nelson, 2012. pp194 - 195.

¹⁵⁵ Mitchell, 2012. p2.

without detection back to Changi.¹⁵⁶ Successful subversive operations of this nature would undoubtedly raise the morale of the team undertaking the task and warrant recognition in any post war recollections as evidence of passive resistance.

There was another good reason for destroying all military paperwork before capture. The Australian prisoner, Russell Braddon suggested that the ‘good’ POW would discard all military paperwork that may attract the attention of the Japanese and pretend to be a cook or a stretcher bearer and thereby ensuring a safe transfer into captivity.¹⁵⁷

Why are there so few incidents of FEPOWs being court-martialled for keeping such records or conveying such information? Maybe the FEPOWs were particularly good at hiding the material away. Alternatively, it could be that the Japanese guards were not so adept or enthusiastic about looking for the material and those incidents that were reported to the higher authorities were met with indifference or a tacit understanding of the benefit of such work.¹⁵⁸ No matter the reason, the retention and upkeep of such files in the face of the apparent threat of punishment was seen by the Allied authorities and latterly the public, as being worthy of commendation after the war.

The greater threat to the safety of the muster rolls was the living conditions and logistics experienced on the work parties. Heavy ledgers were difficult to transport between camps in marching columns, paper rotted away in the humidity or became waterlogged in the constant fight against floods and tropical downpours. Nelson recalls the ‘*Selerang Signature Book*’ in which the FEPOWs signed their compliance to the no escape clause was lost up in Thailand when the custodian fell into a river and his pack was washed away. Other books that were placed into hiding were simply never recovered or rotted in storage. It is therefore likely that paperwork was hidden not only to thwart the Japanese guards but also as the best means of preserving material for future recovery.

¹⁵⁶ Nelson, 2012., p53.

¹⁵⁷ Braddon, 1953. p158.

¹⁵⁸ Major Coombes of the 137th Field Artillery recalls that as the POWs arrived at Banpong they were searched for the first time since arriving in captivity and diaries were confiscated. However, he goes on to note that the Japanese issued an order that stated that any new diaries were to be handed in to the authorities where they would be checked and then ‘chopped’ to say they had passed the censor or disposed of. Any diaries subsequently found that had not been checked would be subject to ‘*serious disciplinary action – death if necessary*’ (Coombes, 1948. p17).

3.5 Destruction, Retention and Regeneration of Documentation

When it comes to quantifying and qualifying the remaining paperwork to be found in the archives which have survived the fall of Singapore, it must be remembered that this surrender was unique in the annals of British military history. Both the victors and the vanquished had relatively free access to the battlefield after the surrender. Whereas in other defeats, British troops had been evacuated, retreated, or taken off to imprisonment in other countries, the Allied forces in Singapore were housed on or near the battlefield and allowed to wander the landscape both in official and unofficial capacities with relative ease for many months after the surrender. This facilitated the search for the missing, the burying of their dead, the limited recovery of equipment and the chance to recover hidden documentation.

Circumstances at the time of surrender, when the order for the destruction of material came into effect, were hardly conducive to the effective disposal of paperwork.¹⁵⁹ Front line adjutants, restricted to their dugouts or command posts by the fear of being shot despite the ceasefire, set about building bonfires of papers, fuelled by petrol from abandoned vehicles, in the bottom of their defences or in the shattered remains of the HQ.¹⁶⁰ Other units buried the documents in slit trenches or hid them in attics and cellars. In some cases, units were simply overrun by the advancing Japanese who walked into command centres and HQ's and rounded up staff at the point of bayonet before anyone had time to set a match to the documents. As we have seen with Aitken and the A&SH Muster Roll, some units were directed by the Japanese guards to place all documents in a single location and then searched as they left the site. Other units simply walked off to pre-arranged rendezvous points without giving two thoughts to the destruction of classified material.¹⁶¹

Once the camp had been established and it was clear there would be little interference from the Japanese authorities, many battalion adjutants and clerical staff set about rewriting the lost records. For example, Lt Col Carpenter of the 1st Cambridgeshires tasked his adjutant, Capt Hill, with the job of recreating the battalion diary for the period of the fighting in Singapore. Not only did Carpenter write up his version of events but he also handed out

¹⁵⁹ Miles, 1961. p103. The Gordon's battalion paperwork was being kept at Birdwood Camp on the Changi peninsula and was destroyed in a bombing raid on 8th February.

¹⁶⁰ McEwan, 1997. p70. McEwan states that the destruction of paperwork at the Sime Road Command centre began on 9th February. Paperwork was doused in caustic soda as it was thrown into a pit. McEwan suggests bonfires would arouse panic and anxiety.

¹⁶¹ Urquhart, 2010. p92.

paper to his company and HQ platoon commanders to ensure their recollections were captured as well.¹⁶² Sgt Stanley Moore, 1st Cambridgeshires, who had been seriously wounded in the fighting was assigned to the administration office to help his recuperation and assisted in the compilation of the battalion roll for the BRE with QMS Tucker.¹⁶³ Other officers were recalled from work parties or excused fatigues; Capt Fred Stahl, 8 Division Signals AIF, adjutant at Adam Park POW Work Camp was transferred back to Changi to help compile his own battalion's records.¹⁶⁴

Various officers and men also took this lull in proceedings and growing availability of stationery as an opportunity to write up their own memoirs of the campaign. The more senior officers would share these with their command. Daily orders were supplemented with parting letters from various commanders as they were despatched on work parties. The departure from Changi of every officer above the rank of Lieutenant Colonel on 16th August 1942 was preceded by a plethora of farewell statements from the senior staff.¹⁶⁵ Typed up and copied using carbon paper, facsimiles of texts were handed down to the battalion commanders to be posted on notice boards or read out at roll calls. It was a foretaste of the conditions that prevailed throughout much of the time in Changi where the regular issue of orders and directives was commonplace.¹⁶⁶

The destruction of paperwork at the time of the surrender was far from comprehensive. Documents were not only destroyed, but also abandoned, hidden, and smuggled into Changi. The unique circumstance of the surrender allowed for the subsequent retrieval of many documents and the process of regenerating paperwork commenced as soon as the adjutant offices were re-established in the new prison camps. Although the conditions under which the new teams worked were far from ideal, they did have the opportunity and know how to generate new documents. Any shortfall in texts were soon made up by retrospective consolidation. So where does this idea of their being a dearth of paperwork come from?¹⁶⁷

¹⁶² *1st Battalion Cambridgeshire Regiment War Diary 1st Feb 1942 – 15th Feb 1942*. Cambridge Archives 1942

¹⁶³ Moore, 1988. p105.

¹⁶⁴ Cooper, 2016. p237.

¹⁶⁵ Nelson, 2012. p39.

¹⁶⁶ Havers, 2003. p10.

¹⁶⁷ Parkes & Gill, 2015. p12.

3.6 Missing Paperwork

The end of the war and the release of the POWs from Changi hastened the recovery of hidden caches of documents and the despatch of trunk loads of paperwork back to the official archives. However, their importance was somewhat overshadowed by the fact the war had ended.

Nelson states that by Wednesday 5th September [1945] he was busy working on the records and answering queries, he had no time to write up this diary. He claimed that he was still a ‘prisoner’, but not of the Japanese; but at the beck and call of the RAPWI (Repatriation of Allied Prisoners of War and Internees.)’

His frustration and weariness are palpable.

‘We still are not able to get any army or RAPWI officer to take over the duplicates of our records. No one wants to be bothered with them – some day they will wake up perhaps.’¹⁶⁸

Nelson’s BRE was shutdown prematurely by the camp commander, to give the administrators a break and to encourage RAPWI to source their own staff to take over the record keeping. Nelson however could not rest; he went over to the civilian internee camp at Sime Road and took with him all the civilian records for dissemination. He remained in the camp all day, answering internees’ queries as to missing friends and relations. He noted that he knew most of the answers off by heart.¹⁶⁹

At the end of the war, the BRE set about making duplicates of all their records before sending a copy to various commands around the world. Naval records, including details of shipping movements was sent to the Admiralty in the UK. Army records went to Kandy in Ceylon under the care of Major-General MacClean for use by RAPWI. Casualty records were also despatched to Kandy and passed to Colonel Foster Hall for use by the War Grave Commission. The Royal Air Force records were sent to the Air Ministry in London and the Netherland Records were sent to a senior RNA officer in the camp during handover. Australian records were also handed over to regional authorities in the SE Asia Command

¹⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, p185.

¹⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, p186.

and civilian records returned to the incoming civil service in Singapore.¹⁷⁰ Nelson heard nothing more of the fate of the BRE's paperwork and concluded that they were not made good use of. None of the BRE staff were ever commended for their 3 1/2 years of work.¹⁷¹

As for those few remaining documents scattered amongst the pitiful remains of administration offices in the Far East, there was little official thought or effort given towards the return of documents to Singapore. It was very much down to the individual custodians to make the effort to recover the items from their hiding places and to ensure their safe return to the suitable unit HQ's. As we have seen, the Muster Rolls for the Gordons and the A&SH did make it back to the UK but many more remained hidden and lost.

Surviving individual diaries and accounts were taken home by their owners. Weary Dunlop, after being held on the Thai Burma Railroad, made sure his collection of small black notebooks and a pile of Japanese exercise books in which he had written his diary were taken back to Australia. He concurs that much of the content was repetitive as it included details of illness and the statistics relating to '*men, rations and finances and the sick*'. He also notes the diaries included '*numerous letters and reports written for our captors*' again suggesting the Japanese were compliant in the production of administrative paperwork.¹⁷²

Other officers were asked to write reports on their experiences as they awaited repatriation. Colonel Toosey had by the end of the war been separated from his own 135th Field Regt RA and his adopted wards, the men of A&SH and the Gordons, who had been split up from their officers and moved to Ubon Camp. Toosey recalls heading back to Ubon to find the camp in fine order and the men in relatively good health.¹⁷³ They had been commanded in the absence of officers, by CSM McTavish of the A&SH.¹⁷⁴ Toosey stayed with the men for a few weeks arranging their repatriation and, anxious to get his men home as soon as he could, went to see the RAPWI in Bangkok about the delays. He was met by Lt Col Clague

¹⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, pp192 – 193.

¹⁷¹ Nelson adds that the BRE office also handled over 2,150,000 letters during the time in Changi. Much of those letters sent on to the POW information bureau in Tokyo who were not sufficiently well informed to move them on to their intended recipient (Nelson, 2015. p193).

¹⁷² Dunlop, 1990. p382.

¹⁷³ Summers, 2005. p301.

¹⁷⁴ On arrival Toosey called for a parade and formerly took command of the camp from McTavish. There is a grainy picture of the parade with McTavish handing over to Toosey. Both are wearing kilts and bonnets (Summers, 2005. p298).

who listened to the predicament intently, arranged for the hastening of the repatriation and then asked Toosey to stay and narrate an account of his time in the camps starting with Sime Road in 1942. On his return to Ubon, Toosey asked others to add appendices to his report. This included a summary of the role of interpreters by Captain Boyle (A&SH), catering, logistics, medical and religious matters. The report was around 20,000 words in length and took three weeks to write.

The paperwork drifted back home, either as part of the official repatriation process or tucked up in personal kit. It was then confined to the archives or stashed into attics and, as Nelson notes, *'only a faint echo has been heard of their fate.'*¹⁷⁵

3.7 Newspaper Articles

The Scots were popular subjects for the local pre-war Singaporean papers providing more unusual stories for the daily updates on military matters. As the threat of invasion approached, the press was invited to selected public demonstrations of military prowess to reassure the public of the competency of the armed forces and the security of the city. Both Scottish infantry battalions appeared in newsreels and newspaper articles extolling the virtues and heritage of the Highland regiments. Footage and photographs appeared of bonneted soldiers enforcing civil security, preparing for war and on military exercises.

Notoriety in the press however cut both ways. The Singapore press were also quick to report on scandalous incidents involving military personnel. The columns are scattered with accounts of fatal accidents, crime, suicides and social misbehaviour by 'squaddies' on nights out in town. More formal occasions such as births, deaths and marriages associated with A&SH and Gordon Highlanders are also covered. Sporting events, especially those between interservice teams are well documented, as are the more formal occasions of King's Birthday and Armistice Day in which Scottish pipes and drums usually had some role to play.

The Japanese were also quick on the uptake as to the propaganda benefits of photographing the Scots in captivity. The Japanese high command arranged several parades soon after the fall of Singapore where the press corps filmed a progression of the Japanese dignitaries

¹⁷⁵ Nelson, 2015. p193.

along roads lined with allied prisoners.¹⁷⁶ The directors emphasised the diversity of conquered nationals by ensuring closeups of various colonial units were caught in the camera. In one sequence the entourage passes by a contingent of Scots, most likely Gordon Highlanders wearing their kilts, khaki shirts, Glengarries, and bonnets.

This was a staged production and a great deal of choreography and effort had been put into getting the men on parade in kilts. As kilts were not worn in combat, these items must have been recovered from storage sometime after capitulation either by the men or by the Japanese looking to kit out their film extras.



Figure 11 - Stills from the footage filmed by the Japanese newsreel team.

This footage has been shot during the cavalcade organised by General Yamashita soon after the fall of Singapore.

The final image shows one Scot staring directly at the camera in an act of defiance. Scottish troops wearing bonnets, glengarries and kilts have been placed in the front rank so as to enhance their importance (<https://www.nicovideo.jp/watch/sm11803071>)

3.8 Methodology for Data Gathering and Manipulation

There is little within Capt Nelson's diary to suggest that he ever considered himself an historian. The aim of the BRE was purely to provide an administration function to help run the camp for the immediate future. As the war ended Nelson expressed disappointment that the paperwork was not being put to good use to help find missing men and to hasten the return of troops to the UK. However, beyond that there is little consideration as to the importance of the documents as primary sources for the writing of the history of Changi

¹⁷⁶ Young 2013, p28. Baynes, 2013. p38. Nelson, 2012. p12.

decades later. The immediate benefit of this premise is that the BRE documentation is unburdened by the prejudices of the authors. The data has been gathered with the intention of its immediate use. No attempt has been made to manipulate it for a specific agenda or to shape a future legacy.

The extraction and study of the BRE and battalion history data that details the common characteristics of a specific social group comes under the generic title of prosopography.¹⁷⁷ Such studies have been traditionally sourced through hand-written administration records, but more and more datasets are now being raised in a digital format which not only makes them more accessible but also assists in the subsequent analysis.¹⁷⁸ The general release of database software such as Microsoft's Excel and Access applications mean that data manipulation and comparison can be carried out at a basic level with little effort.¹⁷⁹ This study will make good use of existing databases such as the list of war dead held by the Commonwealth War Graves Commission and available online. However, most of the data was transcribed from the written records held in the National Archives at Kew and the Regimental Museums.

Data gathering methodology for this thesis is shown in the following diagram:

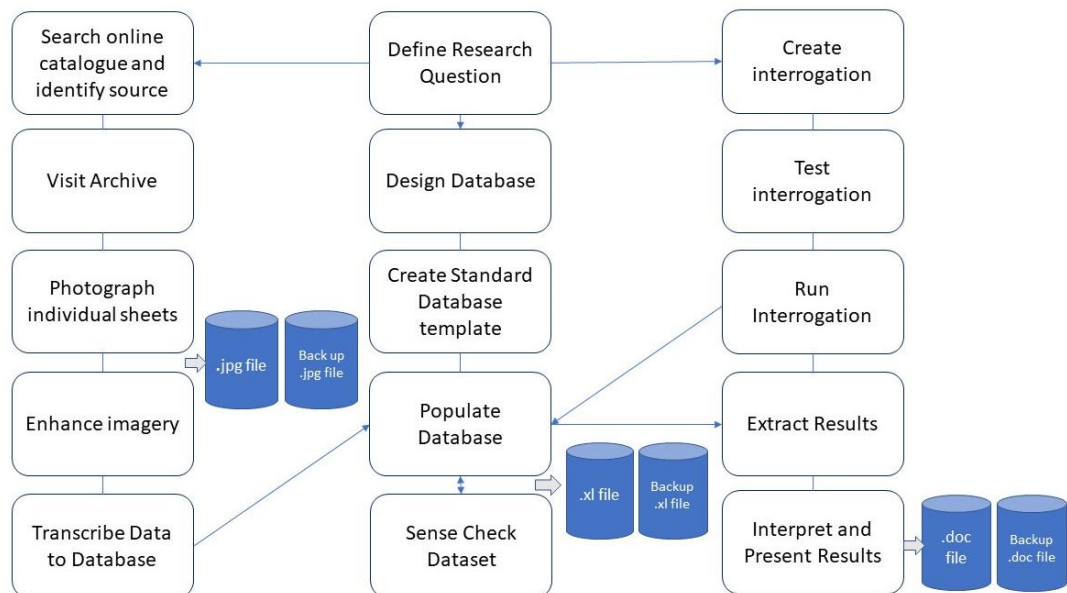


Figure 12 - Diagram showing the data gathering process for the research stage of the project.

¹⁷⁷ Keats-Rohan 2000 pp1 -3. Stone, 1971. pp 44 – 48.

¹⁷⁸ See Mitchell, 2012, Fryer, 2018. Hewitt, 2021.

¹⁷⁹ Keats-Rohan 2000 pp 6 - 7

The major hurdle for any prosopographical survey of the BRE records is the transfer of data from the documentation into the database. Whereas the CWGC data can be downloaded from their online archives as a .csv file and hence added to a database with relatively little chance of corruption, the systematic transposition of handwritten BRE record entries from a .jpg image of the original paperwork is fraught with difficulty. The repetitive nature of the transfer of a thousand entries for each battalion is time consuming and tedious. Errors can be expected and whereas auto editing functions may catch most misspellings and repetitions, the specific military terminology and prevalence of non-standard acronyms require careful uploading. It must be noted that the same could be said for the original transcription of data between documents in Changi in 1942, as clerks copied details from file to file, typing or writing each record out individually.

The data gathered can be classified into two types. Type 1 was the row / list analytical data used primarily in the BRE record databases. Each data entry was listed alphabetically by the soldier's surname and service number. Secondary data such as significant dates and ages were added in a numerical format where possible. Such data can then be quantified and subjected to statistical analysis. Straight text entries such as 'Next of Kin' details, 'Cause of Death' and 'Nature of Wounds' was added in full, adopting the terminology and abbreviations used by the originator. Count columns were added by which the auto summation function could accurately calculate the number of entries for a particular set or subset.

Type 2 data consisted of only 'full text' entries, typically extracted from the Battalion Histories and War Diaries. This complete transcription of the Type 2 data was added chronologically and then indexed by subject allowing specific topics of interest to be extracted with ease.

The consistent use of standard military data formats across the various documents, such as 'name, rank and number', ensured the right individual could be identified within the unit. Military terminology and abbreviations had been used throughout the original BRE Rolls often without explanation. New acronyms, specific to the prevailing circumstances, such as the names of tropical diseases or local POW camp names, had been defined in the accompanying BRE instructions, but these lists had a limited distribution and were soon

abandoned and lost as the clerks became experienced in processing the paperwork.¹⁸⁰ Fortunately, many of these colloquial terms can be identified through careful comparison of secondary sources and individual biographies. For example, whereas the abbreviation ‘CHA’ can easily be reconciled with ‘Changi’, the use of ‘LPR’ to indicate the Pudu POW camp only becomes self-evident when it is known that the prison is in Kuala Lumpur. In contrast, the adherence to military formats and standard phrases helped to fill in data that had been misspelt, were indecipherable, or had been erased from the original document. The transposing of similar details between sources also allowed for cross checking to complete missing or obscured data for a particular entry.

All datasets were saved in triplicate as ‘grandfather, father, and son’ copies on both internal drives and on remote storage facilities, including online and remote hard drives. Care was taken with the file nomenclature and filing system to ensure the most up to date versions of the database was used for the data analysis.

The data analysis became the primary source for much of the commentary presented in this thesis. This is not to say that the data provided an incisive and revealing insight into every aspect of the lives of the Scottish soldier on its own, often secondary sources were needed to provide context to the enquiry. Likewise, the data analysis provided a reliable source of collaborating evidence from which new narratives could be explored.

¹⁸⁰ Nelson, 2012. p31.

Table 2 - Dataset entries table for the BRE Rolls

BRE Record Count Columns	BRE Record	CWGC Database	Muster Roll (If Present)
Total Entry Count	Document File No.	Entry Count	Entry Count
Number of Deaths	Page Number	Surname	Document File No.
Deaths in Combat in Malaya	Service Number	Forename(s)	Religion
Deaths in Combat in Singapore	Rank	Initials	Draft
Death as a POW in Changi / Singapore	Surname	Age	Company
Death as a POW in Malaya	First Name	Honours	Fate
Missing Believed Dead	Next of Kin Details	Date of Death	Nature of Wound
Died as POW away from Singapore	Fate	Date of Death 2	Date of Wound
Other Deaths	Originally Held Captive at time of Surrender	Rank	Comments (Full Text)
On the WO 361 219 List of Missing	1 st Move	Regiment	Next of Kin
	Associated Date of 1 st Move	Unit / ship / squadron	
	2 nd Move	Service Number	
	Associated Date of Second Move1	Cemetery / Memorial	
	3 rd Move	Grave Reference	
	Associated Date of 3 rd Move	Additional Information	
	4 th Move	Comment	
	Associated Date of 4 th Move		
	Circumstance of Death (reverse page of Roll) (Full Text)		

3.9 Conclusion

Many historians have contested that there is a dearth of primary sources relating to the FEPOW narrative to be found (See Chapter 2). They put this down primarily to the extraordinary circumstances in which the prisoners found themselves in during their captivity. Not only, they contest, was there a risk of punishment for raising such paperwork, but the unavailability of stationery and the difficulties in storing the documents meant that few records were raised and fewer survived captivity. The fact that much of the material was then either left in the ground or ‘lost’ in the transit back to the United Kingdom compounded the issue. It may have been the loss of the British paperwork that inspired Woodburn-Kirby to comment on the lack of primary sources, whereas Wigmore was overwhelmed by the documents available to him in Australia.

However, the discovery of the BRE records in the national archives in Kew and a trawl of the Regimental Museum collections suggest that this was not necessarily the case and that many records had been raised and survived the internment. In addition, there is a growing collection of diaries and letters surfacing from family collections. This may still seem a small number in comparison to the paperwork available for POWs in the European Theatre, but it appears that there is a growing portfolio of work to be reviewed.

The generation and retention of paperwork was encouraged by the circumstance surrounding the aftermath of the surrender. Immediately after the ceasefire and in the following weeks of captivity, adjutants and battalion HQ staff were actively recovering hidden and lost documents as well as replacing items that had been destroyed. Lack of interest from the Japanese and the relative freedom to return to the battlefield facilitated the retrieval. By the summer of 1942, the adjutant staff in Changi were suitably resourced and able to generate all the required documents once again, all be it on second-hand paper and purloined typewriters. Only in the closing months of the war, when resources became scarce and accommodation limited, did the production of paperwork diminish. This scenario however contradicts the established premise that Changi was a hellish place to be. How could such a deprived prison camp generate so much administrative documentation? Those advocating that the prison was in fact relatively ‘heavenly’ when compared to camps in Thailand and Burma can now demonstrate that the camp was well run with an established command and active administration function.

As to whether this POW material is accurate is difficult to assess as there are few records as detailed by which to compare it with. However, the researcher can be assured that the motivation behind the author's work was generally to produce as an accurate a record as they could under the prevailing circumstances. This could not perhaps be said of the officer in peacetime having to fill in the regimental diary at the end of a mundane week of garrison duties and there were adjutants in Changi who were at first unable to see the benefit of such tedious work once in captivity. Still, as we have seen with Aitken and Pallant, the keeping of such records could transcend the simple motivation of doing a good job and become a symbolic act of passive resistance, something worth risking punishment and injury to undertake. Certainly, the post war recognition of such bookkeeping would suggest, in a time of few heroes, that such feats were considered notable and courageous when carried out with due diligence and guile.

Perhaps the only potential flaw in the accuracy of the records is to be found in the original source of the data. The bookkeeper may very well have taken pride in transcribing the facts and figures, but they were wholly dependent on the accuracy of the information handed down to them. It could be presumed that much of the data added beyond the initial roll call was sourced from second-hand hearsay and speculative eye-witness accounts compiled many days after the event. Fortunately, the army was particularly good at data gathering, providing the battalion staff with a plethora of forms, ledgers, and diaries to fill in as well as training on the necessity and process of accurate intelligence. This encouraged all levels of the battalion command to report all relevant information in an exact and timely manner in an agreed format. Likewise, all the men recognised such data as to the circumstances of death or the onward movement of POWs as vital information, important not only to the running of the battalion but also to their next of kin back home should they become a casualty.

In the case of the BRE in Changi, it is notable that the Japanese in the early years of the war had little say in the running of the camps and although the POW lived under the perceived threat of punishment should they be caught gathering such information, little was done to stop it, and few were seriously punished. Nelson attests that he and his team were actively assisted by their overseers and Toosey states that he raised reports on the behest of his Japanese guard commanders. Those men who did feel the need to hide stashes of documents did so not only to avoid it falling into the hands of the guards but also as means of preserving them for future recovery.

Chapter 4 - Scots in Pre-war Singapore

4.1 Introduction

The aim of this chapter is to review the life of the Scottish garrison soldier before the outbreak of conflict in Malaya and to determine how this social conditioning affected the morale and fighting efficiency of the battalion as it prepared for the invasion. The surrender of the British in Singapore is unique in that most of the men spent the first year imprisoned on or near the battlefield they had fought across and, for the garrison force, where they had previously lived. It is the premise of this study that this pre-war way of life not only radically influenced the motivation of the Scots to defend the island but also greatly influenced the transition into captivity and their chances of surviving their first year of internment.

The Scottish commanders placed an inordinate emphasis on the traditions and heritage of the regiment adopting in the process many of the trappings of the Victorian imagery of the Scottish Highlander to perpetuate their fearsome repute. So much so that the casual observer was quick to mark the soldier as being ‘a bonnie fechter’ simply from their attire.¹⁸¹ Likewise, each ranker had to readily embrace the Highland persona and put the reputation of the regiment above all else.

This appropriation of the image of the ‘Highland Warrior’ is best demonstrated in the articles found in the local newspapers who regularly comment on the life of the Scottish soldier on the island. They felt this to be a worthy story as the presence of the best regiments in the British army represented the Empire’s commitment to their protection and thereby perpetuating the myth of the impregnability of the island fortress. The only flaw in this reasoning was that a significant number of men in the regiment were neither ‘Highlanders’ nor ‘Scots’ by birth.

The first task therefore is to determine what the Singaporean journalist and commentators were looking at when they remarked on the presence of the ‘Scottish Highlander’ in the community. This chapter will begin by determining the nationality of the soldiers found in the Scottish regiments in Singapore in 1942. It will then consider the martial identity of the ‘Scottish Highlander’ and how the regiments went about maintaining the persona,

¹⁸¹ Berry, 2015. p9. Spiers, 2014. p20, p28.

traditions and fighting reputation of the regiment. The narrative will then reflect upon the nature of the Scottish community in Singapore in the pre-war years and the ease by which they accepted the Scottish soldier into this society. Analysis will then focus on the role of the military garrison in Singapore both from the early days of the colony and during the build-up to the invasion and reflect. Finally, it will show how all these factors influenced the everyday life of the Scottish soldier during the build up to hostilities and considers how this social bond shaped the soldier's attitude to the defence of his home in Singapore.

4.2 Being Scottish

Establishing the ethnicity of those who filled the ranks of the 'Scottish' regiments in Singapore in 1942 is a difficult task.¹⁸² Many contemporary observers assumed that all men of a Scottish regiment were Scots, but a review of the next of kin details in the battalion rolls demonstrates that many men had parents or siblings living outside of Scotland, primarily England.

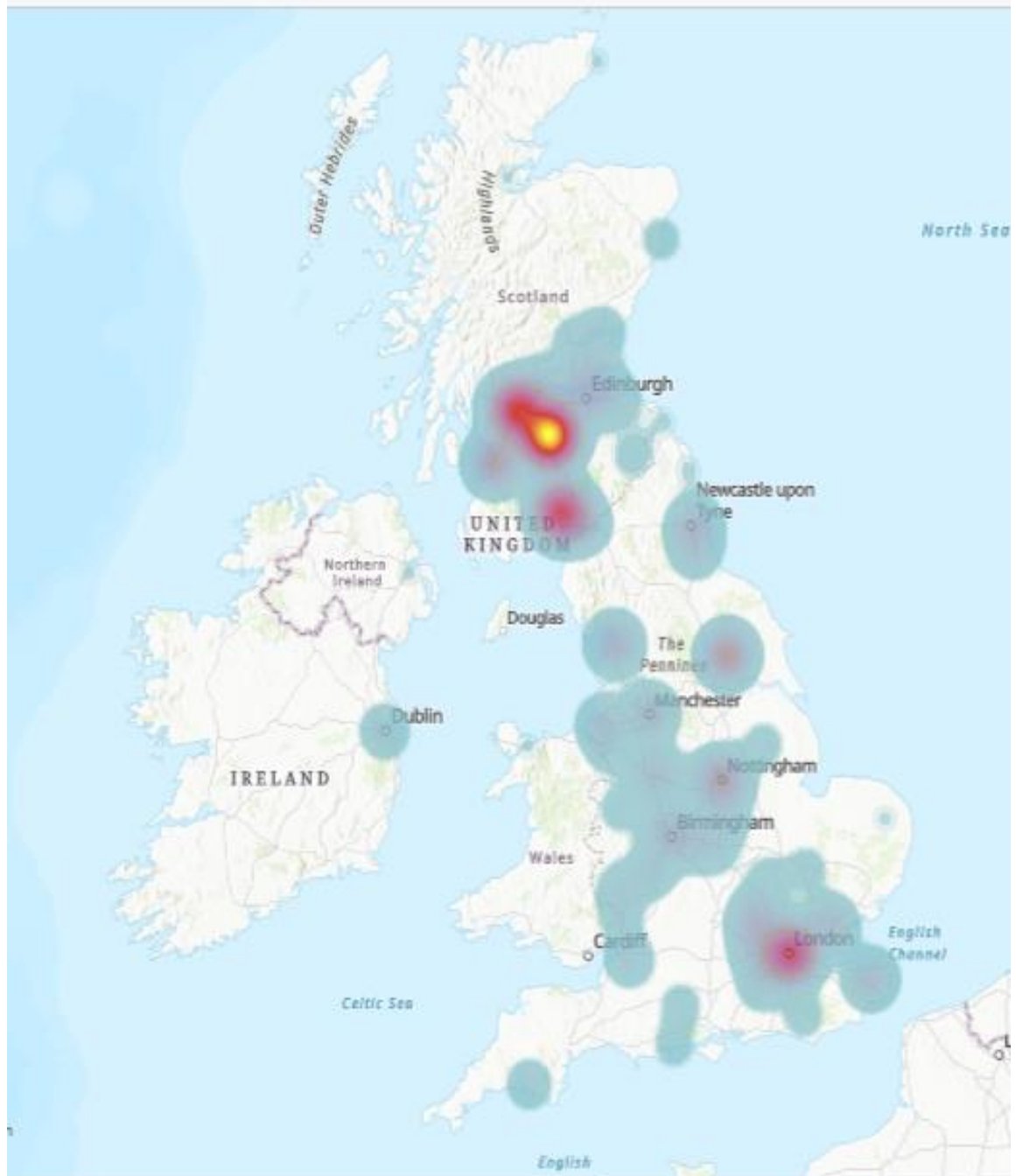
However, this does not mean that the next of kin are necessarily 'English' or that the soldier is not living in Scotland, away from his 'next of kin', and consider themselves Scottish. To compound the problem many of the men failed to list their next of kin details in the roll book.¹⁸³ One reason for this could be the large number of recruits who came from broken homes. Moffatt & McCormick (2003) state that around 40% of the soldiers who filled the pre-war ranks of the A&SH were orphans.¹⁸⁴ Alternatively, some recruits were afraid to disclose their nationality and denied they had any next of kin in case they were not accepted into the regiment because they were not Scots.¹⁸⁵

¹⁸² The general return of the strength of the British army on 31st December 1944 states that out of the 2.8 million soldiers serving at that time 263,000 were born in Scotland representing 10% of the total strength. (WO73/163, 1944. Crang, 2014. p570)

¹⁸³ 51% of the men listed on the roll who were present for the campaign did not have next of kin details against their roll book entry.

¹⁸⁴ Moffatt & McCormick, 2003. p17. Roy, 2019. p27.

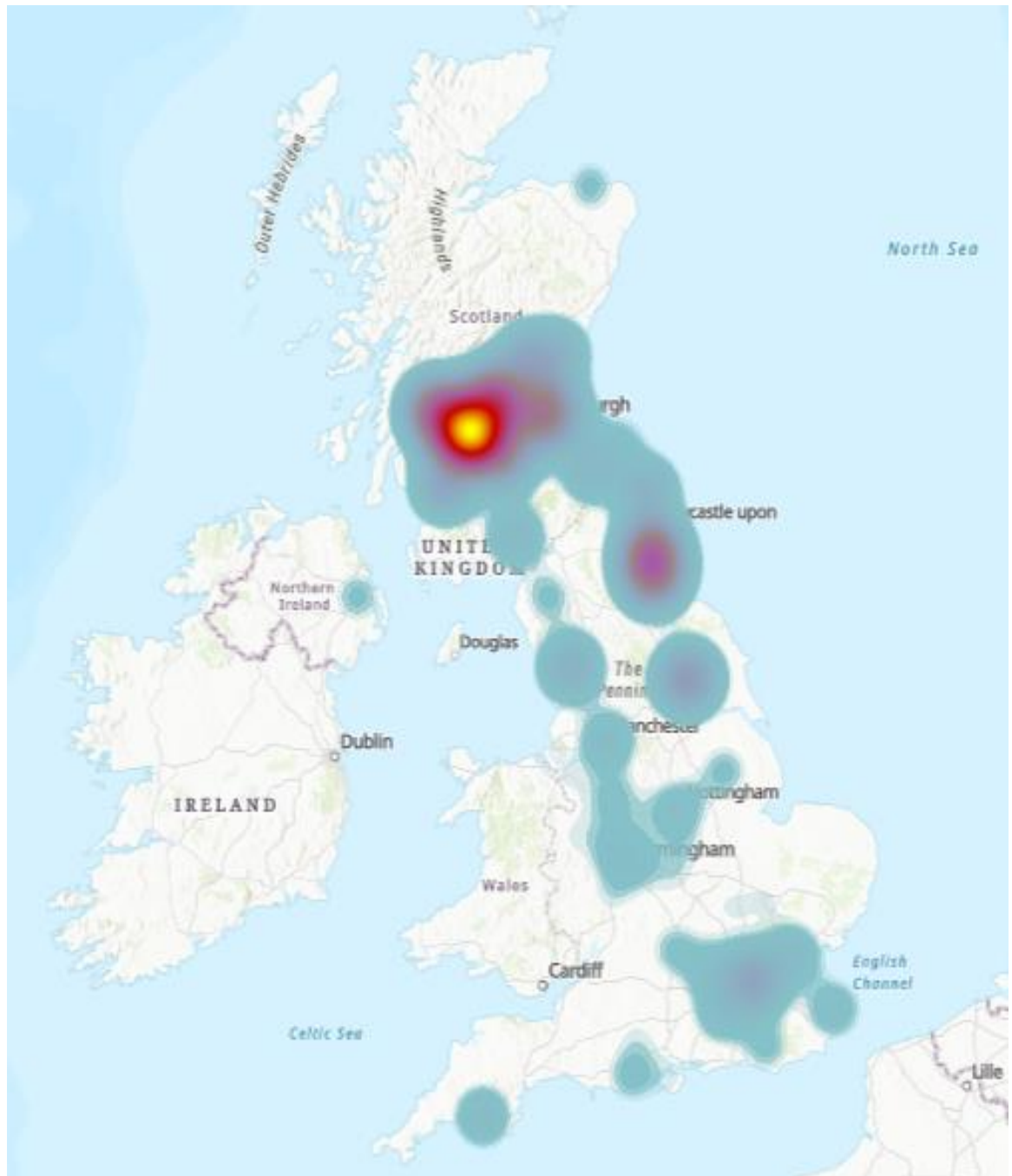
¹⁸⁵ Taylor, 2018. p141.



Map 1 - The Distribution Map for the Lanarkshire Yeomanry serving in Singapore

This diagram demonstrates the wide distribution of addresses for the next of kin suggesting the ranks of the Yeomanry were being filled by men from across the United Kingdom. However, there were still a substantial number of men with next of kin listed as being in Glasgow, Dumfries and Lanarkshire.

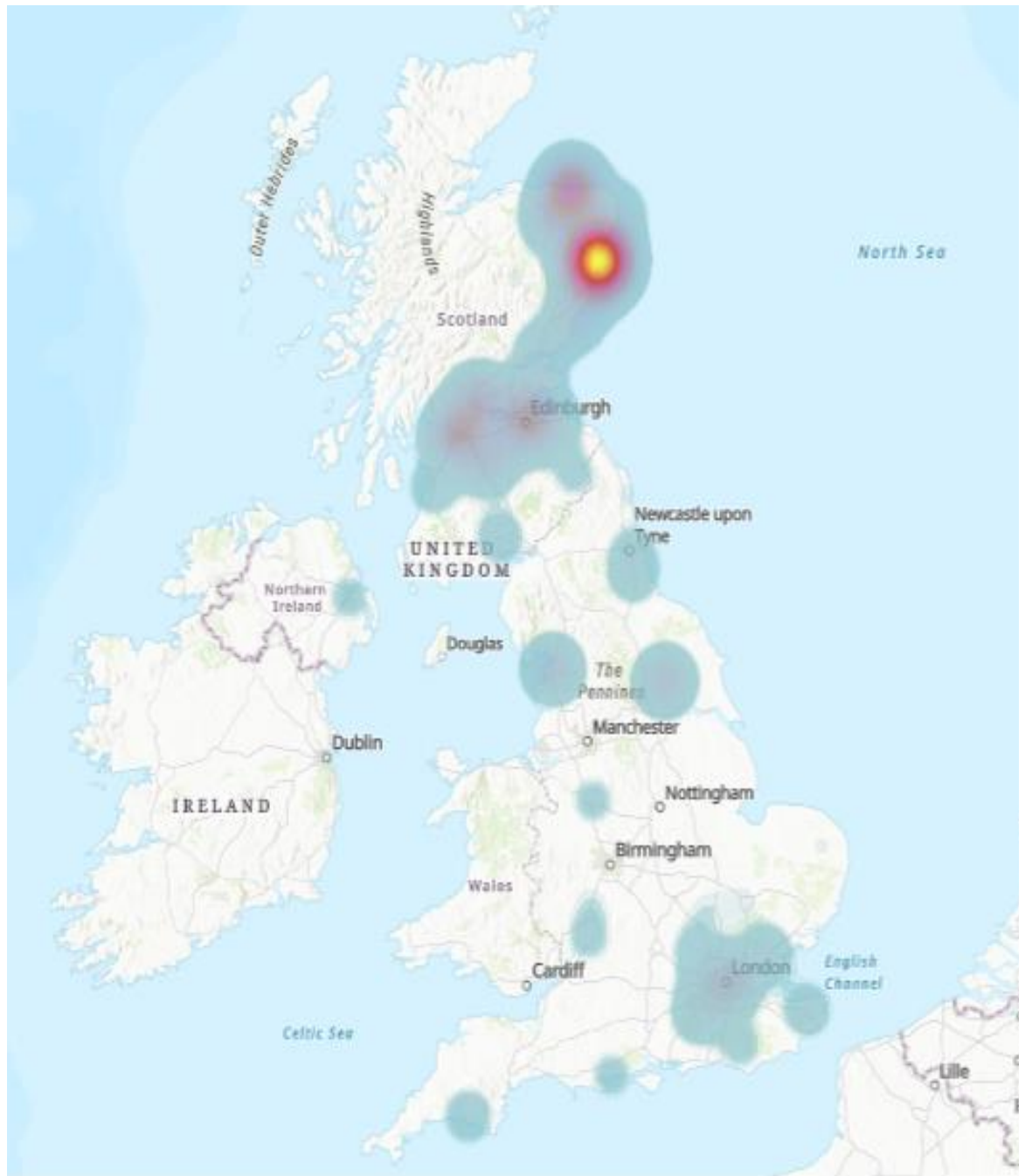
NB. Each address was converted to a latitude and longitude then plotted onto the map. Colour scale is proportional to the number of addresses in the same locality.



Map 2 - The Distribution Map for the A&SH serving in Singapore

In comparison the distribution map of the next of kin addresses for the A&SH shows a concentration of recruits from Central Scotland. However, the notable 'hot spots' of Glaswegian and Tyneside addresses reflects the fact that recruiters were taking men from beyond the traditional recruitment grounds around Perth and Stirling.

It must be noted however that there were a significant number of next of kin details missing from the A&SH rolls. An additional 100 addresses were extracted from the CWGC data base.



Map 3 - The Distribution Map for the Gordon Highlanders serving in Singapore

The dispersal pattern for the Gordon Highlanders' next of kin shows a similar concentration of recruitment from the traditional recruiting grounds in Aberdeenshire, with a secondary recruitment from Banffshire, Edinburgh, and Glasgow as well as smattering of addresses in England.

Yet Scottish regiments were happy to take recruits from England.¹⁸⁶ By 1940, and the introduction of conscription, such units as the Lanarkshire Yeomanry, had no choice but to accept troops allocated to them by the War Office.¹⁸⁷ Likewise experienced Scottish soldiers who had returned from France, were sent to English regiments to train the new recruits. Existing units were therefore reinforced and restructured with the 'Regular Army' veterans being replaced by younger, less experienced newcomers.¹⁸⁸

A review of the serial numbers of the men of A&SH listed in the battalion roll, reveals three distinct prefixes in use. Those numbers starting with '298' and '297' are those men recruited into the regular army before the war and are in the main Scots from the traditional recruiting grounds. Those men who have numbers commencing with '332' are men drafted into the Highland Light Infantry and who were then transferred to the A&SH to bring the numbers up to a wartime footing. Notably many of these men were English, primarily 'Geordies' from Tyneside.¹⁸⁹ An interrogation of the battalion roll data suggests that approximately 14% of the entries begin with '332'.

Calculating how many 'Scots' there were in any particular theatre of war is also complicated by the creation of commonwealth units who adopted Scottish military dress, accoutrements and traditions despite recruiting from out with Scotland.¹⁹⁰ A relevant example of this is 'S' Company of the Straits Settlement Volunteers Force (SSVF) who were based in Singapore and went as far as kitting out a pipe band and wearing kilts on parade, as well as being trained by personnel from the Gordon Highlanders.¹⁹¹ Most of the men had Scottish ancestry, but others including Irishmen and Englishmen, joined simply for the kudos of the uniform and camaraderie of the unit.¹⁹² Many were captured in uniform and served their time as POWs alongside their regular colleagues.

¹⁸⁶ Crang, 2014. p570.

¹⁸⁷ Stewart Mitchell suggests that up to around 64% of the men of the 2nd Battalion Gordon Highlanders were recruited from 'traditional' recruiting areas, 20% from the rest of Scotland and 9% from England before 1939. These figures fluctuated as the new recruits were introduced to the regiment in 1941. He goes on to add that of the new recruits joining the regiment at the end of 1941, 34% were from England, 33% were Lowland Scots. (Mitchell, 2012. p27.).

¹⁸⁸ Stewart, 1947. p6.

¹⁸⁹ Moffatt & McCormick, 2003. p38.

¹⁹⁰ Ugolini, 2014. pp487 - 490

¹⁹¹ 'S' for 'Support' was adopted after 'C' company was re-armed with machine guns however the volunteers maintained the 'S' referred to its Scottish pedigree (Moffatt & Riches, 2010. p10).

¹⁹² Moffatt & Riches, 2010. pp9 -11.

Finally, there is an incalculable number of Scots who joined 'English' regiments, General Service units or other services, either at the point of recruitment or transferring after serving time in a Scottish regiment. Eric Lomax for example was a Scot, who joined the Royal Corps of Signals.¹⁹³ Likewise, Lt Col Stewart lists 17 officers and 99 men of the A&SH who served in other units in Malaya but do not appear on the strength of the 2nd battalion.¹⁹⁴

The foregoing notwithstanding, it can be proposed that these observations, although revealing, are irrelevant when it comes down to a soldier exhibiting a Scottish demeanour. It is the culture and heritage of the regiment that shapes the recruit into a 'Highland Soldier' and his nationality, no longer a prerequisite to joining the regiment, is indistinguishable from his colleagues to the outsider. A man in a bonnet and kilt marching to the sounds of the pipes, to the average reporter and onlooker, is described as a 'Scot', no matter his race, accent, or upbringing.

4.3 Being a Scottish Highlander

In 1822, Col David Stewart published his book entitled '*Sketches of the Character Manners and Present State of the Highlanders of Scotland.*' His work describes the raising of the first regiment of kilted highlanders into the British Army, the Black Watch. He defines the Highlander by their dress, education, religion, upbringing, and their loyalty to their clan chief. However, he states that what sets the Highland regiment apart from the Lowland and English regiments is that they were raised with '*the social standards of the Highlands in mind.*'¹⁹⁵

Certainly, the early recruiters in Scotland recognised that the British Army had to create an environment that was not only familiar to the clansmen but also provided an opportunity to affirm and preserve a Highland way of life which was being threatened by repression, industrialisation, and migration. Concessions were made to existing laws to reinstate privileges lost after the Jacobite uprisings to any man joining the ranks.¹⁹⁶ The mere fact a Highlander was once again allowed to carry arms, after the Disarming Act of 1745 had denied them the right, was a significant incentive, but also the wearing of the 'Great Kilt',

¹⁹³ Lomax, 1995. p36.

¹⁹⁴ Stewart, 1947. p166.

¹⁹⁵ Stewart, 1822. p244. McNeil, 2000. pp78 – 79.

¹⁹⁶ Caldwell, 1998. pp96 – 97.

banned under the post Jacobite Acts of Proscription, and the playing of the ‘Great Pipes’, barred as a Jacobite weapon of war, were also significant additional enticements.¹⁹⁷ The promise of religious tolerance, food and accommodation, and a regular wage were enough to persuade the majority. Enlistment was brisk if not entirely legal, as recruiters competed to raise Highland regiments in short order.¹⁹⁸ In addition, and perhaps unbeknown to the recruit, the regiments were raised under a Royal Charter thereby allowing the government to post them abroad. This committed the Highlanders to the global aspirations of the union, reduced desertion, and assured their absence should a future rebellion break out north of the Great Glen again.¹⁹⁹

The reputation of the Highland soldier up until the 18th Century had been somewhat chequered.²⁰⁰ The terrain and weather in the mountains had conditioned the clans to a particular style of warfare of raids and small personal engagements, usually settled by a flurry of arrows and a round of close combat with swords and targe. These were often bloody affairs with little quarter being given by either side.²⁰¹ The Earl of Montrose and his Highland and Irish contingents had harnessed these tactics and had ably represented the Royalist cause in Scotland during the Wars of the Three Kingdoms.²⁰² In the early 18th Century, the Jacobites had put the government militia to flight in the early stages of each rising but when faced with trained troops fighting in a more conventional setting, the reputed Highland charge had ultimately been found wanting.²⁰³ In Europe, the fearsome reputation of the Highlanders abroad was carefully nurtured by mercenary captains keen to promote their services and retain employment. Scottish mercenaries with Highlanders among their ranks, found productive work throughout the armies of Russia, Prussia, Sweden, France, and the Low Countries, and even fighting alongside the ‘Auld Enemy’ England when the money had been right.²⁰⁴

‘The Clearances’ of the 18th and 19th Century and the subsequent economic migration of Scots to the burgeoning British colonies not only undermined the recruitment of young Highland men to the ranks but also dismantled the Highland way of life.²⁰⁵ The diaspora

¹⁹⁷ Streets, 2004. pp57 – 58. Newark, 2009. p39.

¹⁹⁸ Cheyne, 2015. pp45 – 47.

¹⁹⁹ Caldwell, 1998. pp 96-98. Matheson, 2011. p20.

²⁰⁰ Strachan, 2006. p317.

²⁰¹ Phillips, 1999. pp62 - 63

²⁰² Strachan, 2006. p321. Caldwell, 1998. pp83- 86.

²⁰³ Caldwell, 1998. pp83 – 84.

²⁰⁴ Strachan, 2006. p318. Carswell, 2014. pp248 – 272.

²⁰⁵ Esdaile, 2014 pp414 – 417.

however had the unforeseen benefit of spreading the reputation of the Highland soldier across the world. The regiments sent to the wars in North America and Canada in the 18th century were preceded by their kinfolk happy to extol the virtues of the Highland warrior class and ensuring their repute had gone before them. Several significant victories and heroic defeats only cemented their reputation through the Napoleonic Wars.²⁰⁶ Queen Victoria's obsession for all things Scottish, culminating in her endorsement of the expansion of the Highland regiments when all other British units were being amalgamated by peacetime cuts, ensured that the Highland soldier, once seen as a rebel and a traitor, now represented a loyal and stalwart defender of the monarchy.²⁰⁷ The Highland soldier was not only synonymous with Scotland, but also Britain and the Empire.²⁰⁸

The global success of the Highland regiments could not stop the steady decline of the Highland way of life back home.²⁰⁹ By the mid-19th century, there were not enough young men working the glens and hills to fill the ranks with rugged clansmen believed to be best suited for military life, so Lowlanders and Englishmen from the cities were targeted, many under the pretence of having Scottish, if not Highland, forbears.²¹⁰ It became more difficult to maintain the unique ethnicity of the regiment as 'Highland', yet the distinctive look and the martial reputation remained intact and ultimately it was the character of the regiment that saved lives and won victories on the battlefields.²¹¹ Highlanders fighting in the First War of Indian Independence ('The Indian Mutiny') gained the repute for being super-human, unearthly and demonic.²¹² Fighting on the edge of Empire against a heathen foe who was capable of massacring innocent women and children turned the image of the Highlander into a revenging angel capable of ruthless retribution.²¹³ It was reported, with perhaps with a degree of truth, that the enemy would only have to hear the skirl of the pipes to take flight.²¹⁴ It is no wonder the general staff were happy to endorse such legends and to have the Highland Regiments in their commands adorned in the kilts, bearskins, and sporrans, marching to the sounds of the pipes.²¹⁵

²⁰⁶ Strachan, 2006. p322. Newark, 2010. pp161 – 228.

²⁰⁷ Newark, 2010 p137 – 141. Streets, 2004. p59, pp101 – 110. Carswell, 2014. p640.

²⁰⁸ Strachan, 2006 p327. Streets, 2004. p181.

²⁰⁹ Streets, 2004. p180.

²¹⁰ Strachan, 2006. p324, p326.

²¹¹ Caldwell, 1998. p97. Spiers, 2014. pp458 – 472.

²¹² McNeil, 2000. p78, pp82 – 83. Streets, 2004. p60.

²¹³ Spiers, 2014. p469.

²¹⁴ McNeil, 2000. pp83 – 84.

²¹⁵ Streets, 2004. pp59 – 60.

The demand for Scottish units at the end of the 19th Century compounded the British Army's growing problem of recruiting new men to the ranks.²¹⁶ In 1870, Viscount Edward Cardwell, Secretary for War, and his successor Hugh Childers, determined to create a regimental system that would not only reduce the term of enlistment but would also limit the time spent overseas by increasing the turnaround of trained recruits between the battalions abroad and those manning the home depot. They were also partnered with local militia and reserve battalions that could not only be called to arms in times of need but would also provide a stream of new recruits to replace the regular soldier based abroad.²¹⁷ However, the initial consequence of increasing the number of regular battalions in each regiment and the reduction of the term of service was the doubling of the numbers of men required to fill the ranks and a sudden deficit in experienced senior NCOs needed to instil order among the young recruits. Discipline collapsed and retention fell away.²¹⁸ The commanders in response created a totally fictitious concept of the 'Regiment' which encompassed all the battalions no matter their origins and terms of enlistment. The new regiments became culturally unique communities bound by customs, attire, traditions, and a perceived shared heritage that was uncorrupted by the ethnicity and social class of the recruit.²¹⁹ The regiment was overseen by the paternal Regimental Colonel and the accompanying Regimental Association. It was they who nurtured the idea of a 'regimental family' embracing not only the serving members of the regiment but also the veterans and their families. New recruits were educated in the history of the regiment and disruptive individuals were asked to comply with orders not through fear of punishment but in respect for their adopted community and their colleagues.²²⁰ For many men joining the ranks from impoverished backgrounds and broken homes the 'Regiment' offered the first persistent presence in their lives and something they grew to depend on and in many ways, love.

The Highland Regiments emerged from the 19th Century in good order from the reforms of 1881 with five kilted regiments, the Highland Light Infantry, dressed in trews, and the Lowland regiments adorned with trews, claymores, and doublets.²²¹ The distinct Scottish

²¹⁶ Spiers, 2014. pp458 – 460.

²¹⁷ Irwin, 2014. p803.

²¹⁸ Holmes, 2011. pp377- 378.

²¹⁹ *Ibid.*, pp 308 – 312.

²²⁰ *Ibid.*, pp398 – 405.

²²¹ Wood, 1987. pp75 – 76. Holmes, 2011. p381.

look was bolstered by royal patronage, popularity with the public and a growing martial reputation on the battlefields across the Empire.²²²

The regimental model proved so successful that the War Office frequently despaired as army wide dictates were constantly opposed on the grounds of regimental priorities. Even the introduction of standard khaki battledress was faced down by the regimental insistence of adorning the uniform with various regimental badges and patches. It took until the 1939 for the kilt to be replaced on the battlefield by trousers and shorts although pipers and officers retained the right to wear them in combat.²²³

The mass recruitment of reservists and volunteers in the First World War not only created many more battalions in each regiment, but it also extended the idea of provincial unit identity by grouping whole brigades and divisions by region, principality, or country. There were four operational infantry divisions given Scottish titles including two territorial units; the 51st 'Highland Division', which despite the name consisted primarily of lowland regiments, and the 52nd 'Lowland Division' which distinguished itself in the fighting in Gallipoli and the Middle East.²²⁴ This effectively meant the reputation of the regiments were now dependent on the performance and standing of the division. To compound the issue of the dilution of regimental identity, the nature of warfare on the Western Front proved to be a great leveller as the machine gun bullets, poisonous gas and massed artillery paid little heed to the martial repute or nationality of the target. However, Patrick Watt (2019) in his study of comparative casualty figures for the Scottish regiments, alludes to the sense of perceived honour to be found in the disproportionate loss of life in the First World War.²²⁵ Divisional and thereby regional sacrifice was measured by the proportion of casualties per head of population, a factor that was to play an important role in the politics of nationalism after the war where claims of a perceived bias towards Scottish losses substantiated calls for independence and unionism.²²⁶ Undoubtedly this sense of national sacrifice in the 'Great War' played heavily on the minds of the men joining the ranks

²²² Spiers, 2014. p477. Carswell, 2014. p640.

²²³ Carswell 2014. pp642 – 643.

²²⁴ Strachan, 2006. p.329. Wood, 1987. p85. Spiers, 2014. p509.

²²⁵ Watt, 2019. p76.

²²⁶ *Ibid.*, pp 83-84. Royle, 2014. p529

during the inter-war years, some of whom, like Lt Col Stewart, commanding officer of the A&SH in Malaya, had played an active part in the campaigns in Flanders.²²⁷

The immediate aftershock of the Armistice in 1918 prompted the deconstruction of the British Army where again the martial repute of the regiment took on a new significance. Ball (2010) in his work on the inherent ranking of the regiments suggests that there is a putative pecking order by which the Army Board allocates resources, awards pay, selects commanders, and more importantly considers disbandment in times of peace. This was compounded by the introduction of paid commissions and the subsequent impact the repute of the regiment had on career opportunities of its officers in a distinctly nepotistic command structure. Ball notes that close relationships with the royal family, a tradition of social exclusivity, casualty rates, battle honours awarded, and regional affiliations would also raise the status of the regiment, all of which the Highland regiments had in abundance.²²⁸

It is therefore not surprising that the unit commanders were eager to promote the regiment up this hierarchical table, thereby enhancing their own career prospects and ensuring the preservation of the regiment in the next round of cuts. Field Marshall Wavell's statement in the prologue to Lt Col Stewart's post war account of the A&SH in Malaya may therefore have a nuanced undertone that reflects the need to extol the performance of the regiment in after action accounts no matter what the outcome of the campaign:

*The regimental spirit and tradition, which is the real backbone of the British Army, stands in some danger from military reformers who do not always realise its strength and value. This account may do something to show how much it counts in times of danger and stress.*²²⁹

As for the battalion commanders, such reputations embellished in the retelling, saved lives, won battles, and enhanced careers. For the SNCO tasked with training the new recruits, any tradition that instilled the martial character of the Highlander in quick time would be of great benefit. For the recruit fresh into the country, it was the bedrock of his belief in his own survival. Being recognised as a Scottish Highland Regiment mattered to all associated

²²⁷ Stewart was the first officer of the BEF to set foot on French soil in 1914 and first to be mentioned in despatches. He was seriously wounded and won the Military Cross in 1915, then added a bar in 1917. (Moffat & McCormick, 2003. pp12 - 13.)

²²⁸ Ball, 2010. pp60 – 63.

²²⁹ Stewart, 1947. pvi.

with the unit and as the entry on the first page of the A&SH Regimental Standing Orders clearly states:

*The great traditions of the past should be an inspiration to him [the soldier] to attain in the present, by his own constant endeavour, the same high standards of loyalty, courage, conduct and efficiency.*²³⁰

4.4 The Scottish Community in Pre-War Singapore

The Scots were no strangers to Singapore. Many had taken part in the initial colonization of the island as officers and engineers of the East Indian Company.²³¹ Although Sir Stamford Raffles, the man credited for founding Singapore, was an Englishman, his main compatriots were Scots; William Farquhar and John Crawford worked tirelessly alongside the Malay authorities to secure the island for the British. By 1860 the Scots seemed the most prevalent colonists in the town. One English shipper, Franklyn Kendall, flippantly remarked:

*'Talk about Australia being full of Scotchmen, what would anybody say of Singapore? Jellicoe [his colleague] and I are almost the only two Englishmen in the place, the rest being with very few exceptions about 75% Scotch and 25% Germans'.*²³²

Among the ranks of administrators and civil servants were a plethora of Scots who had headed to Malaya in search of their fortunes.²³³ By the 1890s coffee planting was the most profitable business and after 1900, rubber, with as many as one third of the planters having Scottish ancestry. Scottish managers would recruit from the public schools and the officers and men serving in the colonial military. These were often the disinherited younger sons of prestigious families who would be prepared to travel out to the Far East as means to securing a good income.²³⁴ These military emigrants and other Scottish socialites that settled in Singapore formed an elite social class among a population of ethnic workers. This often entailed the creation of societies and clubs that promoted the sanctity of the

²³⁰ Greenfield, 1940. p1.

²³¹ Buelmann, 2016. p6.

²³² Shennan, 2015. p61.

²³³ Berry, 2015. p45-46.

²³⁴ Shennan, 2015. p63.

upper colonial classes by the adoption of Scottish heritage and traditions that set them apart from the communities around them.²³⁵

Familiarity also extended into the social life of the soldier. He would have found many organisations and entertainments in town that would not have been out of place on the main streets of Aberdeen, Perth, and Stirling. By the 1940s there were four Presbyterian churches in Singapore and a vibrant Saint Andrew's Society from which the local Scottish expat community would organize Hogmanay Parties, Burn's Suppers and St Andrew Day celebrations.²³⁶ His hosts were very keen to show off their Scottish traditions and the presence of so many kilted soldiers could only enhance their repertory.

However, despite the abundance of Scottish brethren in the city, Scottish troops found it difficult to break into social circles confined as they were by class prejudices. Where officers would be welcomed in the bars and clubs such as the Raffles Hotel, Tanglin Club and the Singapore Island Country Club, rankers were not accepted.²³⁷ The Scottish Singaporean community was tightly intermixed with many having travelled from Scotland on the invite of friends and family already out in the Far East.²³⁸ This incestuous extension of Scottish clanship was often at the exclusion of outsiders and although Scottish soldiers were welcomed as fellow countrymen, they were inevitably unable to break down the social barriers unless known to the families through their connections at home. These social divides were exasperated by the absence of an established British working class on the island. Expats arriving in Singapore were more likely to be middle class overseers, government officers and managers, with the workforce made up of Chinese, Malay, or Tamil laborers. There was also no commonality between the wealthier Europeans and the Southeast Asians many of whom were also extremely rich.²³⁹ Soldiers often from working class backgrounds would find few with similar upbringing and from the same class within the civilian community, thus promoting their own sense of isolation.²⁴⁰

This class prejudice, decadence and hedonism has often been cited as a measure of unpreparedness of the city for war.²⁴¹ The authors reflect on a society so caught up in the

²³⁵ Bueltmann, 2016. p6.

²³⁶ Shennan 2015 p61

²³⁷ Rose, 2017. p38. Urquhart, 2010. p60. Holmes & Kemp, 1982. p13.

²³⁸ Shennan, 2015. p67.

²³⁹ Holmes & Kemp, 1982. p13.

²⁴⁰ Urquhart, 2010. p61 – 62. Holmes & Kemp, 1982. p14.

²⁴¹ Gillies, 2011. p103.

comforts of life that they fail to anticipate the impending invasion and are incapable of organising an effective defence.²⁴² But Shennan (2015) suggests that this view of the British in Malaya, as a smug and undeserving community, is born out of jealousy felt by the press and politicians in Britain who were envious of the pioneering and free thinking colonialists who were making the most of their migration.²⁴³ As such she cites the attitudes and work ethos of the many planters, miners, engineers, and entrepreneurs who worked tirelessly to carve a living out of the hills and forests of Malaya and thereby creating a viable and thriving economy to the benefit of all, adding that many of them were Scots. She goes as far as to suggest that the Scots, unburdened by the discrimination of any English middle-class prejudices and public-school boy accents, were able to demand more respect in the multilingual, multicultural workforces on mainland Malaya through their hardworking attitude and Scottish brogue.²⁴⁴

Yet even if this observation is correct, such indomitable Scots were usually to be found up country and seldom gracing the social scene in Singapore.²⁴⁵ Social pigeon-holing prevailed and troops heading into town therefore tended to mix with their own kind and gather in favorite haunts catering specifically for their needs. The bars and clubs in Lavender Street and Bencoolen became popular meeting places and cinemas and dance halls that showed English speaking films and played western music became the preferred venues.²⁴⁶ These social gatherings did nothing to encourage the mixing of classes and races. Subsequently it was particularly galling when the soldiers were then called upon to risk their lives defending these very same islanders with whom, beyond their temporary co-habitation, they had little in common.²⁴⁷

4.5 Garrisons in Singapore

Richard Holmes in his study of the British soldier (2011) identifies the life in a garrison as a distinct stage in the transition to war in which the unit is subjected to a social structure reminiscent of a boarding school, warships, prisons, hospitals, and any institution where the lives of the individuals are controlled by a governing authority and a clear sense of

²⁴² Shennan, 2015. p314 – 316. Grehan & Mace, 2015. pp335 – 336.

²⁴³ *Ibid.*, p24.

²⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, p7.

²⁴⁵ Holmes & Kemp, 1982. p13.

²⁴⁶ Bayly & Harper 2005 p51. Shennan, 2015. pp158 - 161

²⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, p64 – p66.

hierarchy prevails.²⁴⁸ Holmes references Erving Goffman's studies into asylums, equating military garrisons and barracks to a 'total institution'. As such, soldiers work, play and rest in the same place. They carry out their daily activities alongside numerous other members, all of whom are treated identically. Their daily routines are fixed, and all their work is intended to serve the causes of the greater society or, as Goffman states, 'to pursue some work like task', in this case the defence of the garrison and the community it has been tasked to oversee.²⁴⁹ Total institutions, Goffman claims, '*disculturate*', subjecting their members to a continual '*series of abasements, degradations, humiliations, and profanities*'. In military terms this would include such practices as being assigned communal living quarters, issued with uniforms, and regularly paraded for inspection.²⁵⁰ Day to day existence is governed by a set of rules; in the case of the military this is laid out in the King's Regulations disseminated down in various 'Daily' and 'Standing Orders and enforced by courts martial.

²⁴⁸ Holmes, 2011. p515.

²⁴⁹ Goffman, 1996. p16.

²⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, p24.

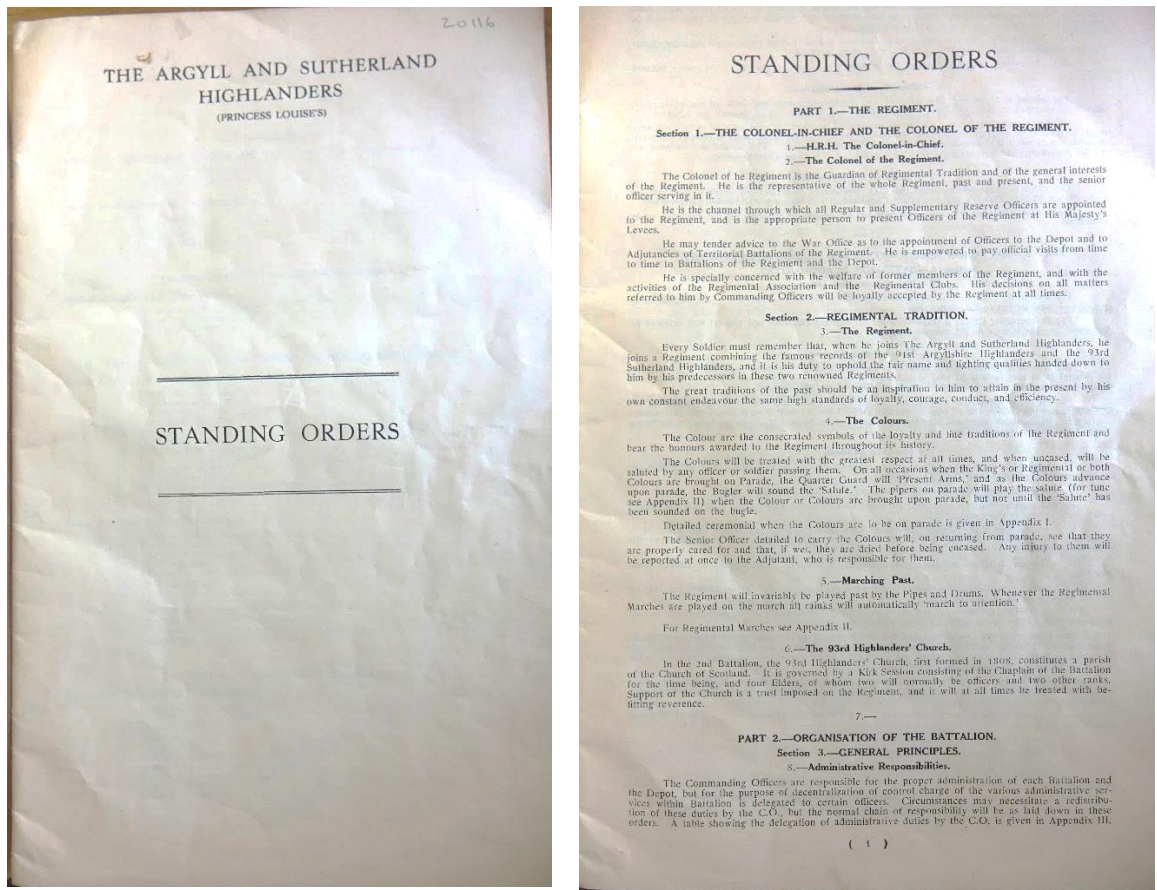


Figure 13 - The A&SH Standing Orders

The Standing Orders, now held in the regimental museum in Stirling, were rewritten at the bequest of the CO 2nd Battalion A&SH in 1941 in Singapore. Copies were sent back to the Regimental HQ at Stirling Castle for editing. All aspects of the battalion life are addressed in this document. The first page reminds the reader of the importance of the Regiment's traditions.²⁵¹

The concept of deploying a garrison has been a distinct part of military endeavours ever since soldiers were asked to spend more time in service than they could be reasonably expected to sustain themselves by their own means. The national armies of 17th Century Europe that had been traditionally recruited on a temporary levy system with their soldiers returning to their farms and businesses once the campaign was over, now raised permanent, professional battalions that required accommodation and pay all year round.²⁵² Likewise, imperial expansion obliged more troops to be housed in ever more alien environments on the edge of empire, often amidst a hostile population and in extreme climates. Initially troops could be billeted in accommodation commandeered by the

²⁵¹ Greenfield, 1940.

²⁵² Tabraham & Grove, 1995. pp16 – 18. Childs, 1997. pp14 – 15.

military amongst the civilian population, but this seriously compromised the safety and effectiveness of the unit and provided only a temporary answer for a long-term occupation.

The growth of armies in the 16th and 17th centuries forced military planners to rethink the policy of cramming troops into the confines of medieval townships. Instead, they constructed resilient defences around purpose-built accommodation blocks to house ever larger numbers of men, ammunition, horses, and equipment.²⁵³ Whereas castles were often embedded into the heart of the town, garrisons could be autonomous and operate remotely, guarding more strategic yet isolated landscapes. The isolation of garrisons separated the troops from the potentially hostile community, provided larger areas for training with ranged weapons, protected the garrison from the urban diseases, and deterred the soldier from fraternising and ultimately deserting. But this came at the price of detaching themselves from the community they were there to protect and help govern. Only in relatively friendly countries in peacetime conditions were the garrisons encouraged to integrate with the local community. However, such cordiality could not necessarily be guaranteed for the lifetime of the establishment and garrisons were duly designed to be self-sufficient, well protected, and adequately provisioned to withstand an investment for an agreed period before relief could be expected without depending on local help.²⁵⁴

Garrison commanders of these remote 'Total Institutions' therefore had to constantly address the paradox of living alongside a potential hostile community, in a manner that would preserve the peace and assure the mutual protection of all from foreign adversaries. Should the citizens feel aggrieved by the presence and the cost of maintaining such a garrison then the commanders faced the dilemma of having to carry out unpopular official duties and yet remain at peace with their community. Should the common enemy turn out to be a foreign power then the garrison would be called upon to show enough military prowess to deter the aggressors and to reassure the public of their safety. Should they fail in either scenario and conflict ensue, the garrison may not only evoke the wrath of the attackers but may also lose the support of the local populace and thereby condemning them to certain defeat. In the meantime, the commanders had to maintain military discipline and ensure their men would obey their orders no matter the consequence or reason.

²⁵³ Tabraham & Grove, 1995. p15.

²⁵⁴ French, 2005. pp103 – 105.

It is to this conundrum that the founding fathers of Singapore turned their attention in the early days of the colony. When Stamford Raffles first set foot on the island in 1819, one of his first priorities was the establishment of a garrison and the building of the barracks. However, it was not until 1827, when the first major review of Singapore's defences took place, that the construction of the fortifications in Singapore began. The initial plan was to protect the port and river entries with gun batteries, but it was thought that this might encourage attackers to fire on the nearby godowns thereby threatening the independent business enterprises of the bipartisan traders. After much prevaricating with the business community, a garrison fort on Government Hill was built in 1859, later to be named Fort Canning.²⁵⁵ A local battalion of troops were recruited to live alongside a European regiment and guard the artillery, the ammunition and the governor's residence.²⁵⁶ Eventually, as the population and township grew, Fort Canning became undefendable and overcrowded. Planners undertook to build the Tanglin Barracks on the edge of town to provide suitable facilities for weapons training, gunnery practice and manoeuvres through tropical terrain. The other armed forces also demanded new facilities. Inevitably the construction of the new naval base at Sembawang demanded the siting of coastal guns overlooking the main entrance to the Straits of Johor and new barracks on the Changi peninsula were constructed to accommodate the gunners and the guards. Airfields at Tengah, Seletar and Kallang, military hospitals, ammunition storage areas and supply bases also required the protection of a local garrison, prompting the construction of barracks at Tyersall, Alexandra, and Gillman to the west of the city.

Ostensibly, the greatest threat to Singapore was assumed to be from other European colonial powers who would inevitably attack the city from the sea, however there were few adversaries in the region that would have the resources to take on the Royal Navy.²⁵⁷ The garrison was never threatened by foreign invasion up to the outbreak of the First World War, although the perceived threat from Dutch and French colonial forces out of Indo China, Russian fleets operating in the China Seas and the aspiration of German raiders in the Indian Ocean were frequently mentioned as arguments for the development of the military presence on the island.²⁵⁸

²⁵⁵ Holmes, 1982. pp11-12.

²⁵⁶ Bose, 2012. pp29 – 31. Miksic, 2013. pp415 – 418.

²⁵⁷ Holmes, 1982. pp11 - 12.

²⁵⁸ Murfett et al., 2005. pp110 – 141.

There was however a persistent fear of ethnic uprising throughout the late 19th century. The garrison had proved incapable of suppressing riots among the Chinese clans in 1854 and failed to address the persistent threat of piracy in the busy straits of Malacca.²⁵⁹ The inadequacies of the garrison were ably demonstrated when, on 15th February 1915, the sepoys of 5th Light Infantry Regiment at the Alexandra Barracks mutinied, killing British soldiers and civilians in the process, and releasing German POWs being held at Tanglin. Ironically, the British called upon their allies in the local area to help put down the mutiny, including the crews of Japanese, Russian, and French warships, although the bulk of the fighting was undertaken by Royal Marines, Sikh police, and local volunteers.²⁶⁰

In the inter-war years as the threat of conflict loomed in Europe and the Far East, Lt Gen Percival and his commanders had the unenviable role of defending the indefensible. The garrison in Singapore was tasked with the enduring dilemma of walking the fine line between preparing for war with inadequate resources, a flawed strategy, and an ever increasing 'period before relief' while reassuring Singaporeans that the island was impregnable.²⁶¹

4.6 Garrison Life - A Totally Scottish Institution

4.6.1 Moving In

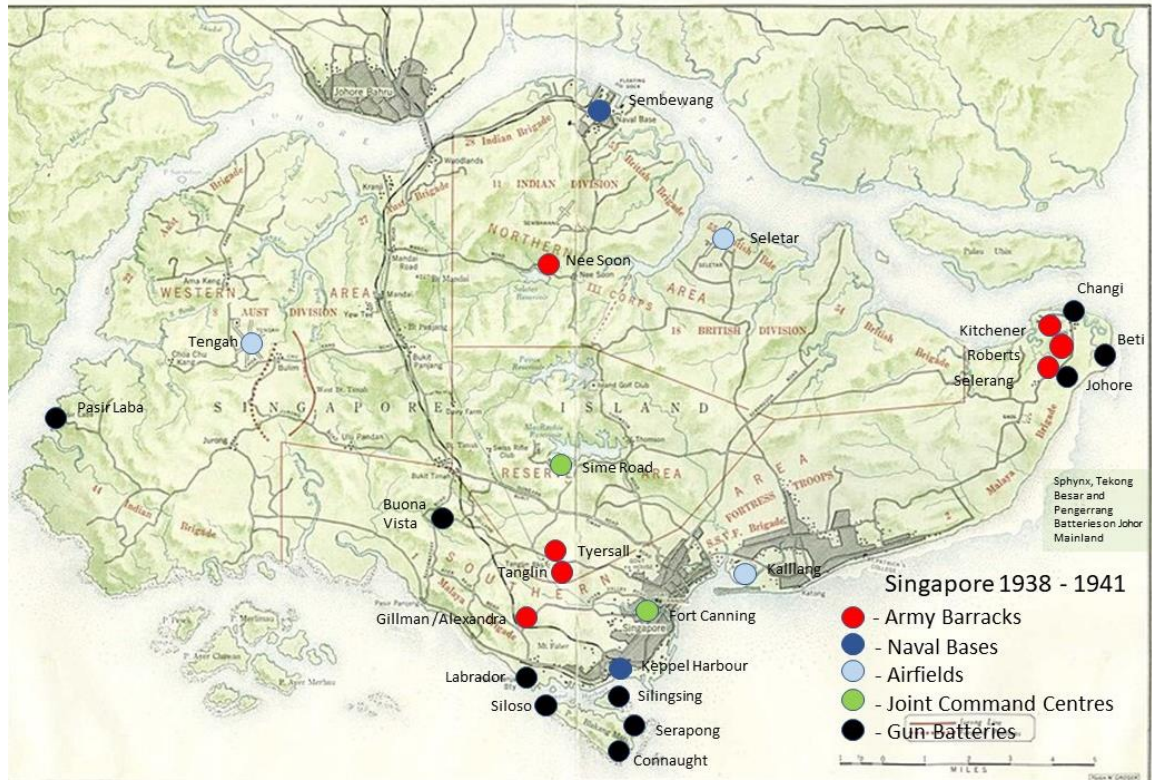
Both the Scottish infantry battalions had completed half their foreign tours before being sent to Singapore. The Gordon Highlanders had been dispatched from garrison duties in Gibraltar. They arrived in Singapore on 3rd April 1937 and were sent to the newly constructed barracks at Selarang, 12 miles from the city on the remote Changi peninsula. The area was already by then the site of a collection of military bases including the Kitchener Barracks of the Royal Engineers, the Roberts Barracks of the Royal Artillery, and the India Lines housing Indian Army detachments. The Gordons were the first Scottish regiment to be sent to Singapore for some time and they joined two other British Army infantry battalions; the 1st Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers and the 1st Battalion of the Middlesex Regiment, in garrisoning the island.²⁶²

²⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, pp76 - 78

²⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, pp162 – 174.

²⁶¹ *Ibid.*, pp218 – 245. Farrell, 2006. pp107 – 120.

²⁶² The Singapore Free Press and Mercantile Advertiser, 20 February 1937, Page 3 viewed 07/11/2019.



Map 4 - A map of Singapore showing the location of significant military facilities.

The map shows the disposition of gun batteries along the south coast and clearly reflects the persistent belief of the garrison that the enemy threat would be from the seas to the south.

According to the predictably jingoistic article in the Straits Times on 3rd April 1937 entitled ‘*Broad Accents, Bairns and Bagpipes*’ the Gordon Highlanders were looking forward to their stay despite the high cost of living. The correspondent stated that the Gordons numbered around 850 men and were conspicuously accompanied by more than 100 wives and children.²⁶³ The article goes on to comment on the high proportion of non-combatants declaring that they must have set the record for the most children per family.²⁶⁴

²⁶³ Percival notes that once the war started no married families of the army or the air force could enter Malaya, but those already there could stay (Grehan & Mace, 2015, p 181).

²⁶⁴ The Straits Times 3rd April 1937. p12. The Straits Times 5th April 1937. p20.

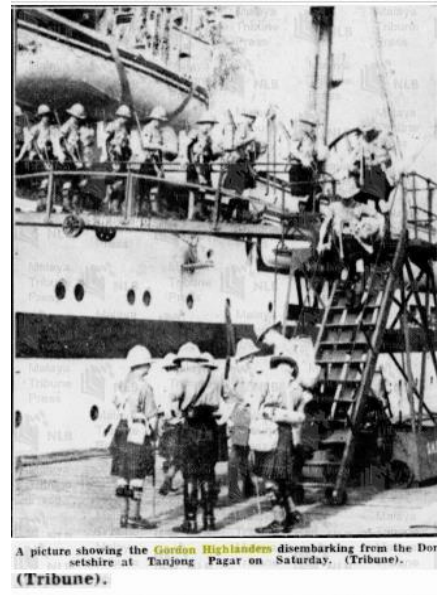


Figure 14 a and b – Press coverage of the arrival of the Gordon Highlanders in Singapore

The article included images of the families arriving and the disembarking of the soldiers. CQMS James Bradford had seven children including a set of triplets and a pair of twins. Three more families had five children each (Morning Tribune, 5 April 1937, Page 23, Straits Times, 5th April 1937, p20.) Such articles were designed to assimilate the Scots into the local society.

The Selarang Barracks had been constructed just the previous year in 1936 and the Gordons were the first unit to take residence.²⁶⁵ The amenities such as the sport facilities, hospitals and swimming pool were still being installed by the time the Gordons arrived.²⁶⁶

²⁶⁵ Havers, 2003. p32.

²⁶⁶ The Straits Times, 26 December 1937. Page 12.

The battalion's families moved into brand new married quarters set in what observers stated were '*pleasant shady avenues*' around the barracks.²⁶⁷ There is however evidence that suggest the barracks were not totally fit for purpose. The school facilities for the 50 families proved to be far from adequate. An 'Observant Sympathiser of the Military' wrote in the Straits Times that the classrooms were housed in a bungalow out with the Changi base and the building was without proper sanitation and overrun with mosquitos.²⁶⁸ Calls were also made for a new Cold Storage outlet at the NAAFI so the wives could '*get meat and fruit without having to go the 16 miles by car to get it.*'²⁶⁹ The tenders for the erection of a Post Office in Changi only went out in August 1937.²⁷⁰

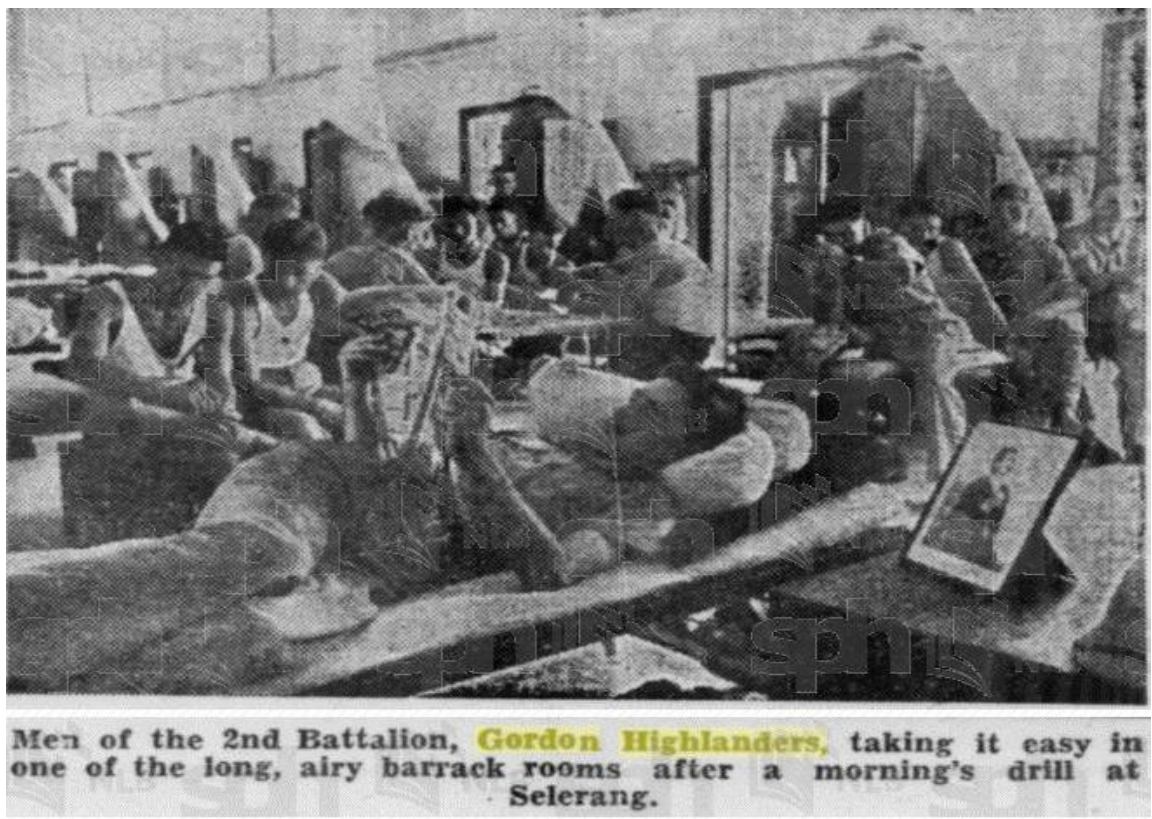


Figure 15 – An image depicting an accommodation block for the Gordon Highlanders at the Selerang Barracks.

Soon after the arrival of the Gordons the Singapore press were given access to the site to publicise the conditions the troops were living in at their new barracks. When considering the overcrowding in Changi POW camp, this pre-war image of the accommodation at Selerang should be compared with image of the accommodation at Changi Jail in Chapter 8 (The Straits Times, 1 May 1938, Page 16).

²⁶⁷ At least 10 officers were accompanied by their wives and children. The Straits Times, 2 April 1937, Page 12.

²⁶⁸ The Singapore Free Press and Mercantile Advertiser, 20 April 1937, Page 2

²⁶⁹ The Singapore Free Press and Mercantile Advertiser, 20 April 1937, Page 2

²⁷⁰ The Straits Times, 14 August 1937, Page 12

The A&SH in comparison had been transferred from India alongside the 4/19 Hyderabad Battalion and the 5/2 Punjabi Battalion. The units had fought alongside each other in the Waziristan Campaign 1919 -1920 where the Argylls had not performed particularly well in the mountain battles.²⁷¹ They arrived in Singapore on 7th August 1939 and were temporarily housed with the 2nd Loyals Battalion at the Gillman Barracks.²⁷² They then went on exercise to Johor before returning to take up residence in their new barracks at Tyersall.

There are three entries in the A&SH Battalion War Diary concerning the state of the Tyersall Barracks:

Table 3 - A&SH Battalion War Diary showing entries concerning the state of Tyersall Barracks

Date	Text
09/11/1939	The battalion moved by MT from KOTA TINGGI to TYERSALL PARK where it occupied the hutted Camp which had been built for it. The Camp was hardly completed
12/04/1940	<p>On return to Tyersall Park Camp [from exercise] it was found that there had been a large increase in the number of rats in Camp. These have now become a serious nuisance and the men complain that they can't sleep at night because of the rats, which sometimes even jump up on the men's beds. The DADH has been asked to institute an extensive anti rat campaign.</p> <p>The concrete drains are breaking up everywhere in Camp. This is due to the thoroughly bad mixture of concrete which was used in the original construction. The question of drains has also been represented to Force Headquarters.</p>
31/01/1941	During the month the Bn was told that it would move into Gillman Barracks about the end of Feb or the beginning of March in place of the 2Bn Loyals who were going to India. About a week later this was cancelled as the war office had decided not to send the Loyals to India after all. This caused considerable disappointment in the Bn as we had been in Gillman Barracks with the Loyals for two months on the first arrival in the country and knew them to be very well-appointed barracks.

²⁷¹ Roy, 2019. p34, p47. In one engagement the A&SH lost 9 men and left the bodies to be mutilated by the tribesmen.

²⁷² Dean, 1955. pp131 - 135.

These entries demonstrate a litany of problems with the Tyersall camp. This facility had been created during the rapid influx of forces in response to the growing threat of Japanese invasion. Unlike the Gordon Highlanders who were replacing another battalion, the A&SH arrived as one battalion in a full brigade which was considered a supplement to the standing garrison commitment and as such their arrival had forced the authorities to build new temporary accommodation in which to billet them.

Tyersall Camp was located at the west end of Orchard Road and adjacent to the Botanic Gardens across the road from the purpose-built Tanglin Road Barracks. Typically for more temporary barracks and later to be a common site in the POW camps in Thailand and Burma, the accommodation consisted of a collection of attap roofed bamboo huts 40yds in length with a veranda running along one side.²⁷³ They were raised on piers to deter wildlife and keep the building clear of any flooding in the monsoon but tended to sink into the ground over time. Each hut had room for up to thirty beds allotted according to rank. Junior officers slept in similar buildings, but sub divided into compartments to offer a bit more privacy. They were tended by orderlies and local 'Boys' who ironed the clothes and tidied the accommodation.²⁷⁴

Married garrison officers over the age of thirty and soldiers over the age of twenty-six were entitled to quarters in adjacent estates, but there were never enough properties, and the waiting lists were long. The arrival of new battalions, especially those which had already been stationed abroad for many years with their wives and families in tow, compounded the issue especially as no new quarters had been built at Tyersall. This forced many families and married men under the required age limit to rent accommodation in the local area.²⁷⁵

The garrison quartermasters set about establishing all the usual facilities found in a barracks in Scotland. This included a respectable Officer's Mess, a Sergeants Mess and a 'wet' (with beer) and 'dry' (without beer) canteen.²⁷⁶ Dry latrines, a common sight in India, were established away from the accommodation and 'cold' shower blocks were built for the essential wash down after a hard day on exercise. Cooking at Tyersall was done in a cement -floored block, with open sides and an attap roof with stoves all around it – but no

²⁷³ Attap is thatch made of palm throngs.

²⁷⁴ Moffatt & McCormick, 2003. p44.

²⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, p49.

²⁷⁶ Holmes, 2011. pp536 – 538.

ovens.²⁷⁷ Daily life centred around the parade square, the orderly room, mess halls and workshops. Downtime was spent in the messes, chapel and taking the short trip to the bright lights of Orchard Road.²⁷⁸

Those working around Tyersall, but living in town, looked upon the landscaped gardens, tropical palms and attap huts as some quintessential view of a tropical paradise. Denis Russell-Roberts working at the command centre on site recalled that the buildings were set in beautiful surroundings:

*'It was here that I came to work every day among the tropical shrubs and plants, small lakes and green lawns. After the arid soil of India this was quite a little oasis.'*²⁷⁹

However, there was no doubting that the services at Tyersall were, in comparison to the established garrison facilities at Selerang, Gillman and Tanglin, a poor neighbour and not fit for purpose. Many of the soldiers considered Tyersall a dump.²⁸⁰ Maj Angus Rose commented that a few officers on the other hand treated the place as a holiday camp, with conditions no worse than the public-school dormitories, again demonstrating a certain misplaced appreciation of the tribulations of the ranker.²⁸¹

Rose does go on to give some form of explanation as to why the Tyersall barracks were so poorly built. He suggests that it was in some way down to the corruption in the civilian and military administration and alludes to an ongoing enquiry concerning the funding for the new Tyersall build.²⁸² Rose also attests that the levels of corruption among the local authorities was so bad that no one person could be singled out without implicating many more. Captain Loveday, an officer in the Royal Engineers, was accused of accepting money for contracts and appeared to have been a handy scapegoat for the authorities looking to crack down on contractual dishonesty but afraid of implicating themselves or close associates.²⁸³ Loveday was not the only officer among the military who were prepared to take advantage of the pending war and behaving badly in public, all of which according to Rose, caused quite a justifiable annoyance to the civilians. He concludes that

²⁷⁷ McCormick, 1997. No page numbers.

²⁷⁸ Moffatt & McCormick, 2003. pp47 – 50.

²⁷⁹ Russell – Roberts, 1965. p29.

²⁸⁰ Pte Jockie Bell stated in interview that the conditions at Tyersall were no worse than those in the mills at Tillicoultry. (McCormick, 1997. No page number).

²⁸¹ Moffatt & McCormick, 2003. p45.

²⁸² Rose, No Date. p2.

²⁸³ Thomas, 2009. p19.

there was a perceptible lack of friendliness to the military from the civil authorities which affected the attitude of the A&SH officers.²⁸⁴

Life in Tyersall became so bad for some units that they were willing to mutiny. The entry in the A&SH logbook dated 7th May 1940 states:

D.A.A & QMG Force EMU visited Bn and reported to CO that about 2 Pls (platoons) of 4/19th Hyderabad Regt had refused to go on parade. In case there was any further trouble the Bn Was ordered to stand by with a Flying Picquet of one Coy (one Pl at immediate notice and the remainder at 15 minutes notice)

The 4/19th Hyderabads had arrived from India in August 1939 along with the A&SH and had spent their first few months in tented accommodation in Tanglin Barracks before being moved across the Tanglin Road into the wooden huts at Tyersall.²⁸⁵ There were the usual rumblings of dissatisfaction from a new unit settling into new billets and there were always Indian nationalist sympathisers in town willing to spread false rumours with the aim of propagating discontent among the rank and file.²⁸⁶ However, many officers found the life in Singapore pleasant enough with a good exchange rate that made their pay go further than their British counterparts. Some bought cars and toured Malaya, but most chose to take advantage of the relatively cheap food and drink in the city.²⁸⁷

But the conditions for the young, homesick, Hyderabad soldiers deteriorated so drastically in the makeshift barracks, that around a company of men had refused to muster for their parade. Things came to a head when one of their popular Indian officers, an advocate for Indian independence and nationalism, was detained by the authorities.²⁸⁸ The A&SH diary aptly describes how the battalion then spent the next few days manning a nervous watch over the troublemakers after securing their ammunition.²⁸⁹

This worrying incident never made it into the local papers. There was a concerted attempt to avoid damaging publicity and spooking an anxious population still fearful of an

²⁸⁴ Rose, No Date. p2.

²⁸⁵ The Straits Times 6 May 1940 Page 10

²⁸⁶ Farrell, 2015. p140.

²⁸⁷ Singh J, 2015. p xv. Food was a big issue for the Indian officers who were often sharing a mess with British colleagues. British catering staff tended to serve up traditional British dishes despite many of the officers preferring curries. (Barkawi, 2017. p97)

²⁸⁸ Elphick, 1995. pp98-100.

²⁸⁹ Murfett et al., 2006. pp163 -170.

uprising, especially those living around the Tanglin and Alexandra barracks who had witnessed the deaths of civilians during the mutiny in 1915.²⁹⁰ The eventual removal of the Hyderabads to the Changi peninsula did not only address some of their complaints about standards of the accommodation but more importantly, removed the troublemakers from the city and surround them by loyal British Army troops. How close this was to a full-blown uprising is debateable, however the event and the subsequent actions taken by the authorities ably illustrates the tension within the Indian Army divisions and the impact that low pay, poor living conditions, and homesickness had on the morale of troops.²⁹¹

Angus Rose summed up the attitude of his colleagues towards being stationed in Tyersall and being so far away from Scotland.

*'As a station, we didn't care much for Singapore, and there was considerable competition among the officers to wangle a transfer to the home establishment, as, for the first 2 1/2 years in Malaya we felt very much in the non-combatant zone.'*²⁹²

This last comment is a persistent theme among the pre-war commentators. The escalation to war in Europe dominated the press from 1939 onwards and the Scots in Singapore were very aware of the threat to Britain should Hitler's Germany choose to invade western Europe.²⁹³ The mounting sense of trepidation pervading through the letters from home seemed in stark contrast with the local press assessment of the remote chance of anything happening in the Far East. This feeling of helplessness and isolation was compounded by the deployment of the 51st Highland Division to France and Belgium in June 1940, which included sister battalions of the garrison troops in the Far East.²⁹⁴ The usual levels of homesickness were intensified by the ominous onset of war.

²⁹⁰ On 15th February 1915, sepoys of the 5th Light Infantry mutinied at their barracks in Alexandra. Eighteen British troops and local civilians were killed before the mutineers were rounded up by local volunteers, regular army units and visiting foreign troops. Forty-seven of the ringleaders were publicly executed, and the regiment dispersed. Poor conditions and inept leadership plus the real fear of fighting against fellow Muslims in Gallipoli were thought to have sparked the uprising. (Murfit et al., 2005. pp158-176.)

²⁹¹ Farrell, 2006, pp127 - 128.

²⁹² Rose, No date. p6.

²⁹³ Shennan, 2015. pp299 – 306.

²⁹⁴ Urquhart, 2010. p63.

4.6.2 Rest and Play

The garrison authorities were keen to introduce the new arrivals into the local social scene. This would not only ingratiate the soldiers to their new neighbors but would also go some way to relieve the tedium of training and barrack life. The battalion adjutants were very willing to accept invitations from the civilian organisations for their men to participate in various social functions. Each event gave the garrison press officer a chance to promote the reputation of the battalion in the local papers with vivid accounts of the formal proceedings. The battalion willingly appropriated Scottish cultural symbolism to augment the integration into Singapore colonial society. Scottish institutions, such as the St Andrews Society and the Presbyterian church, reinvigorated by the arrival of the Gordons in 1937, set about reinstating a packed programme of Scottish themed events. Every opportunity was taken to portray the romantic Scottish military heritage. The climax of the 'Tattoo' held in Farrer Park in August 1937, was described in the most stirring patriotic terms by the Tribune reporter.

*'The roar of modern guns and the Figure of Peace above the castle gateway stretches out her arms in appeal. The bugles of Britain ring out in the 'Rally' summoning her people to rearm for the maintenance of peace in a fear-ridden world.'*²⁹⁵

The review in the paper of the Selangor St Andrews Society celebrations in November ended with a comment reflecting on the martial attributes of the Highland soldier. Mr James Robertson commented that the 'homely' speech of the Highlanders was refreshing and reasserted that their tough upbringing ensured their fighting qualities:

*'...they were "bonnie fechtors" coming from the "north east knuckle of Scotland where only fit men can survive.'*²⁹⁶

The arrival of the A&SH and the temporary stopover of the Seaforth Highlanders, who were moving from Shanghai to India, boosted the competition between the battalions vying for the title of most 'Scottish' unit in town. Things came to a head in October 1940 when the Gordons staged the annual piping and dancing competitions at Selangor and invited men of the A&SH and the Seaforth Highlanders to compete. The Gordons won most of the awards.²⁹⁷ By the end of November 1940 there were enough Scottish battalions in

²⁹⁵ The Morning Tribune, 28 August 1937. Page 3.

²⁹⁶ The Straits Times, 4 December 1937. Page 12.

²⁹⁷ The Singapore Free Press and Mercantile Advertiser, 15 October 1940, Page 9.

Singapore to stage the largest Highland Gathering in SE Asia at the Jalan Besar Stadium on the last day of the month.²⁹⁸ The Straits Times reporter commentated on the music and costumes on display. Again, there was an underlying theme of creating the myth of a formidable fighting man spawned from the rugged landscapes of the old country:

'Men of brawn, men of endurance and men of agility met in contests which took the memories and hearts of Scots men and women who watched them back to the misty island of Skye, Braemar and Strathallan, Central Scotland.'

Every opportunity was taken to parade the men in front of an admiring public. The officers extolled the virtues of the battalion through drill, music, and performances. Although such talents may not have been a necessity on the modern battlefield, the martial displays did reinforce the Scots reputation for discipline and smartness, traits that the local civilians equated to the superior fighting qualities of the men.



Figure 16 - An illustration in LIFE Magazine dated 21st July 1941

The images depict the multinational forces gathered for the defence of Singapore. The 'Scotch' are represented by the A&SH pictured on exercise and distinguishable by their bonnets and notably different from their English compatriots. There is a good probability that the Indian units on show are the 4/19 Hyderabads and the 5/2 Punjabis of the 12th Indian Brigade.

²⁹⁸ The Straits Times, 1 December 1940, Page 22.

The military authorities had for many years recognised the need to keep a garrison soldier occupied. Beyond the training, drill and formal duties, down time could be filled with sport. The 1932 edition of the Infantry Training manual exalted the importance of physical fitness and the role of various sports in keeping the men fit to fight:

*The men will respond wholeheartedly and will carry the spirit of their games into their work. A platoon which plays football, runs, and boxes, will be qualified to meet, and overcome the stress and strain of battle and of long marches.*²⁹⁹

Sport would not only promote teamwork, unit morale and overcome the stresses of training but also allow the soldier a chance to integrate in the local community. A good performance on the playing fields would also demonstrate the prowess of the battalion, thereby building public confidence in its martial capability.

The Singaporean colonial public expected the garrison troops to put up teams to face off against civilian opposition.³⁰⁰ The Gordons took to the field in a plethora of sports, fielding rugby, football, cricket, water polo, tennis, boxing, and athletic teams to varying degrees of success and all in the eye of an appreciative public.³⁰¹ Had the aim been to promote the physical attributes of the Scots then the surfeit of complimentary press stories that accompanied each competition would suggest the strategy had been a successful one. For example, an astute observer of the shot, discus and hammer throwing at the combined services events in 1937 was particularly impressed by the performance of two hefty team members from the Gordons. They appeared '*very brawny and capable*'. The observer goes on to describe the typical Highlander as being '*7ft high, covered in muscles and hair on his chest*'.³⁰²

Social sport and fitness were also encouraged.³⁰³ Golf, swimming, shooting, and sailing were all popular pastimes. Some officers took advantage of the local flying club at Kallang to learn how to fly.³⁰⁴ Captain Ivan Lyon of the Gordon Highlanders became a regular

²⁹⁹ War Office, 1932. pp13 – 14. French 2005 pp115 – 116.

³⁰⁰ Rose, 2017. p38.

³⁰¹ The Malaya Tribune, 8 May 1937. Page 15. The Straits Times, 30 July 1937. Page 14.

³⁰² The Malaya Tribune, 25 June 1937. Page 16.

³⁰³ Many of the sport club facilities abandoned at the fall of Singapore were later incorporated into the POW camp network beyond Changi. The Polo Club on Thompson Road, Turf Club at Bukit Timah, Singapore Island Country Club at Sime Road, and the Farrer Park Sports fields all became scenes of heavy fighting and used as POW sites in 1942.

³⁰⁴ Rose, 2017. p38. Wilson, 2010. p55.

visitor at the local Yacht Club, He had been given a grant from the battalion's 'sports fund' to buy a six-metre sloop called the 'Vnette'. A skilled yachtsman, Lyon undertook several long-distance excursions up the Malay coast to Thailand and Indo China to visit his girlfriend. His excursions made the papers and he built up a reputation as quite an adventurer.³⁰⁵ The intelligence reports he compiled were sent to Malaya Command.³⁰⁶ Club sports also provided a social platform to encourage the integration of the soldier with the civilian population. Officers used the social and sport clubs to do business with local contacts and meet up with girlfriends and acquaintances. Days at the horse races, sailing galas, polo festivals and national sporting events became the ideal place to mix with the local community.

The foregoing notwithstanding, public parading and sporting fixtures did not necessarily help the average private soldier to assimilate into the community or foster a sense of domesticity. Despite the formal duties orchestrated by the command, there were limited opportunities for the common soldier to spend his leisure time in the city as he was usually confined to his barracks not only by the remoteness of its location but also by the lack of money to pay for their transport and entertainment. In June 1939, the Singapore Free Post & Trader ran a series of three unsolicited articles under the title '*Soldiers Problems*' discussing the main issues concerning the local garrison soldier during their stay in Singapore. Although not directly attributed to the Scots, the articles ably illustrate the issues around living and working so far from home in the army.

What was unusual about the commentaries was the candidness of the subject matter. The correspondents appear to pull no punches when it comes to identifying the shortfalls of the Army in coping with the problems caused by low pay, prostitution, and the lack of married quarters. Although the piece was written with a degree of sympathy towards the young soldier stationed far from home, the article was primarily aimed at the civilian who was expected to accept these men into their society and if need be, help address these pressing social issues. It was also a subtle swipe at the ineptitude of the military authorities.

³⁰⁵ The Straits Times, 30 July 1939, Page 3. Lyons was later among the A&SH to escape Singapore and went on to head up the *Jaywick* and *Rimau* raids attacking shipping in Singapore harbour with commandos ferried in a fishing boat, the *Krait*, from Australia. He was killed during the evasion after the unsuccessful *Rimau* Raid.

³⁰⁶ Ramsay-Silver, 2010. pp84 – 85.

The concluding article printed on 7th June edition states that:

*‘... nothing, not even generous pay increases will ever make the average soldier really like Singapore. He finds the heat and the monotony of Army training in the tropics so distasteful and the opportunities for amusement and leisure hour enjoyment so few that he inevitably thinks Singapore is the “worst” military station in the Empire – which it definitely is not.’*³⁰⁷

However, a second article suggests that the pay was insufficient in such a costly city and that the soldier has very little spare cash left to spend on himself and if he wants to see the town, he is soon completely ‘broke’.³⁰⁸ The paper admits there were cheaper and more local facilities to be found on and about the Changi military area and subsidised buses coming into town, but the figures were a stark reminder as to how far the average pay would go for a newly arrived private soldier.³⁰⁹

The article then goes on to cite the plight of married men in Singapore and suggests that there was lack of adequate married quarters which was compounded by the recent drives by Mr Hore-Belisha of the War Ministry to recruit more men into the regiments.³¹⁰ The lack of accommodation for the families had meant that the married unaccompanied soldier had lost all hope of getting a quarter in Singapore for the duration of his detachment. Despite the recruitment drive there had been no increase in investment in new married quarters.³¹¹

The writer sums up by saying:

*‘It is not to be wondered therefore that the soldier, often longs to be back in his depot town where all the cinemas and dance halls are usually at hand and where he can afford to take his girlfriend for an evening out without spending more than he can afford.’*³¹²

³⁰⁷ Singapore Free Post & Trader, 7 June 1939. Page 11.

³⁰⁸ Singapore Free Press and Mercantile Advertiser, 6 June 1939. Page 8

³⁰⁹ Urquhart refers to a ‘The Piggy Bus’ which took the local Singaporeans working at the camp to and from the city. (Urquhart, 2010. p60).

³¹⁰ Baron Leslie Hore-Belisha, (b.1893, d. 1957), was the British secretary of state for war between 1937 and 1940 and instituted military conscription in the spring of 1939.

³¹¹ The Singapore Free Press and Mercantile Advertiser, 6 June 1939. Page 8.

This problem was not limited to the ranks. Officers arriving from China who were obliged to send their families to live in the United Kingdom, Australia, or India, found themselves unable to support them due to the high cost of living and were left ‘financially embarrassed’ (Grehan & Mace, 2015. p181.)

³¹² The Singapore Free Press and Mercantile Advertiser, 6 June 1939. Page 8.

There is no immediate evidence available in the battalion archives which questions the validity of the articles. However, assuming the sentiment is true, if not the detail of the salaries, then the economic constraints on the average garrison soldier would in many ways shape the experience of the man in Singapore. Married men with wives and family back in the UK would have naturally looked upon the tour in Singapore as a temporary stopover and an obstacle to overcome before their eventual return home. Bored Scottish soldiers, confined to barracks due to lack of funds, denied such domestic comforts and family support, and counting down the days to the repatriation, could never be expected to call Singapore 'home'.

4.6.3 Violence, Lawbreaking and Prostitution

Intense regimental rivalry also encouraged division within Malaya Command. The Scot's inherent fierce nationalistic and regimental pride set them apart from the other battalions on the island and encouraged not only feisty engagements on the sports field but also fueled violent clashes in the bars and clubs in town.³¹³ This left the battalion command with a dilemma. Such engagements clearly built camaraderie and fighting spirit among the ranks, but it was often at the expense of the battalion's reputation for discipline and threatened the fragile tolerance of the local population. There was a fine line between being seen to be condemning and condoning such violent acts.

The Malaya Tribune reported that on 17th August 1941, a fight broke out at the Sergeants Mess at the Selarang Barracks between Australians and the Gordons. It resulted in the death of Robert Halley Gibson AIF. Sgt Robert Gray, aged 37, was accused of causing his death as he pushed Gibson through the door of the mess smashing his head against a wall.³¹⁴ Surprisingly, the incident was not reported in the battalion diary and later the second district judge, Mr Conrad Oldham, dismissed the case as death by misadventure after a special jury found there was no case to answer under the Defence Regulations.³¹⁵ According to many veterans, fights between rival battalions, services or commonwealth forces were frequent enough occurrences often leading to injury and arrest, all be it a night in the Military Police holding cells. Very few cases appeared to have made it into the

³¹³ Fighting was not limited to the Scots. In May 1941, C M Crighton reported in a Japanese publication that there were 'constant large scale, clashes' between Indian and Australian units (Hack & Blackburn, 2008. p75.)

³¹⁴ The Malaya Tribune, 17 August 1941. Page 5.

³¹⁵ Morning Tribune, 24 October 1941. Page 6.

criminal courts and even fewer were picked up by the papers. Yet Russell Braddon, an Australian soldier arriving in Singapore as part of the build-up of troops in 1941 clearly understood the unwritten territorial claims of the A&SH in the brothels and bars of Lavender Street and the 'World Resorts'. He states that the A&SH had held undisputed control in Singapore prior to the arrival of the Australians and had sent out an 'uncompromising note' warning the Diggers to keep out of town:

*That, of course, was all that was required. On the first available leave day every free Australian on the island went into the city. There they were met by every free Argyll, and great and bloody were the battles..... Thus, round the Great World and the Happy World and the main street of Singapore did the volunteers from the Dominions first join hands with the professional soldiers from the Homeland.*³¹⁶

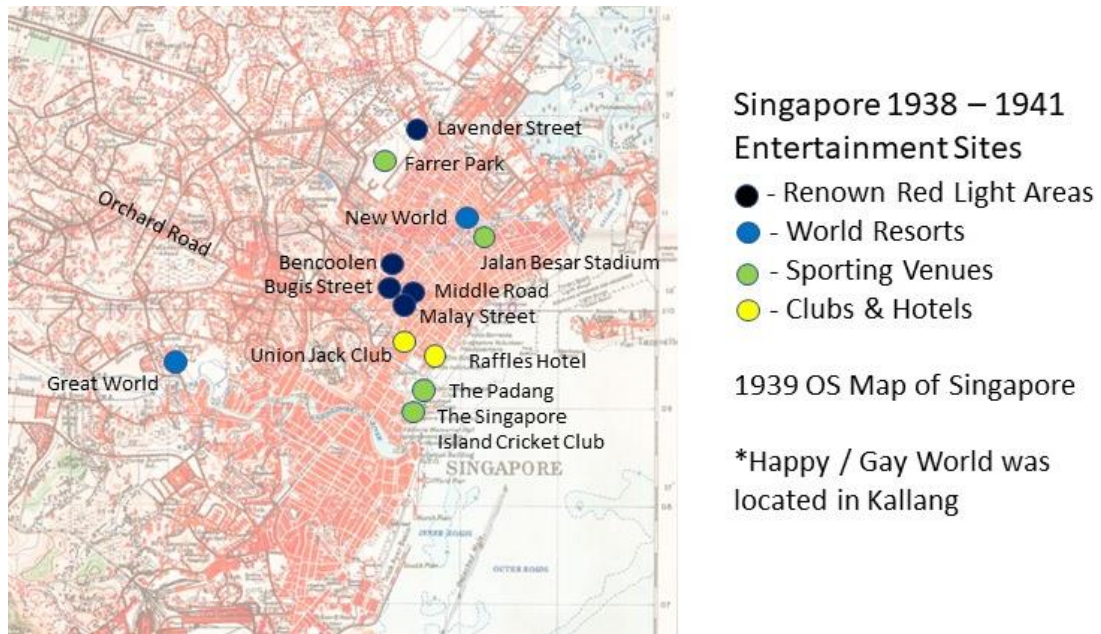
Duncan Ferguson of the A&SH puts it simpler:

*'The Union Jack Club: that's where all the battles took place – the John Wayne stuff. It was good!'*³¹⁷

Both statements infer the pleasure and camaraderie to be had on such occasions. The fact that Braddon recognises the A&SH above all other units on the island as being the dominant force in Singapore is evidence of the success of the leadership in installing a sense of superiority over every other unit in town. They were ready to defend their reputation against all comers including their own countrymen.

³¹⁶ Braddon, 1954. p78.

³¹⁷ Robertson & Wilson, 1995. p92.



Map 5 – A map of Singapore's entertainment sites frequented by Scottish troops.

Jimmy McLean, an Argyll, interviewed by Moffatt and McCormick suggested that it was in the make-up of the Argylls to fight and reinforces the notion regimental rivalry.

*'They knew how to look after themselves and they came in the Army pretty streetwise. The two regular Argyll battalions were a different type to the territorial battalions, and they were a different type altogether from the more rural recruits of the Gordon Highlanders.'*³¹⁸

National identity on such violent occasions was a necessary priority. Highlanders in town were usually wearing their standard khaki shirts and trousers, however their bonnets and Glengarries distinguished them from the bush hatted opposition. There was a certain degree of military precision to the fights with men meeting at agreed location and buglers on standby to call in reinforcements from adjacent streets. There was a medical evacuation system for removing the wounded and many ruses to disassociate the main protagonists from the event to avoid arrest and the inevitable court appearance.³¹⁹ The fact that such skirmishes were not noted in the Battalion Diaries suggest this brawling was often overlooked by the respective commands.

³¹⁸ Moffatt & McCormick, 2003. p56.

³¹⁹ *Ibid.*, p56.

The matter would take on a more serious aspect when the civil courts and local press became involved. The adjutants, worried about the standing of the military among the civilians, if not the fighting reputation of the unit, sought ways of diffusing the confrontations. The Pay Office of the A&SH made certain the men were paid on a Wednesday, a day before their Australian colleagues, ensuring they had spent all their cash in town before the 'Diggers' could join them.³²⁰ Curfews and drinking bans were tried at various times but this only forced the soldier into breaking the restrictions as well as being hauled in for street fighting. Fighting among their own ranks, in contrast, was often an indication of an endemic culture of bullying which was seldom ever spoken about outside the regiment.³²¹ However perpetual reoffenders were often identified as troublemakers and were first on the list to be seconded to other units as they were deemed unreliable and had no loyalty.³²²



Figure 17 - Newsreel dated 5th October 1941.

This picture illustrates the reaction of newly arrived Australians to the drinking hours restrictions imposed to ensure good behaviour in the town (IWM).

³²⁰ Moffatt & McCormick, 2003. p56. Robertson & Wilson, 1995. p92.

³²¹ Holmes, 2011. pp548 -549

³²² Robertson & Wilson, 1995. p75.

Excluding the persistent incidents of brawling, soldiers would sporadically appear in the press as perpetrators of crimes. The local papers were quick to report the misdemeanours of the Scottish soldiers. It is noticeable that many relate to the stealing of cars and taxis, to get back out to their billets after a night in town.³²³ There are also cases where the soldier had been wrongly accused of a crime and been exonerated by the court. In each of these cases there is a sense of the regiment making every attempt to protect the reputation of the unit in the eyes of the civilian population. The accused's counsel, often officers of the regiment under the direction of the adjutant staff, attempted to provide character references and context to the cases to mitigate the punishments. However, the sentences when guilt was proven, were stiff.

One correspondent writing the first article in the trilogy entitled '*Why Soldiers Dislike Singapore – The Facts*' published on 5th June 1939 suggests that the unlawfulness was caused by boredom. Men short of money would wander around town looking for excitement.³²⁴ They would turn to petty crime for entertainment. Alternatively, a persistent criminal would hope to be eventually drummed out of the army and returned home. However, the writer suggests in the defence of the Army, that much had been made of the few cases that involve civilians and the extensive criticism from the public was indicative of their reticence to accept the garrison soldier into their community. The correspondent goes on to state that the difficulties of recruiting good men in the United Kingdom before the war had allowed a number of '*outcasts*' into the ranks, '*black sheep*' who had joined up to avoid imprisonment and escape sanction in their hometown. This had led to the civilians believing the worst in all soldiers and seeming '*stand offish*', something of which the soldier took to heart and assumed that he and his kind were pariahs barred from the colonial society in the city. A clarion call was posted asking for all civilians to accept the soldier for what he was and not to consider them with '*even the slightest intention of caste distinction*'. Clearly the writer had identified a prevailing uneasy divide between the garrison soldier and the public he had been sent to protect.³²⁵

It is no coincidence that the scene of the heaviest fighting in Singapore, before the war, took place in the vicinity of the bars and brothels. Moffatt states that for a hard-up Argyll, a rickshaw ride to and from Tyersall barracks would cost around 25 cents, a beer or

³²³ Morning Tribune, 4 December 1941, Page 4

³²⁴ Singapore Free Press and Mercantile, 5 June 1939. Page 8. French, 2005. p109.

³²⁵ *Ibid.*, p8.

whiskey around 1 dollar, and fifty cents would purchase ten dances with a girl at one of Singapore's three Entertainment Worlds – New World, Happy World and Great World.³²⁶

Two dollars guaranteed a good time in supposedly off-limits red-light districts in Bencoolen and Lavender Street at bars such as the 'Green Circle' and the 'Red Dragon'.³²⁷ Great World was even open on a Sunday afternoon.³²⁸ Moffatt notes that the temptations were so great that some Argylls took up running after the Sunday church parade and, clutching their two dollars, headed across town to these areas.³²⁹ This practice was soon stopped by the Military Police who arrested men in gym kit in the brothels and charged them with being improperly dressed in town.³³⁰

Prostitution in Singapore had been rife throughout the colonial period. Before 1914 it was reckoned that there were 236 Chinese, 48 Japanese and 10 European brothels in the city.³³¹ The brothels in Malay Street and Malabar Street housed Hungarian, Poles and Russian women. The thriving prostitution had however some serious repercussions beyond providing a battlefield for the inter-battalion clashes. The third article published in *The Singapore Free Press & Mercantile* on 7th June 1939 highlighted the growing problem of soldiers being debilitated by venereal disease despite several recent initiatives to reduce the number of cases. The paper claimed that 99 % of prostitutes in Singapore were infected and warns that the chances of contracting a disease after any sexual contact was almost inevitable. Moffatt and McCormick (2015) suggested that an unnamed unit, staging through Singapore from a tour in Shanghai, had 75% VD cases when they departed Singapore a year later.³³² In his report on the VD situation in Singapore, CEC Davis suggested the infection rate in Singapore in 1940 was 115 per 1,000 service personnel.³³³

Much of the reporting laid the blame for the prevalence of the disease not with the soldier but with the prostitute, the pimp, and the community. Commentators quoted Rudyard

³²⁶ Ironically the only 'World Resort' to retain its name was Great World which not only became a POW camp in 1942 but today is a bustling shopping centre. New World was primarily frequented by the Malays (Bayly and Harper 2005 p51, p56.)

³²⁷ Wardrope, 1993. p12. Two of the more notorious pre-war prostitution communities were the *Karayuki-San* found along Malay Street and the Japanese 'hostesses' in Middle Road. (Lee, 2005. p92).

³²⁸ Urquhart, 2010. pp75 – 76.

³²⁹ Moffatt & McCormick, 2003. p57.

³³⁰ Wardrope, 1993. p14.

³³¹ Shennan, 2015. p99.

³³² Moffatt & McCormick, 2003. p57. This description could apply to the Seaforth Highlanders.

³³³ Bayly and Harper, 2005. p58.

Kipling suggesting that men who live in barracks were not ‘*plaster saints*’ and that the observations could be extended to the entire male civilian population of Singapore as well.
³³⁴ The blameless soldier, short of funds and bored, needed the help of the local population to provide a healthy release for his understandable pent-up sexual demands. It was expected that single men would need the services of working women and it was up to the community to provide a safe and affordable facility.



Figure 18 - Cartoon drawn by Pte Basil Akhurst (aka 'Akki') depicting the VD Inspection Clinic in Changi POW camp.

Notably the doctor's features have been shown in detail, yet the patients have all been caricatured to protect their identity. VD patients in Changi POW camp who had contracted infections before the surrender subsequently suffered from lack of suitable drugs. (Courtesy of J Sutherland and the Akhurst Family)

The press correspondent also noted that the jaded peacetime soldier, those men without a daily role other than to undertake training, are more likely to head into town for some stimulation. Army tradesmen such as drivers, training staff, cooks etc and men of the Royal Air Force and Royal Navy were mostly productively working and would have little spare time to fill. This is a valid observation. The garrison soldier who is trained for war

³³⁴ "...and if somehow my conduct ain't all your fancy paints, why single men in barracks don't grow into plaster saints'. From 'Tommy' by Rudyard Kipling from his collection of poems entitled, *The Barrack-Room Ballads and Other Verses*.

remains on standby to carry out his role. As such he has little else to fill the working day beyond drill and training. A bored soldier with time on his hands, yet with few resources to fill it, will use what little cash he has at the 'disreputable cafes' or go looking for trouble in the clubs and bars. Moffatt & McCormick echo that sentiment suggesting that the A&SH spent so much time training and away in Malaya that they had no time for such liaisons.³³⁵ However, a single entry in the A&SH Battalion Diary suggest that the A&SH were not free from such temptations and reflects on the extent of VD within the unit:

30/07/1940

Number of cases in Hospital with VD today is six. This is a record low figure since arrival in Malaya

A letter in the Singapore Free Press and Mercantile Advertiser written in June 1939 summed up the financial consequences of contracting VD. A nameless Gordon Highlander describes the financial penalty imposed after he had been '*unlucky and contracted VD*'. His pay fell from 3s to 2s 3d per day for six months after leaving hospital to pay for his treatment and to reflect his inability to carry out his soldiering duties. Subsequently, with only limited time left in the army, the soldier was worried that his reduced pay would not allow him to save enough for his return to civilian life. The letter ends with a telling indictment of the problem within the unit, '*You see you have not heard half the complaints you could get if some people I know could tell you*'.³³⁶

For many commanders, the problem of venereal disease was more than just a medical issue. Senior officers looked upon the abstinence of the soldier as a matter of duty and national pride. For others it was a measure of discipline and morale. A fit and healthy soldier was the result of a good lifestyle and training regime. Otherwise, an army riddled with venereal disease was an indication of poor morale, indiscipline, and a lack of self-esteem.³³⁷ There is nothing to say from the battalion records that the Scottish regiments

³³⁵ Moffatt & McCormick, 2003. p57.

³³⁶ The Singapore Free Press and Mercantile Advertiser, 23 June 1939, Page 6.

³³⁷ Newlands, 2014. p127. Holmes, 2011. pp585 -587.

were any better or worse than any other unit at protecting its soldiers from the vices. But they were not the *'plaster saints'* the commanders would like the public to think.

It is easy to place too much emphasis on this narrative in assessing the morale of the Scottish soldier in Singapore. Certainly, brawling, petty criminality and prostitution connected with heavy drinking, is a prevalent theme in any study of life in a garrison and in excess it can be an indication of the declining discipline of the troops.³³⁸ What is notable in Singapore is that the garrison commanders tended to ignore or suppress the behaviour and only responded should the incident make it into the local courts and subsequently, the local press. Maintaining the image of a highly trained, well-disciplined fighting man was the imperative.

4.6.4 Relationships

By way of contrast there were men happy to head into town for a more genuine liaison with the opposite sex. However, the choice of eligible young women was limited. The subparagraph of an article of the King's Birthday reception dated 9th June 1939 highlighted another unfortunate consequence of the build-up of troops in Singapore.

'The common myth is that this outpost of empire, where men are men and the heat gets them down, lacks beautiful women.'

It goes onto add that:

'... the European woman – man ratio is variously placed at between one to ten and one to 100'.³³⁹

If the correspondent is correct, then it was no small wonder that the thousands of servicemen arriving in Singapore would find it hard to meet a future bride among the European colonial community. However, a review of the marriage columns in the local press does reveal a lucky few who managed to tie the knot.³⁴⁰ This small selection of notifications is indicative of the type of occasions these weddings were. Most notably is the attendance of regimental bands, the wearing of highland dress and the range of

³³⁸ Connelly & Miller, 2004. p427.

³³⁹ The Straits Times, 9 June 1939, Page 13. Shennan states that in 1931 woman accounted for around 28% of the European population in Malaya. By 1940 the number of women had increased to around 8,500 with 4,300 children with almost half living in Singapore. (Shennan, 2015. p264.)

³⁴⁰ Smith, 1999. pp11.

religions catered for by the churches. These were very much stand out occasions for the mixed congregations and those passing by the venues.³⁴¹

Yet for each man happily escorting his bride down the aisle there were many more courting partners around the island. Shennan (2015) provides an interesting insight into the attitude towards sexual encounters in colonial Singapore for the civilian '*pioneer generation*'. She suggests that it was the length of the overseas contract that usually determined whether a '*white exile*', by inference a male, would marry '*a complaisant, amusing, good tempered and good-mannered daughters of the East*'. However, it was more than likely that a man on a short-term deployment would engage a local mistress. Although there was a degree of public opposition to such liaisons, by the outbreak of the First World War the act of taking Asian concubines, commonly called '*Keeps*', was an established practice. Dr Michael Watson working among the planters in Malaya estimated that 90 per cent of the single exiles had taken a mistress.³⁴² This allowed the overseer to gain a more intimate and lasting relationship with the community around him. It is therefore not surprising that the soldier, if not the officer, looked upon establishing a relationship with a local girl as a legitimate option and in some way, a rite of passage especially as the oncoming war spread a sense of uncertainty and impermanence. Pte Wardrope recalled that his '*romance*' was a young entertainer for a Malay concert party.

*'Many a night she and I sat in her room, singing to the music of her guitar. She played very well. After a while we would fool around then hit the sack for a bout of loving which lasted until I had to run and grab a cab back to barracks. She taught me Malayan Love Songs. One of my favourites was 'Terang Bulan' the story of a lover who was not afraid to die for the sake of the girl he loved.'*³⁴³

Such romantic trysts would break down the social barriers between the garrison troops and the local populace and, as Shennan suggests, increase the understanding between the ethnic groups. However, commanding officers would also fear a conflict in interests should the soldier be called to duty yet as Wardrope infers in his comments about the tune, it would also give the soldier a reason to fight for the country. For a few garrison soldiers, the

³⁴¹ The most remarkable wedding service must have been that of Captain Mike Bardwell who had fled the battle of Slim River and escaped to Sumatra. He then requested leave to fly into Singapore on 12th February aboard a Malayan Volunteer Air Force Tiger Moth to marry his fiancée, Kate Lundon and return to the A&SH. (Moffatt & McCormick, 2003. p212.).

³⁴² Shennan, 2015. p98.

³⁴³ Wardrope, 1993. p13.

defence of Singapore meant much more than just defending an outpost of the Empire; they were also defending their lovers, wives, homes, and families.

4.6.5 Morbidity and Health

Any evaluation on the quality of life in the garrison for the Scots in Singapore can be corroborated by a review of their deaths. An examination of the Battalion Diaries and Regimental Rolls reveals several fatalities before the outbreak of hostilities (See Table 5 below).

There are significant numbers of ‘accidental deaths’, ‘road traffic accidents’ and ‘suicides’ as well as the predictable fatalities due to illness reported in the documentation. In comparison to the troops in Singapore, the Lanarkshire Yeomanry, training in Scotland, only had two deaths in the same period caused by illness. Medical reports and eyewitness accounts aired in the subsequent courts of enquiry were reported in the local newspapers and provide a useful insight into the circumstances of the deaths.

Alcohol proved to be a primary factor in many of the fatalities. Bouts of heavy drinking led to fatal accidents as intoxicated men lost consciousness, crashed their vehicles, died of asphyxiation, or pitched headfirst over the low balconies of their accommodation blocks. Many of the men who took their own lives drank heavily beforehand. Soldiers were reported as drinking to stave off depression only to find enough ‘Dutch Courage’ in their drunken state to end their suffering. Suicides were also connected to social events such as Christmas and New Year and the receipt news of the war from home such as the start of the fighting in Europe.³⁴⁴

Each newspaper report offers a detailed appraisal of the circumstances of the death. For example, Pte William Watt, 2nd Battalion Gordon Highlanders, had gone missing from his barracks on the morning of Friday 18th February 1938. The next day Watt’s body was found fully clothed in his regulation khaki shirt and long trousers and in a decomposed state. Notably the reporter finds it necessary to report that his ‘*glengarry was found*

³⁴⁴ French, 2005. p109. Wardrope, 1993. p11. Wardrope recalls that in September 1939 he was disturbed by the cleaning girl who came calling for help from the Sergeant’s room in the block. They rushed in to find the man sawing at his neck with his own bayonet. The sergeant was diagnosed as suffering from delirium and removed to hospital.

Table 4 - Deaths of Scottish soldiers from the time of their arrival in Singapore to December 1941

Date of Death	Name	Initial	Regiment	Cause of Death
22/12/1937	Donovan	J P	Gordon Highlanders	Accident while drunk
19/02/1938	Watt	W	Gordon Highlanders	Suicide
23/10/1938	Stronach	W	Gordon Highlanders	Accident while drunk
25/05/1939	Adams	W	Gordon Highlanders	Illness not specified
02/08/1939	Forbes	J	Gordon Highlanders	Motorbike accident
22/08/1939	Tevendale	G R	Gordon Highlanders	Car Accident
29/10/1939	Caffie	G W	Gordon Highlanders	Motorbike Accident
21/11/1939	Paterson	R M	A&SH	Car Accident
23/11/1939	Watson	D	Gordon Highlanders	Road Accident
02/12/1939	Milne	R H	Gordon Highlanders	Illness not specified
31/12/1939	Dempsey	R	A&SH	Asphyxia and Alcohol poisoning
10/03/1940	Scott	J	155 th Fd Regt	Pneumonia while training in Scotland ³⁴⁵
15/11/1940	Wilson	T	Gordon Highlanders	Suicide / Accident
29/12/1940	Hughes	R	A&SH	Suicide
26/05/1941	Dawson	W	Gordon Highlanders	Malaria
09/06/1941	Thorburn	J	Gordon Highlanders	Meningitis
19/10/1941	Johnston	WJ	155 th Fd Regt	Tuberculosis on route to Singapore ³⁴⁶
24/11/1941	Duncan	A M	Gordon Highlanders	Cerebro-Spinal Fever Appears in War Diary
02/12/1941	Hughes	P P	Gordon Highlanders	Acute Oedema of the lungs

Information of deaths with shaded entries comes from Singapore newspapers at <http://eresources.nlb.gov.sg/newspapers>.

³⁴⁵ McEwan & Thomson, 2013. p3.

³⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, p14.

nearby’; a symbol of nationality that the reader would relate to. The enquiry found that the private had an ounce of tar oil creosote in his stomach and the coroner concluded the soldier had taken the disinfectant and then jumped into the sea.³⁴⁷ He subsequently gave a verdict of suicide and Watt was buried at the Bidadari Christian cemetery with full military honours.³⁴⁸



*Figure 19 - The pipe band of the 2nd Battalion Gordon Highlanders at the Selarang barracks. Drunk soldiers tended to fall headfirst over these low balconies.
(Viewed at <http://bobkelsey.net/changi.html> on 21/05/20)*

Social isolation such as loneliness, social withdrawal, unemployment, bullying and ostracisation, is arguably the strongest and most reliable predictor of lethal suicidal behaviour among social groups across ages, nationality, and societies. Such behaviour is also compounded by remoteness from friends and family, domestic issues, and bereavement.³⁴⁹ It could be argued that some or all these factors were ever present in the garrison life of the Scots in Singapore. This coupled with the ready availability of alcohol, access to means by which to take ones’ own life and a shared knowledge of previous deaths among the soldiers increase the instances of suicide.

³⁴⁷ Malaya Tribune, 25 February 1938. Page 13.

³⁴⁸ Malaya Tribune, 2 March 1938, Page 18.

³⁴⁹ Van Orden et al., 2010. p5.

Many of the men were laid to rest with full military honours at the Bidadari Christian cemetery. Sgt Donovan's funeral was a typical occasion steeped in Scottish and regimental tradition. The service was attended by 150 officers and other ranks and the coffin was draped in a Union Jack with the sergeant's cap resting on the lid. The report states that the service was followed by a very traditional moment.

'Then came the most impressive part of the service when in between three volleys by the guard of honour the pipers played 'The Point of War', a Scots battle rally call'.

'The Last Post' was sounded, followed by the Scottish lament "*Lochaber No More*", played on the pipes by the regimental pipe major.³⁵⁰ This process, except for the gun salute, would be replayed time and again in captivity.³⁵¹

In contrast there were five men who died in hospital of diseases, some of which were to become so prevalent in the first year of captivity. Pte William Dawson of the Gordons, aged 27, having died of Malaria in Alexandra Hospital on 27th May 1941, was also buried in Bidadari Cemetery with full military honours.³⁵² Unusually, Pte William Adams (d. 29th May 1939) and Pte Richard Henry Milne aged 26 (d. 1st December 1939) are reported as having died of unspecified illnesses.³⁵³

The review of deaths reveals a society of young, frustrated, and bored men living far from home with access to alcohol and the temptations of the exotic tropical city. Although accidental deaths were predictable among a youthful population, the suicides are indicative of the social pressures being experienced by the garrison troops and the resultant faltering morale. All this under the ever-present threat of tropical disease.

4.7 Conclusion – A Total Institution or a Home to Fight for?

Recruiters in the early part of the 20th century coined the phrase '*Join the Army and See the World*'. In the age of global empire this was certainly an attraction for the common soldier. The army offered the chance for a man to travel, get paid a living wage and should he survive, a viable pension. Among the jewels in the colonial crown was the far flung and

³⁵⁰ The Straits Times, 24 December 1937, Page 13.

³⁵¹ Farrow, 2007. p139.

³⁵² The Straits Times, 28 May 1941, Page 11.

³⁵³ The Straits Times 29th May 1939 Page 12. The Straits Times, 2 December 1939, Page 10.

exotic island of Singapore which by the early 1930s had a reputation for expensive living and a glamorous existence. However, life for a garrison soldier was far from ideal as he often found himself socially isolated, under paid and bored. This left the Scottish soldier yearning for home.

By the middle of the 20th Century, it was expected that a soldier joining his regiment would spend some time away from his native country. The British Empire extended across the globe and required policing by its armed forces. The troops of the two Scottish regiments sent to garrison Singapore had been dispatched from duties abroad and the majority were well used to the trials of moving between foreign postings. They were also experienced in setting up their new billets in quick time. If the facilities were found wanting, then they had the ability to make good the deficiencies.

Singapore's location and climate did nothing to help the integration of the young soldier who found it difficult to acclimatize. The incessant heat above all, sapped energy and drained enthusiasm despite the innocuous afternoon tiffin breaks and regulation naps. Outside the perimeter of the camp lay a strange world of unusual customs and ethnic diversity. At times, the young soldiers were overawed by the alien sights, sounds and smells. However, the garrison commanders made every effort to mitigate the transition into this unfamiliar world and create familiar surroundings for the new arrival. Western food was served in the messes, English-speaking films were shown at the cinemas and familiar music played over the radios. Army routine and work prevailed, familiar sports and leisure activities staved off boredom. The purpose built Selerang barracks at Changi, and the more temporary Tyersall barracks, were the perfect examples of a 'total institution' – providing accommodation for an autonomous and isolated society. The command, realizing such a segregated existence may be detrimental to their role of guardians, set about integrating their soldiers into the community they had been sent to protect with varying degrees of success.

The prevalence of drinking, brawling, prostitution, indiscipline, and suicides are tell-tale markers that indicate the deterioration of morale of a battalion. Boredom, homesickness, and an uncertain future played havoc on the minds of the new volunteers that by 1940 were filling the ranks. Newspaper accounts and battalion diary entries suggest that many of these traits were prevalent in Scottish battalions. It could be argued that this was a predictable norm for any troops stationed abroad and as such the battalion commanders were aware of

what was required to keep the unit together. However, these were not professional career soldiers of the regular army on what they hoped to be a peaceful detachment. These were new young recruits joining up to defend their country and finding themselves posted to the other side of the world. In response every effort was made to instill a sense of pride and camaraderie within the battalion and the Scots had plenty of heritage and tradition to call upon to support their efforts. Above all the Scots were to be kept busy. Training not only had to prepare the men for war but had also to take their minds off their longing to be elsewhere.

For the Scottish commanders, the mental state of their troops was as important as their physical condition. Long periods abroad on garrison duties in far flung corners of the Empire could ultimately eat away at the capability of the unit. Singapore in 1941, despite all its social highlights and exotic temptations, was no exception. The military high command in Malaya were not only facing a threat of an impending invasion, but it was also holding together a disparate force of Allied troops from across the Empire. The more men arriving in Singapore, the worse the living conditions would get, the harder it would be to maintain a state of readiness.

Chapter 5 – Training and Equipment

5.1 Introduction

If boredom and social isolation were the causes of the decline in combat efficiency among the garrison soldiers, then the solution could be a comprehensive and effective training regime. This would not only keep the men busy but would also raise unit morale, highlight equipment deficiencies and tactical frailties and, if carried out in public view, reassure the Singaporeans that the defence of the ‘impregnable fortress’ was in good hands. Ultimately the training would directly determine the ability of the soldier to survive the ensuing combat and progress into captivity.

This chapter considers the action taken by the Scottish commanders to prepare their men for battle in Malaya. The study not only includes an assessment of the training undertaken by the units but also considers the constant struggle to retain experienced men in the ranks and procuring the right equipment. For the Scots, this also addresses the inevitable problem of maintaining and adapting traditional dress to meet the requirements of the modern battlefield.

The analysis of entries in the battalion war diaries which detail the exercises undertaken by the units suggests that both the A&SH and Gordon Highlanders spent around 10% of their days on exercises away from their barracks.³⁵⁴ It also suggests that the two units were following radically different training programmes and seldom exercised alongside each other.³⁵⁵ Whereas the A&SH companies spent many days on the road and in the jungles of Malaya, the Gordons stuck closer to home rehearsing the defence of coastal positions.³⁵⁶ However these units were fortunate to have the time and opportunity to train in the Malayan countryside. Units such as the Lanarkshire Yeomanry arrived so late to the region that they had little time to acclimatise to the conditions or the style of warfare.³⁵⁷

³⁵⁴ From arriving in Singapore in August 1939 until the outbreak of war the A&SH spent approximately 86 days deployed on exercises. This equates to just over 10% of their time. According to the 1941 Battalion Diary out of the 341 days commented on the Gordons spent 37 days on training exercises, again just over 10%.

³⁵⁵ Ferris, 1993. p253. Ferris cites Stewart’s memo to Woodburn Kirby is stating that the 12th Brigade only participated in two intra-brigade exercises and four inter-brigade exercises between 1939 and 1941.

³⁵⁶ The battalion diary includes dates for ‘Tactical Exercises Without Troops’ or ‘TEWTs’. These are paper exercises for officers only.

³⁵⁷ Goodman, 1946. p2.

The study will also determine whether the training and the procurement of equipment was appropriate for the strategy advocated by the high command. It will also consider how the training affected the performance of the soldier in battle, the likelihood the unit would be engaged in combat and the misplaced trust in the unit's abilities fostered in the training program. However, the review will begin with an investigation into the nature of the 'Jungle Training' so favoured by Lt Col Stewart and his fellow A&SH officers and whether the lack of such guidance contributed to the Allied defeat in Malaya.

5.2 Training by the Book

Tactical Notes for Malaya 1940 was Malaya Command's attempt to introduce a practical training manual for jungle warfare. Yet, it was a challenge to convert the theory into practice through training, especially in a command convinced that the jungle would not become a viable theatre of conventional operations.³⁵⁸ What was needed was an effective training regime and the notable procurement of suitable equipment, coupled with demonstrable improvement that would encourage the commanders to invest time and effort into the jungle training programme.³⁵⁹

But what were these jungle training programmes trying to achieve? It is easy to believe that the regime put in place by the likes of Lt Col Stewart was ultimately designed to turn the A&SH and the 12th Indian Brigade into a unit like that of Gen Orde Wingate's 'Chindits' and Brig Gen Frank Merrill's 'Marauders' formed in Burma.³⁶⁰ However, Chindit and Marauder operations in the latter years of the war were not the norm for the British Army in the Far East. Wingate fashioned his 'Long Range Penetration' raids on similar small-scale commando columns operating in the North African Desert. These could be best described as 'irregular' units operating miles behind the enemy lines destroying second line infrastructure and logistics and as such required specific training for limited numbers of men. The Chindits approach to jungle operations was too far removed and specialised for the vast number of 'regular' troops of the 14th Army in Burma to undertake.³⁶¹ What Lt Col Stewart and Lt Gen Percival were advocating in the summer of 1941 was not a divisional deployment of highly trained commandos behind enemy lines,

³⁵⁸ Farrell, 2015. p143.

³⁵⁹ Moreman, 2005. p7.

³⁶⁰ Rose, 2017. p97.

³⁶¹ *Ibid.*, p9.

but a broad-brush, army wide, basic field craft, that would allow the individual soldier to effectively operate in the jungle and plantations as part of regular army operations.³⁶²

5.3 Conventional Training

In contrast to the tactics advocated in the *Tactical Notes for Malaya*, the hierarchy in the Malaya command believed that manning the coastal fortifications around Singapore was a simpler, more familiar task that required less training, especially for an army which had been defending the coast of Britain since the outbreak of the war.³⁶³ The Royal Air Force and the Royal Navy, operating safely out of the ports and airfields on the island would take the attack to the enemy.³⁶⁴ The Army's role would be to defend these facilities and there would be no need to venture too far into the jungles if a strategy of static defence was adopted. The Gordon Highlanders were among those forces designated for the defence of the Singapore coastline and as such did not require jungle fighting skills and therefore received little jungle training.³⁶⁵

What was also needed was a mobile reserve to reinforce the garrisons should the enemy break through the various defences and stop lines. The 12th Indian Infantry Brigade, including Stewart's A&SH, was assigned to Malaya Command primarily as that mobile reserve, capable of reacting quickly to any Japanese incursions towards Singapore.³⁶⁶ The role of the unit therefore allowed Stewart to train his men in the skills of aggressive manoeuvre and attack across the Malaya peninsula, including, he concluded, operating in plantations and jungles. The lack of enthusiasm towards any new training regimes was compounded by the fact that Percival delegated the responsibility for training down to the battalion commanders without much guidance or conviction.³⁶⁷ As such there was little

³⁶² Grehan & Mace, 2015. p175.

³⁶³ Farrell, 2015. p143. Singapore was given the title of 'Gibraltar of the East', an acronym which exemplifies the traditional values and dogged mindset of the high command in defending the island (Arnold, 2011. pp68 - 70). Much of the 18th Division, despatched as reinforcements to Singapore, had spent the initial months of the war guarding the coastline of East Anglia and the local airfields as well as a training as a mobile reserve. (Cooper, 2016. pp50 – 53.)

³⁶⁴ Grehan & Mace, 2015. p25, p168.

³⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, p144. The Gordons were assigned to the Singapore Fortress Command consisting of 2nd Loyals, 1st & 2nd Malaya Regt, 1st Manchester Regt, 2/17 Dogras, 5/11th Sikhs, Mysore Infantry, 122nd Field Regt R.A., 7th and 9th Coastal Regt R.A., 16th Defence Regiment, R.A., 35th & 41st Fortress Coy R.E. and the Straits Settlement Volunteers (Woodburn-Kirby, 2004. Appx. p21).

³⁶⁶ The 12th Indian Infantry Brigade under Brig ACM Paris consisted of the 2/A&SH, 5/2 Punjab, and the 4/19 Hyderabad (Woodburn-Kirby, 2004. Appx 21).

³⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, p146.

incentive to think beyond the unit's primary role and engage in what was perceived as unnecessary training with limited resources.³⁶⁸

The nature of the training undertaken by the Scots is evidenced in the battalion war diaries and to some extent the local newspapers. Although the press was invited to attend the initial training exercises, this was soon curtailed as the war beckoned. Only when the propaganda benefit outweighed the military demands for secrecy were the reporters allowed to re-join the programme.

The Gordon Highlanders, according to their battalion diary, undertook their first exercise of note on 28th July 1937 as the men participated in beach landing operations from Tanjong Rhu to Changi Beach. The Malaya Tribune reported that there were some very interesting points in the training of troops that came to the notice of the staff, a euphemism perhaps for how things did not necessarily go to plan, however the reporter was quick to add that:

*'The work during the individual training season has borne good fruit and the ability of troops to operate at night was found to be remarkably high.'*³⁶⁹

Three months later, on 1st October 1937, a larger combined services operation took place with three battalions of infantry, including the Gordons and the Inniskillings, to test the defences in the north of the island.³⁷⁰ A similar exercise was staged a week later, on 10th October, with manoeuvres concentrating around the beach defences along the Pasir Panjang Road. The Gordons were a part of the attacking team landing from launches in the Tanjong Pagar area. The Volunteers were given the role of defending the beaches and *'Although efforts by the 'enemy' to land troops were partially successful'*, The Straits Times correspondents tactfully reported that the invaders were, in each instance, *ultimately repelled*.³⁷¹

On 15th October 1937, the Gordons moved to Johor for the next exercise when they teamed up with the Johor State military forces and had their first experience of working on the mainland.³⁷² The exercises took place between Kota Tinggi and Johore Bahru and 500

³⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, p145.

³⁶⁹ The Malaya Tribune, 29 July 1937. Page 13

³⁷⁰ The Straits Times, 2 October 1937. Page 12.

³⁷¹ The Straits Times, 10 October 1937. Page 1.

³⁷² The Royal Johor State military force is an independent military unit designated with the role of protecting the state of Johor and the private royal guard of Sultan of Johor. The Johor Volunteer force was created in 1905 as part of this force. (Moffatt & Riches, 2010. p13.)

Gordons took the part of the invading troops advancing on the capital. The Johore Military forces, nearly a thousand strong, acted as the defenders. The reporter adds that the

*'Troops are provided with the most up to date kit and equipment introduced less than 16 months ago.'*³⁷³

Observers stressed that the Malay and Johor forces acted without the assistance of British commanders and that the observers were all satisfied as to their performance.

1st February 1938 saw the start of a major 'invasion' exercise of an apolitical 'Redland', as 'Blueland' seaborne troops landed from the East Indies squadron. The scenario simulated a beach landing. This was a major exercise with more than 10,000 men and over 100 front line aircraft and 25 warships taking part. Both commanders were given free rein as to the progress of the 'war'. The objective was to:

*'... test the defences of Singapore, the position and general efficiency of the batteries and mobile guns and to give troops and RAF men additional training in their wartime duties.'*³⁷⁴

Notably, and perhaps more reassuringly for the Singaporean population, the exercise included an air battle 500 miles off the coast as the island's aircraft attacked 'enemy' squadrons flying off *HMS Eagle*. Subsequent 'bombing raids' by carrier-based aircraft allowed the Singaporean command to practice their black out drills and to test the proficiency of the newly installed 15" and 18" gun batteries which could engage the ships at ranges of over 20 miles.³⁷⁵ Once again the attackers were successfully repelled.

Over 14th-15th October 1938, the Gordons took part in a two-day exercise in Johor with the Johor Military Forces. This was the first time the Gordons had exercised with the newly arrived 2nd Battalion Loyals Regiment. The objective of the exercise was to test these units in jungle fighting which the writer admits:

'...is entirely different to any other type of fighting and has its own problems and methods of solution'.

³⁷³ The Straits Times, 15 October 1937. Page 13. It is unclear as to what the 'new equipment' was.

³⁷⁴ The Singapore Free Press and Mercantile Advertiser, 1 February 1938. Page 9.

³⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, p9.

This exercise also included landing imaginary forces on the east coast and then onto jungle fighting between the coast and Kota Tinggi. The scenarios included a river crossing in the face of enemy opposition. But again, it seemed things could have gone better. The commentator alludes to the sketchy performance of the attackers.

*‘Many valuable lessons were learnt during these exercises particularly the strength of the defence when fighting in the jungle’.*³⁷⁶

It may be a coincidence that there are no further reports on the Gordons’ military exercises in the papers after 1939.

Unfortunately, the battalion diary entries detailing the Gordon’s training regime are not as detailed as those of the A&SH. Many of the statements mentioning exercises give no further indication as to the intention of the training. However, there are some trends worth noting. Between 25th November 1940 and 16th January 1941, the battalion undertook ten, day long exercises. There is little detail as to what these consisted of, but the deployment on 14th January 1941 (Exercise No.9) encompasses ‘*embussing*’ and ‘*debussing*’ followed by a deployment by MT to Johor in a similar manner to the exercises undertaken by the A&SH at the beginning of their tour. There then follows a series of TEWTS (Tactical Exercises Without Troops) and Command exercises that were designed for the officers only. These continue sporadically into 1941. In May 1941, two months before the ‘Great March’ of the A&SH from Mersing, the Gordon’s completed the first of many one-day battalion route marches which continued over the course of the next four months interspersed with weapons training and public black out drills. At the end of the summer in 1941, the Gordons were deployed by company to Muar for training ‘*up country*’ and undertook several beach defence exercises in Singapore. As the end of the year drew near and the threat of invasion increased, the battalion deployed to coastal defence duties at Pengerang in accordance with the Malaya Command strategy for the security of the island.

In contrast the A&SH were destined for a totally different role as a Mobile Reserve. According to Lt Col Stewart the battalion set about training in jungle operations with the intention of covering as much terrain as possible, especially through country previously

³⁷⁶ Sunday Tribune (Singapore), 16 October 1938. Page 3.

thought to be impassable by Malaya Command. Stewart dramatically states that training was designed to:

‘... develop the characteristics of morale, resourcefulness, and above all, aggressiveness and intense speed, for only by these means could the initiative be kept, and to lose the initiative in jungle is death.’³⁷⁷

Stewart is resolute throughout his post-war accounts of the training period that the A&SH were the best trained unit in jungle warfare in the British army. He pays little attention to the 4/19 Hyderabad and the 5/2 Punjabis of his brigade that went through similar training.³⁷⁸ More importantly Stewart dismisses the preparation undertaken by the other Malaya Command units, including the Gordon Highlanders, as being trained in the less wearisome strategy of ‘*static defence*’ pinned to fixed lines of resistance and fearful of engaging the enemy in the jungle.³⁷⁹ He later concludes that the battle for Singapore, was lost by:

‘... those junior officers and men who were not prepared in peace fully to sacrifice their comforts in rigorous training for war.’³⁸⁰

A brash statement which would undoubtedly annoy his colleagues in the Gordon Highlanders. It is said that Stewart deliberately ignored the advice of his fellow garrison commanders in insisting his men exercised through the hottest part of the day. Pte Finlay MacLachan recalled:

We were doing training when all the rest were in bed. Mad Dogs and Englishmen – they went to bed in the afternoon between two and four. The Argylls were out doing training.’³⁸¹

Capt Eric Moss of the A&SH goes on to sum up the plight of garrison troops who were confined to barracks and not taken out on training exercise. He suggests that those units that took shelter from the midday sun instead of training would turn to suicide and homosexuality.³⁸² He also adds that the two Highland regiments did not necessarily co-operate with the training regimes.

³⁷⁷ Stewart, 1947. p3.

³⁷⁸ Singh, 2015. ppix – xx.

³⁷⁹ Stewart, 1947. p2.

³⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, pviii.

³⁸¹ Robertson & Wilson, 1995. p92.

³⁸² Moffatt & McCormick, 2003. pp28 – 29.

‘When we got to Singapore the Gordons naturally tried to tell us all about it – they’d been in Singapore, they knew Singapore, you don’t work after 10.00 in the morning it was too hot. This is what they were telling us. Of course, we didn’t do that. We got straight out into the jungle and trained. And time and time again Stewart would arrange an exercise, along with the CO of the Gordons. It would be cancelled at the last minute. We never went out with the Gordons yet.’³⁸³

This may be down to regimental rivalry but most likely indicative of the difference in intended roles of each unit and therefore their willingness to embrace the jungle warfare doctrine. As the Gordons manned their coastal fortifications, the A&SH were training for their role as a mobile reserve.

5.4 Nature of Jungle Warfare

There was a prevailing reluctance at command level in the inter-war years to engage in ‘Jungle Training’ as the trackless wastes of mountainous forested regions simply had no strategic or economic importance.³⁸⁴ The jungles of the early 20th Century had few resources to protect and little to sustain any force sent there to protect it. But unwittingly, British industrial expansion into Malaya and Burma in the 1920s and 30s had laid the seeds for its own demise. The pursuit of new resources for cutting-edge industries, such as tin, tungsten and rubber, opened access to the jungle which was soon criss-crossed by the necessary transportation links. Once the British established the infrastructure then the industrialised jungle became more of an asset, more accessible and therefore more of a viable target.³⁸⁵

This left the British planners caught in a quandary. If the jungle had become a possible strategic goal, then how could it be defended? Unfortunately, the Malaya Command made two flawed assumptions when they reluctantly addressed the task of defending such a terrain.³⁸⁶ Firstly, they assumed the jungle was impenetrable and rivers unfordable to conventional forces. Unbeknown to the Malaya Command, the enemy thought differently. The Japanese staff believed that given suitable training, small units of lightly armed and determined troops could make flanking marches through the jungle, around the enemy positions and then block the roads to the rear of the allied lines. Secondly, the Allied

³⁸³ *Ibid.*, pp28 – 29.

³⁸⁴ Moreman, 2005. p11.

³⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, p12.

³⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, p11.

planners assumed that the new road and rail networks could accommodate the amount of traffic a modern regular army would bring into the battle. This also was not true.³⁸⁷ The roads and rail tracks of Malaya were narrow, lined with ditches, easily blocked, and could become impassable in the monsoon. The notion that to defend Malaya was simply a matter of defending the transport links, as the jungle would look after itself, proved to be tragically incorrect. Yet, any argument for pre-war jungle training was effectively countered by these presumptions.³⁸⁸

Most commanders were however united in the opinion that fighting in the jungle required a unique skillset.³⁸⁹ The terrain and weather in the Malayan forests often reduced the visibility on the battlefield to less than 50yds, an area less than the average soccer field.³⁹⁰ Fighting in such a confined space, where communications were limited to word of mouth, meant that small units had to act independently and with aggression. The mountainous terrain, dense forestation and incessant rainstorms effectively closed the wireless network. The communications were drowned out in a forest with the electromagnetic signals being absorbed by the foliage.³⁹¹ It was down to individual junior officers and SNCOs to take the initiative and seize every opportunity to assault the enemy. The conditions always favoured attacking troops, as the effective killing zone for the defender was limited by visibility to a matter of yards and well within the range of a determined bayonet charge, especially at night. Defenders also faced the psychological strain of awaiting the inevitable attack where every sound, smell and sight was alien to the senses. Heavily armed defensive lines, never extending too far from the safety of the road, could easily be outflanked by a mobile aggressive enemy even if this meant navigating up rivers or across mountainous terrain.³⁹² Once a defending force retreated into the jungle it would be obliged to abandon its heavy equipment and quickly disintegrate as a fighting force. Merely moving through thick foliage in the tropical heat was exhausting. Disease, dehydration, and starvation would inevitably follow. The quality of the individual soldier was therefore the most important

³⁸⁷ Grehan & Mace, 2015. p325.

³⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, pp62 – 64. pp319 – 322.

³⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, pp327 – 328. Cross, 1989. p12. Moreman, 2005. pp12 - 13. For Australian training see Farrell & Pratten, 2009. pp128 – 135. For Indian Army training see Roy, 2019, pp42 – 50.

³⁹⁰ Moreman, 2005. p13. Stewart noted that primary forestation, once penetrated was often open and clear at ground level.

³⁹¹ Lomax, 1995. p59.

³⁹² Farrell, 2015. p144.

component of the training for the jungle³⁹³. As Stewart noted in his summary of the campaign in Malaya:

*In close country war everything favours 'Quality'. The even slightly better side will always win. The Japanese have therefore been made to look far better than they really are, but even then they are bloody good !*³⁹⁴

A review of '*Tactical Notes for Malaya*', provides a summary of the nature of 'jungle warfare' as advocated by Lt Col Stewart and formed the basis for much of the training being undertaken. But what is also notable is that there are facets of jungle warfare that are not covered in the publication.

The pamphlet advises on small scale actions being fought at company level (c.100 men) and below. It suggests on several occasions that larger actions are too difficult to coordinate. There is little advice given as to using new technology or innovative tactics such as air operations and deep penetration raids. Instead, there is a focus on the adaption of existing manoeuvres and equipment. Uniform and weapons were to be adapted; shorts to be replaced by trousers, haversacks and water canteen slung onto the back to avoid snagging on foliage and 'Molotov cocktails' used in anti-tank warfare. Armoured cars, and not tanks which were conspicuously absent from the Malaya Command's order of battle, were to be incorporated into the tactical deployments. The emphasis is on improvisation, using the equipment at hand rather than the procuring and integrating new items.³⁹⁵ The inventory of equipment discussed uncannily resembles the items being acquired by the A&SHs in the months leading up to the invasion.

Tactical Notes also commits the soldier to operating in the jungle no more than a day's march away from the road. Soldiers entering the forests were told to take 24 hours rations. Resupply and evacuation of casualties was to be by motor transport along roads rather than by air. No heavy equipment, such as heavy 80mm mortars or the Boy's antitank rifles, was to be taken as much was deemed unusable in the jungle environment and there is no mention of using alternative transport such as boats, aircraft, or mules. The *Tactical Notes* appear to dovetail with the accepted grander strategy advocated by Malaya Command of

³⁹³ Moreman, 2005. p14.

³⁹⁴ Stewart, 1942. p1.

³⁹⁵ There is evidence of the Scottish units receiving new weapons such as the Bren gun and the Thompson sub machine gun which proved ideal for combat in the jungle, however these were as part as an army wide directive rather than specifically for the Far East operations.

defending fixed positions and lines of communication, albeit through aggressive jungle patrolling, i.e., ‘Tiger Patrols’³⁹⁶. Little thought is given to launching long-range, month long incursions behind enemy lines or the sustained defence of jungle strongholds cut off from conventional methods of resupply which were to be a common strategy in the later campaigns in Burma. Escape and evasion skills are not directly addressed. The document is simply a supplement to the established British doctrines in Malaya rather than a comprehensive volume of innovative jungle tactics.

5.5 Training the ‘Jungle Beasts’

The first A&SH exercises noted in the press occurred on 11th September 1939 when the Straits Times warned the population of the likelihood of ‘*war noises*’ emanating from the Gillman Barracks and the training area west of Bukit Timah village.³⁹⁷ However according to the paper and contrary to Stewart’s assertions, training was to be carried out from 8.45 to 12.15 am and from 7.00 to 9.00 pm in the evening, allowing for a break during the heat of the afternoon. This also appears to be the last report of A&SH exercises to be covered by the press for the next two years.

But a review of the A&SH battalion war diary for the period up to July 1940, reveals a more detailed list of strenuous exercises and training. Almost as soon as the A&SH had landed in August 1939, their command had been briefed on the defence of the Khota Tinggi line in Johor, before being taken up country to view the location of the trenches and fieldworks they were expected to defend. Subsequent exercises were centred around the rapid deployment of the battalion to these fixed defensive positions. Training involved the defence or assault of fieldworks whether they be inland or on the coast, and the speedy movement of the battalion by motorised transport. Troops practiced ‘embussing’ and ‘debussing’ onto a fleet of commandeered vehicles. Later that summer, exercises involved the defence of coastal positions and the simulated rounding up of Japanese sympathisers in Singapore. Jungle training was absent from the diary entries. Major Angus Rose even

³⁹⁶ ‘Tiger Patrols’ were so named by Lt Col Stewart ‘since their role was to harass enemy’s communications like tigers’ (Stewart, 1947. p3.). These were usually three to ten men patrols designed to infiltrate the enemy front lines and strike at the rear echelons.

³⁹⁷ Notably this was the area of the island they went on to defend during the battle for Singapore. The Straits Times, 11 September 1939. Page 10.

suggested that the training he undertook with his company was more ‘*on the lines of games in Baden Powell’s “Scouting for Boys”*’.³⁹⁸

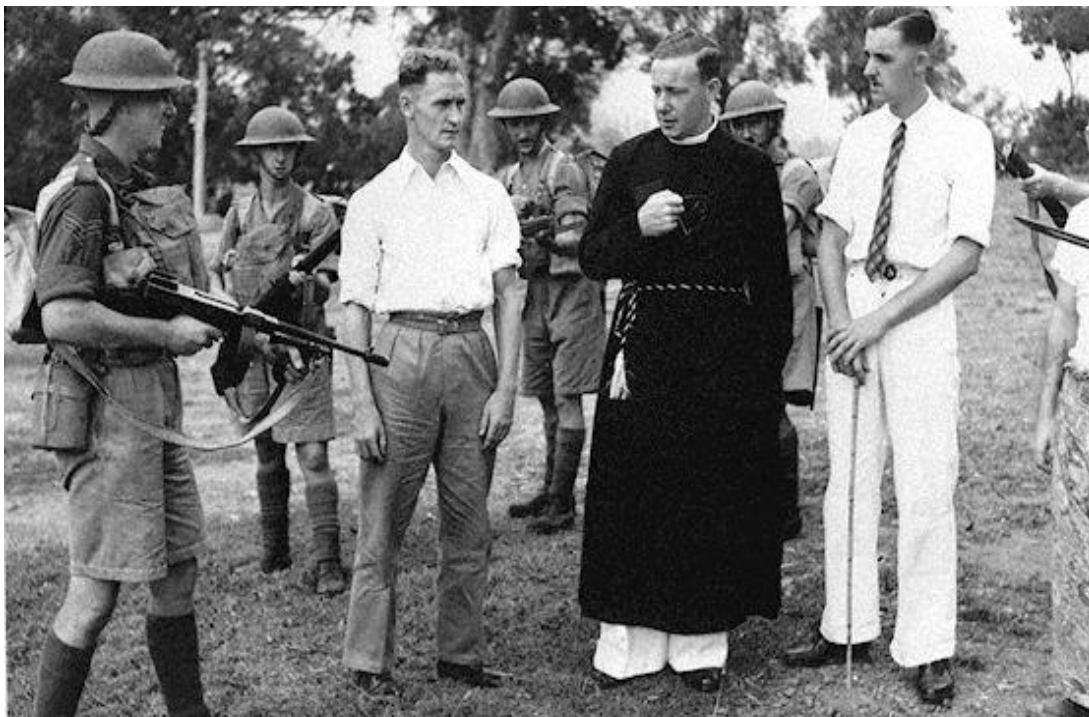


Figure 20 –A press photograph showing the A&SH on exercise on 13/10/1941.

The A&SH were set the task to round up ‘5th Columnists’, in this case men from the regiment dressed appropriately to blend in with the local population. The SNCO is equipped with the recently issued Thompson Sub Machine Gun. As with all early war engagements the soldiers still carry their gas masks despite the ‘Tactical Notes for Malaya’ stating the use of gas would be ineffectual in Malaya. Many of these were discarded on being captured and the haversacks used to carry more necessary items. (IWM)

However, the War Diary entry dated 12/07/40 recalls a distinct change in the policy. It reads:

12/07/40 *Bn Training Memo No.6 was issued. This marked a reversion to jungle warfare as opposed to open warfare in which the battalion had been training for the last six months.*

It infers that the A&SH only officially started to concentrate on ‘*jungle warfare*’ training in August 1940; a year after their arrival and seventeen months before the outbreak of the war in the Pacific. The change in the training regime was, in Lt Col Stewart’s mind, in part a result of his campaigning. Stewart attests in his post war commentary that he had fought an

³⁹⁸ Rose, no date. p7.

ongoing campaign to train the army in jungle tactics ever since his arrival in theatre and taken over command of the Argylls. He was convinced that any attackers in Malaya would move off the roads through the jungle and plantations to outflank any fixed defences. He was also adamant that tanks could be used in Malaya and anti-tank training would be essential. He spent many hours writing to his direct superiors asking for more resources and permission to undertake jungle warfare training.³⁹⁹

Much of the evidence for Stewart's apparent prophetic forebodings comes from his own letters and memoirs written after the war with the benefit of hindsight.⁴⁰⁰ However, there is corroborating evidence within the Battalion War Diaries, in the form of a flurry of training memos and letters issued across the brigade in the latter half of 1940 and into 1941 that suggest a new curriculum had been implemented and Stewart was actively promoting his training methods to his superiors. The A&SH subsequently undertook another ten exercises in the remaining 14 months before the invasion in December 1941.

Stewart was exasperated at the slow take up of jungle training across the Malaya Command stating in a letter to his brigade commander in November 1940 that, other than the General Officer Commanding (GOC), no General Staff Officer of Malaya Command had ever visited the battalion when on jungle exercises and that the command's appreciation of jungle warfare was '*exclusively academic and second hand*'.⁴⁰¹ However, post war commentary suggests Stewart was not totally alone in his crusade. The start of this new initiative in July 1940 came two months after the arrival of Lt Gen Percival who set about reviewing the defence strategies and denounced many of the plans made by the Governor Sir Shenton Thomas.⁴⁰²

Percival states in his own memoirs that he was a keen advocate for the training being undertaken by the A&SH and that he put in place a training regime to make good the apparent deficiencies in the Allied troops.⁴⁰³ But there remains a distinct absence of this intent between his arrival and the onset of hostilities in the primary sources. Percival also concedes in his post war despatch on operations that the construction of defences in the

³⁹⁹ Stewart, 1947. pp1 – 5.

⁴⁰⁰ Stewart, 1942. pp1 - 3.

⁴⁰¹ Moreman, 2015. p16.

⁴⁰² Murfett et al., 2006. p232.

⁴⁰³ After the war Stewart was very complimentary about Percival's and Brooke Popham's contribution to the preparation of the island for invasion during their times in command (Ferris, 1993. p246.)

summer of 1941 was seriously impacting the time set aside for training and a balance was to be struck between the two tasks. Only then did he decide to build up a

‘... foundation of good individual and sub-unit training which could be done concurrently with the construction of defences.’⁴⁰⁴

Higher level training was to commence in December 1941 as soon as work on the fixed defences had been completed.⁴⁰⁵ As it turned out this was far too late. Percival’s notes do not explain why a whole year had been squandered after his arrival where it appeared no such unit training had been carried out beyond that undertaken by Stewart and the 12th Brigade.⁴⁰⁶

Stewart’s frustrations with Percival’s and Malaya Command’s attitude to jungle training may well have been the reason for an extraordinary demonstration of the fruits of his training regime. The press was not usually invited to cover these exercises for security reasons, but the A&SH created a stir on 16th July 1941 by commencing an eight-day trek from Mersing to Singapore, 116 miles in which journalists were summoned to take part. The Straits Times correspondent reported that the exercise was:

‘...the most intensive training the battalion had undertaken since its arrival in Singapore a month before the outbreak of the war [in Europe]’.⁴⁰⁷

The reporter comments on the fitness of the men and quotes Stewart as saying:

“...nothing heroic but just part of the training scheme which has put my men among the fittest fighters in this part of the world.”⁴⁰⁸

The exercise concentrated on the landing of forces along an enemy held coast and the difficulties of moving inland. The correspondent faced a moral dilemma as he had been tasked to assure the readers that, with the ‘adequate coastal defences’ currently found along the Malayan coast, any invasion would meet with disastrous results. However, this

⁴⁰⁴ Grehan & Mace, 2015. p175.

⁴⁰⁵ Murfett et al., 2006. pp227 -235. Moreman, 2005. p23.

⁴⁰⁶ Roy suggests that the Malaya Command belatedly took steps to train brigades in jungle lore. The 15th and 6th Indian Brigades were sent for training at Sungei Patani and Tanjong Pau but received lessons in digging trenches. (Roy, 2019. p47.)

⁴⁰⁷ The Straits Times, 24 July 1941. p11.

⁴⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, p11.

premise would have also challenged the efficiency and capabilities of their hosts in launching the attack.

The long march, '*the first to be undertaken by any battalion*', was primarily along the coast supported by the tongkang (sea-going barges) offshore carrying the company's tents, mosquito nets, pack rations and water. According to the '*commanding officer*', presumably Lt Col Stewart:

*'No preparations were made for the carrying of supplies of water or of much food. This was to be a test of endurance and the ability of a battalion marching on a war time basis to fend for itself on a long journey.'*⁴⁰⁹

The A&SH marched along the sandy beaches of the east coast for over four days. They forded several river estuaries and chopped their way through dense foliage cresting numerous headlands. Pioneers built occasional bridges and created landing zones for the tongkangs to unload stores. The exercise proved that the tongkangs were unreliable and would flounder in high swells and fast running tides. Contrary to earlier assertions that the A&SH marched through the midday sun, the troops took to the road from 6.00am to noon then rested until 3.00pm and march on until 6.00pm after which the men set up temporary bivouacs on the beach. The following days were spent moving along rivers on the barges, loading the kit up every morning and camping out on the riverbanks each night. Finally, the battalion took to the roads covering 21 miles each day. The reporter states that each company was escorted by a drummer and piper and when they finally reached the island of Singapore, the battalion put on quite a show marching together with the full band taking the lead alongside the battalion canine mascots, Jock, Jill, and Sheila. The report concludes with a comment that the battalion would only be resting for two days before they would be on another exercise.⁴¹⁰

This very public march and the preceding night navigation exercise held in Johor on 27 February 1941, were designed to demonstrate to sceptical staff officers that large bodies of fit troops, given efficient support and training, could move quickly by road or on foot and where necessary through jungle, as well as by coastal craft bypassing various lines of

⁴⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, p11.

⁴¹⁰ This type of training was not limited to the A&SH. The 5/2 Punjabi Battalion also from the 12th Indian Brigade carried out a similar route march to Labis in October 1941 (Farrell, 2015. p146.)

defence running across the peninsula. This ominously presaged the strategy employed by the Japanese five months later (See Chapter 6).⁴¹¹



Figure 21 – A&SH on the march

Two images accompanying the Straits Times article on the A&SH route march in July 1941 (*The Straits Times*, 24 July 1941. p11.). Again, the pipes and drums are front of stage, but the men have swapped their bonnets for topees adorned with a tartan flash.

According to Moffatt and McCormick, Lt Col Stewart was not averse to handling the press and was by all accounts ‘*a man who correspondents loved to interview*’.⁴¹² He was unequivocal in announcing to the media that his A&SH were the finest and fittest jungle fighters in the region. However, this did not always sit well with his colleagues in command, who found Stewart brusque and ‘*a bit of a crank*’ and would undoubtedly meet with derision among the ranks of the other garrison battalions including fellow Scots in the Gordon Highlanders.⁴¹³

5.6 Training in the Far East of Scotland

What is missing from this study into pre-war training for the Scottish soldier in Singapore is the third unit to fall under the remit of this theses – the Lanarkshire Yeomanry. This is because they were not in Singapore before the war. Neither were they an established infantry regiment, a unit from the regular army or kitted out in kilts and bonnets. As such they are an ideal neutral yardstick by which to measure the readiness of the A&SH and the Gordons for war and assess the factors that determined their chances of survival in the POW camps.

⁴¹¹ The battalion diary entry for 01/11/1939 states that these exercises were shadowed by Japanese observers.

⁴¹² Moffatt & McCormick, 2003. p42.

⁴¹³ *Ibid.*, p27. Murfett et al., 2006. p232.

The Lanarkshire Yeomanry were created in the early 19th Century to protect the country from the threat of invasion. Formed in 1819, the troopers were primarily drawn from the rural farming community and estate workers used to handling horses. The Yeomanry had performed well in Gallipoli, Palestine and on the Western Front in the First World War but post war cutbacks had seen the unit reduced, once again, to a regional, peacetime cavalry regiment of the Territorial Army.⁴¹⁴

In September 1939, as the Gordons and the A&SH were training in Singapore, the call up papers were sent out across Scotland for the new volunteer army. The Lanarkshire Yeomanry was re-rolled from a cavalry unit, and, from 15th February 1940, it became a Field Artillery unit, a task closely aligned to their old cavalry roots. By April 1940, the first antiquated 4.5-inch guns were received, and training could begin. They had also suffered their first casualty, as Gunner John Scott had died of pneumonia on 10th March.⁴¹⁵

Training concentrated around the technical aspects of gunnery and the deployment of mobilised batteries; a far cry from the cavalry training undertaken by the original territorials in the previous war. Training took them to Beattock Muir for gun calibration and then to Haddington, where they were billeted in local country houses and a requisitioned council estate at Gifford.⁴¹⁶ Rumours were rife that the unit would be going out to the Middle East but eventually the move was westward, a temporary stopover back in Lanark. There they were issued with khaki drill uniforms and ‘Bombay Bloomers’ and given tetanus and typhoid injections, reinforcing the theory they would soon be shipping out to warmer climates.⁴¹⁷

On 21st March 1941, the men were marched down to the local railway station and boarded trains for Gourrock. Then they were loaded on to *SS Strathmore* and shipped out to Canada and South Africa, destined for Bombay and the hilltop garrison of Ahmednagar. The Yeomanry sweated and trained for the next four weeks acclimatising to the dry heat and colonial lifestyle. On 14th June, the unit was relocated once again to Kirkee near Poona, home of one of the major arsenals and training units. The men fell into the routine of

⁴¹⁴ McEwan & Thomson, 2013. p2.

⁴¹⁵ *Ibid.*, pp1 - 3.

⁴¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p8.

⁴¹⁷ The ‘Bombay Bloomer’ was a hybrid with a trouser fitted loosely below the knee which could be turned up and secured to create shorts. Unfortunately, the Bloomer under tropical conditions tended to chafe the wearer, got heavy when wet and to gather dirt and leaves within the turn up (Brayley, 2002. p35.)

training, tiffin, sleeping through the midday heat then more training before the evening meal. Local entertainment could be found in the small town of Kirkee a few miles from the camp.⁴¹⁸ On 23 August 1941, the Yeomanry were stunned to find that they were to be split up. ‘A’ Battery was to be transferred to the 160th Field Regiment and the remaining two batteries sent to Malaya. ‘B’ and ‘C’ batteries were loaded aboard the SS *Ekma*, ‘a stinking tramp ship,’ bound for Port Swettenham. They arrived in Malaya on 3rd September 1941.⁴¹⁹

Their next destination was Canning Camp, two miles out of Ipoh and then onwards to Sungei Patani where they were housed in the, all now too familiar, ‘100 ft long attap roofed huts raised 4ft off the ground on concrete posts’ set amidst a vast rubber plantation. The unit was attached to the 11th Indian Division, which included Jats and Punjabis regiments and two regular British battalions, the 1st Leicestershires and the 2nd East Surreys who had been out in Malaya since 12th October 1940⁴²⁰. They spent most of their time digging in and ranging their weapons along pre-prepared positions known as the ‘Jitra Line’.⁴²¹ The remnants of the two batteries would not enter Singapore until 27th January 1942.

This brief account of the journey of the Lanarkshire Yeomanry to the Far East is in complete contrast to the narrative of the A&SH and the Gordons Highlanders. The gunners had wandered the world with little opportunity to build a community spirit or attachment to their surroundings. The unit had been split up on the whim of high command and finally placed alongside units from England and India. This conscripted artillery unit with limited heritage, a hotchpotch of recruits from across the country, a diffused sense of Scottish roots and not a kilt or piper in sight, is eventually billeted alongside its more illustrious Scottish brethren. The disparity could not be starker. Despite all the Lanarkshire’s work, Brigadier E W Goodman in his post campaign appraisal of the Royal Artillery units under his command in Malaya commented:

One regiment [the 155th] had arrived in September 1941, having left England about March and spent about four months in India. Owing to the late receipt of

⁴¹⁸ McEwan & Thomson, 2013. p13.

⁴¹⁹ McEwan & Thomson, 2013. p14.

⁴²⁰ Woodburn-Kirby, 2004. p47.

⁴²¹ *Ibid.*, pp16- 18.

*essential equipment fullest use of these four months had not been possible and their training was not complete.*⁴²²

5.7 'Milking' the Ranks.

The amount and quality of any training regime is often seen as a fundamental measure of the units' readiness for operations however the effectiveness of training could be seriously undermined by the turnover of personnel to the regiment. Battalions were constantly taking in new recruits at the expense of sending the more experienced men to other units or back to the home depot.⁴²³ Each battalion was therefore forever processing new men through basic training and acclimatisation regimes with the aim of having the frontline units up to full strength before the outbreak of war.

On 26th March 1939, the MS 'Ettrick', a P&O liner troopship passed through Singapore on its way to China and disembarked 115 men for the 2nd Battalion Gordon Highlanders.⁴²⁴ The *Ettrick* dropped off another 84 men on 7 August along with 70 Loyals.⁴²⁵ 24 more men arrived on 22nd December 1939.⁴²⁶

There are two more arrivals of new drafts noted in the battalion diary in 1940 and 1941.

01/10/1940 2/Lts CHAYTOR, IRVINE, DE MIER, HALLOWES, ROSS, MARR and SYMINGTON, three corporals and 132 other ranks first reinforcements arrive at Singapore from UK
28/11/1941 Draft of 2 Officers, 1 Sgt and 46 ORs joined from UK

Mitchell states 20 more men arrived on 15th May 1941; however, these do not appear in the battalion diary as the unit was out on a route march that day.⁴²⁷ He calculates that if the return of the 'regulars' to the UK is also considered, the turnover of men in the months leading up to the outbreak of the war was in the region of 25%.⁴²⁸

⁴²² Goodman, 1946. p1.

⁴²³ Miles, 1961. p89. Miles states eight officers and 135 other ranks were despatched by the Gordons back to the UK before the outbreak of hostilities

⁴²⁴ The Straits Times, 27 March 1939. Page 14.

⁴²⁵ The Straits Times, 7 August 1939. Page 14.

⁴²⁶ Urquhart, 2010. p46.

⁴²⁷ Mitchell, 2012. p26.

⁴²⁸ *Ibid.*, p26.

The drafts for the A&SH can be found in full detail in the Battalion Roll Book and a breakdown of casualties per draft has been included in [Appendix 1](#). A summary of the totals is given below.

Table 5 - The entry in the A&SH Battalion Roll showing the dates and numbers of the drafts.

Dates	From India	Rear Party	20/01/1940	27/02/1940	01/10/1940	02/10/1940	06/03/1941	16/05/1941	28/11/1941	Local Enrolment	Total
Grand Total	602	32	23	30	69	181	8	61	66	1	1073

The total of 439 new men out of a count of 1073 suggests the A&SH had around 41% new arrivals in the battalion by the outbreak of the fighting in Malaya.

This influx of relatively untrained personnel was a common occurrence in peacetime as the battalions stationed abroad were constantly being reinforced from the depot battalions back at home. The flow ensured new recruits could be given the benefit of training from more experienced NCO's before they in turn headed back into new roles or out of the army on retirement. However, during wartime, this arrival of men was driven by the need to bring units up to a war footing and to disperse experienced NCOs among newly formed battalions in other regiments.⁴²⁹ Units deemed to be in quieter backwaters of the empire were a useful source of skilled reserve and considered an ideal training environment for their replacements.⁴³⁰ The issue came to a head when those units suddenly found themselves in the frontline of a regional campaign, as was to happen in Singapore.

There were two ways of mitigating the risk of introducing new recruits into the battalion just as the unit was about to go into action. The draft could be spread as thinly as possible among the existing platoons to ensure that the unit was sent into the front line with the full complement of men, all be it some lacking the required skills. Alternatively, the draft could be established as an independent reserve and be left back at the depot, to deploy as guards for home defence, and to train up to become combat ready. They could then be deployed in ones or twos to replace casualties or despatched as a new unit to act as a frontline reserve.

The new recruits, by 1941, were also not regular soldiers. They were primarily volunteers from the ongoing mobilisation of the citizen army back in the UK and as such were not accustomed to the strict discipline and 'spit and polish' of their professional NCOs. They

⁴²⁹ Grehan & Mace, 2015. p327.

⁴³⁰ Stewart, 1947. p6.

were not necessarily Scots either and certainly not from the traditional recruiting grounds of the Highland regiments (see Chapter 4). This was a problem for the Gordons in particular, as many of the older soldiers were regulars from Aberdeen and the northeast of Scotland and spoke in ‘Doric’, the prevalent dialect of the area.⁴³¹ New recruits from other regions could simply not understand what they were being told to do. Assimilating the new recruits into the existing units was essential to prevent ostracization and resentment especially with the imminent onset of hostilities.

5.8 Officer Training and Retention of Skills

There was a similar churn of officers as well. Garrison battalions were the first port of call to supply officers for various new staff posts as the command structure ramped up in Malaya to cope with the build-up of reinforcements.⁴³² They were replaced by young officers coming out of the officer training units in the UK.

The lack of officers to fill the ranks of the resident units was the main reason behind the creation of the Officer Cadet Training Unit (OCTU) in Singapore.⁴³³ This was the first in the Far East and held its first passing out parade in December 1940. Thirty-three men were commissioned having been drafted from various units around the garrison. These men would be fed back into the system but not necessarily into their old units. Although press coverage in the Straits Times puts a positive spin on the project as being a mark of how important Singapore was to the war effort, it was a worrying admission that the garrison did not have enough fully trained and experienced officers in their ranks.⁴³⁴ The course was led by Major BEH Denne of the Gordon Highlanders alongside a plethora of officers and NCOs from other units. The plan was to graduate over 200 officers a year from the programme.

⁴³¹ Mitchell, 2012. p29.

⁴³² Percival states that the delay in filling command posts was complicated by the long lead time to apply for staff and the 2 – 3 months sea voyage. He estimates that at the outbreak of hostilities there were less than 70 officers in HQ Malaya Command including the headquarters of the services. (Grehan & Mace, 2015. p155.)

⁴³³ Wilson, 2010. p60.

⁴³⁴ The Straits Times, 23 December 1940. Page 10.

Lt Col Stewart's post war account of the A&SH in Singapore includes an appendix which lists the men of his battalion seconded to other units. There are 99 men and 17 officers listed, enough to form a separate company of troops.

Table 6 – Details of officers in the A&SH seconded to other units

Number	Rank	Name	Post	Unit
Not Given	Capt	J F Allan		No2 British Convalescent Depot
Not Given	Lt	W Bruce		Sarawak Rangers
66683	Capt	J Cowen	Garrison Adjutant	Changi Garrison
189570	2nd Lt	J Cameron	L of C Provost Company	CMP
Not Given	2 nd Lt	H R Carey	Brigade Intelligence Officer	12 th Indian Infantry Brigade
112911	2 nd Lt	A A Duncan	Cipher Staff	HQ Far East
73186	Major	N P Farquhar	DAA & QMG	Singapore Fortress
184640	2 nd Lt	I G Gordon		HQ 12 th Indian Infantry Brigade
81195	Lt	T S Law		Movement Control
152972	Lt Col	J O McKellar MC	Brigadier I/C	FMSVF (Volunteers)
56135	Major	C A MacDonald	Brigade Major	12 th Indian Infantry Brigade
113918	Capt	E T Moss		Movement Control
Not Given	Lt	H Munro		Movement Control
77924	Lt	L N G Pace		Movement Control
Not Given	Capt	C G Skinner	Staff Capt	Singapore Fortress
69186	Lt	I G Stoner	ADC	GOC Malaya

Stewart 1947, App XI

Moffatt and McCormick assert that there was another reason for the movement of A&SH officers into command posts. All new officers joining the regiment had to undertake a three-week training course with their men. Any officer not coming up to scratch or falling ill in the tropical conditions was removed from training and posted to a command job. This did not make Stewart popular among his company commanders and he had all four replaced in the first few months of taking over his command. He then handpicked the new

men and thereby ensured their loyalty and co-operation in instigating his new and radical training regime.⁴³⁵

Ballantyne Hendry, an A&SH from Edinburgh, recalled with a touch of delicacy:

*Our Colonel, Ian Stewart, insisted that all we officers went in among the ranks carrying packs and rifles and doing all the training. He transferred some to staff jobs in Singapore as he regarded they weren't quite suitable for jungle warfare.*⁴³⁶

The result of this continual replacement of experienced men with new volunteers was a deterioration in the fighting ability of the unit. Valuable resources had to be directed towards getting the new arrivals up to speed in the basic techniques before any pertinent jungle training could take place. The introduction of conscripts and men recruited beyond the traditional recruiting areas established cliques and sub-groups within the unit structure. Time and effort had to be spent breaking down these prejudices and rebuilding unit coherence. It was vital to create a new common experience through which the battalion could reflect upon, and the Gordons were keen to get the new men integrated into the squads and platoons at the earliest possible occasion. In contrast, the A&SH established a reserve unit that isolated the newcomers and ensured the untrained cadre would not degrade the performance of the frontline units.⁴³⁷

5.9 Acclimatisation and Basic Training in Singapore

Alistair Urquhart was among twenty-seven reinforcements sent out on the *MV Andes* to join the Gordon Highlanders in Singapore. His experiences in the first months of his time in Singapore are recalled in his book, *The Forgotten Highlander (2011)*, and is worth cross referencing with the newspaper articles of the time to corroborate some of his account.

Urquhart and the *MV Andes* had completed a three-week journey through the Mediterranean and Suez which were at the time relatively clear of Axis forces. In

⁴³⁵ Moffatt & McCormick, 2003. p39.

⁴³⁶ Robertson & Wilson, 1995. p93.

⁴³⁷ According to McCormick and Moffatt, 30 to 40 men arrived at Slim River prior to the battle. These men had been trained by Major Eric Moss. Stewart had the occasion to rebuke Moss for the toughness of the training regime stating, '*I said train them – not kill them*' (Moffatt & McCormick, 2003. p146.)

Urquhart's opinion, Singapore was known as a '*sexy posting*' for the British colonials, living in a state of relative comfort in bungalows, served by their cook boys and amahs.⁴³⁸

Urquhart describes his first impression of the Selarang quarters as a '*sleepy haven*' which was a '*bright change to the grim greyness of our Bridge of Don barracks.*' The recruits were given lunch of '*British food*' served by Chinese waiters, listened to a welcome speech from Lt Col Graham which focused on the chances of catching VD, the risk of pickpockets and the insistence on wearing Glengarries when in town. They were then allocated into companies and shown to their new accommodation.⁴³⁹

Urquhart was one of just four of the new arrivals allocated to the company. They were welcomed by the 'old salts' with the usual '*macho posturing and mock sexual advances.*' There followed six weeks of a continuation of basic training and square bashing leaving them with '*bleeding toes and red-raw feet*'.⁴⁴⁰

Troops arriving in the Far East were submitted to a degree of conditioning. This usually started on board the transports on the way to the new posting and, for men travelling to Singapore, it involved regular activity on the open deck, regulated sunbathing, and the systematic reduction of the wearing of clothing. This allowed the skin to tan slowly without risking heat stroke or chronic sunburn.⁴⁴¹ On arriving at the new barracks, the men would be submitted to a six-week acclimatisation course commonly called 'salting' by the medical staff. This entailed the men being exposed to the extremes of the prevailing weather conditions in the monitored confines of the camp. Thus, the men adjusted to the heat, glare, and humidity of the tropics, learnt how to spot signs of heatstroke and dehydration and how to self-medicate to restore their own health.⁴⁴²

The change of diet, climate and exposure to local illnesses and infection through cuts and bruises would often lead to an early spate of confinement in the hospital. Skin complaints brought on by profuse sweating could be spotted and dealt with at an early stage. Under the watchful eye of experienced NCO's and with medical services at hand, the soldier could recover quickly and establish a certain level of immunity. The recruits were shown

⁴³⁸ Urquhart, 2010. p52.

⁴³⁹ *Ibid.*, pp52 - 53.

⁴⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, p54-55.

⁴⁴¹ Newlands, 2014. p119.

⁴⁴² *Ibid.*, p119.

necessary hygiene techniques and introduced to some of the more poisonous fauna and flora in the region. The men were also given a course of inoculations against typhoid and tetanus. Vaccinations against the likes of cholera were only given out should an outbreak occur in the local area.⁴⁴³

Malaria was kept at bay with regular destruction of mosquito swarms, the systematic removal of potential breeding grounds and the issue of mosquito nets, long sleeved shirts, and trousers. It was then down to the training to embed the necessary routine to ensure the preventative actions were taken almost without a second thought. The men were also given quinine tablets on parade to ensure the foul-tasting pills were properly consumed.⁴⁴⁴ All this acclimatisation and slow immunisation took time and soldiers new to theatre were often unable to function at 100% efficiency for weeks if not months after their arrival.

The A&SH Battalion War Diary entry for 23/11/1940 reflects on the problems of receiving unsalted new recruits.

23/11/1940 The Pl Comds Course had temporarily to be postponed as out of 8 Officers 5 were in hospital. This is mainly due to the cuts and scratches received in the jungle. These do not heal at all readily in Malaya, especially in the case of persons who have only recently arrived in the country and who are not therefore acclimatised

Alistair Urquhart's account of his early instruction with the Gordons in Singapore adds further comment as to the quantity and quality of the basic training before 1940. He spent much of his 6-week induction either square bashing, at the firing range practicing with his own very antiquated First World War Lee Enfield rifle or letting off his frustration on the Bren Gun range. Every week there was a ten-mile route march over dunes and semi-jungle in full marching kit in order, as Urquhart notes, to keep them men fit and to stave off boredom. Induction training finished around 4.00pm each day and the men could attend clubs, events and play sport. Once the new recruits had passed their basic training, the routine instruction was combined with guard duties and interspersed with drill, inspections, and manoeuvres.

⁴⁴³ *Ibid.*, p119.

⁴⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 2014. pp118- 120.

Notably and perhaps with a degree of post war retrospection, Urquhart comments on the practice of the battalion to insist that all men were to take a compulsory siesta between 1.00 and 3.00pm

*'I disagreed with this from the start. The enemy seemed unlikely to suspend hostilities to allow us time to rest during the hottest part of the day. One's body gets accustomed to the habit of daily routine. It was hardly suitable training for jungle warfare, but our superiors thought differently. This ridiculous routine, a hangover from the days of the Raj, was fairly typical of the complacency that served the British so badly in Singapore.'*⁴⁴⁵

As for jungle training Urquhart recalls 'once in a while' being taken up to the jungle training school at Port Dickson, on the western coast of Malaya, due south of Kuala Lumpur, where he experienced at first hand the wildlife of the forest; he ran into a nest of red ants and had to be taken to hospital to recover. Otherwise, Urquhart reflects that he enjoyed the jungle training as it was a welcome change from the 'humdrum life' at Selarang. However, he has little good to say about the skill of the Gordons' officers who frequently sent the men out on impossible timetables and routes. The poor route planning, Urquhart suggests, would have left the troops readily visible to the enemy and would have ended in a complete massacre in a shooting war.

*'The officers were completely out of their depth just playing at soldiers. They had no jungle expert at hand to assist them.'*⁴⁴⁶

He goes on to add that the Gordons were often left short of supplies and food which forced the early cancellation of exercises. Looking back at his experiences after the war, he concludes:

*'There were times when it was quite farcical, a cross between 'Dad's Army' and it 'Ain't Half Hot Mum'. I kept my mouth shut of course.'*⁴⁴⁷

⁴⁴⁵ Urquhart, 2010. p57.

⁴⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, p65.

⁴⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, p66.

5.10 The Overburdened Infantryman.

Among the many theories for the Allied failure in the Malayan campaign is the notion that the equipment and combat dress issued to the front-line troops was in some way substandard and unfit for purpose.⁴⁴⁸

In contrast with Stewart's assertions as to the quality of the opposition, Pte Jackie Bell recalls:

*'People tell you the Jap was a great jungle fighter. He wasn't any better than anybody else. We were ill-equipped. You can't fight with rifles against tanks.'*⁴⁴⁹

The battalion paperwork is scattered with comments and references relating to the procurement of kit and equipment in the years and months prior to the outbreak of hostilities. Overall, these entries detail the practicalities of integrating weapons and equipment designed for European and North African theatres into a jungle environment. There is a persistent theme of 'making do' and converting the usage of existing equipment to meet the new threat of warfare in Malaya.

However, notably for the Scots, the adjutants and quartermasters were also constantly weighing up the practicalities of such items against the deep-seated traditions of the regiments. In 1939 the War Office banned the issuing of kilts for the rank and file with only the 'Pipes and Drums' and the officers being allowed to retain them.⁴⁵⁰ They were to be replaced with shorts, trousers and for a brief spell, the notorious 'Bombay Bloomer'. Battalion Diary entries note the difficulty in acquiring Glengarries and the need to replace these with the Tam O'Shanter (TOS) bonnets for guard duties and trips into town. These were later to be replaced by the 'Bush Hat' usually associated with the Australian forces. Eventually the Scottish soldier in combat dress was only discernible from his English compatriot by a flash of tartan on the topee or the shoulder patch.

⁴⁴⁸ Farrell, 2006, p118.

⁴⁴⁹ Robertson & Wilson, 1995. p95.

⁴⁵⁰ Crang, 2014. p571, p643.



Figure 22 a and b – A&SH on pre-war exercises.

Two press photographs of the A&SH training showing the preferred combat drill of shorts or overalls for the armoured car crews. Note the continued use of the gas mask and the issue of the older style 1907 webbing. Tam O'Shanter bonnets are worn in preference to helmets or Glengarries.



Figure 23 – A Gordon Highlander on parade.

General Sir Archibald Wavell, C-in-C Far East, and Major General F K Simmons, GOC Singapore Fortress, inspecting a soldier of the 2nd Gordon Highlanders, Singapore, 3 November 1941 at the Selerang Barracks.

Note the use of the topee, trousers and the older 1907 webbing. There is little to distinguish this man as a Scot. (IWM FE375)

However, the references to the procurement and adaption of equipment in the battalion records seem not to criticise the lack of appropriate equipment but reflect upon the ability of the unit to gather the allocation by fair means or foul. Both the A&SH and the Gordons seem happy enough to go to war having obtained all the items they were entitled to despite having proved repeatedly in the battalion exercises that the equipment, uniform, and allotments were unsuitable for jungle warfare.

For example, it is noticeable that the A&SH war diary states that they went into battle with almost the full scale for 1st Line transport.⁴⁵¹ The battalion diary states that the totals were as follows:

Table 7 - Number of vehicles in comparison to scale for the A&SH at the outbreak of hostilities.

Description	Scale	Actual	Type
Motorcycles	9	6	Triumph
Cars 4-Seater	1	1	
Trucks 8 cwt	9	2	Morris Office Trucks
Trucks 15 cwt	9	10	Ford Canadian type 15cwt
Lorries 30 cwt	9	9	
Lorries 3 Ton	1	2	
Recce Vans	nil	7	
Armoured Cars	nil	6	4 x Lanchester Armoured Cars and 2 x Marmon Herrington Armoured Cars*
Water Trucks	nil	2	Morris Water Trucks
Universal Carriers		10	Universal Carriers
Totals		54	

*This was eventually increased to five Lanchesters of which four went up to Malaya. Only the 'Stirling Castle' made it back to Singapore where it was joined by two more. These were later destroyed in the fighting at the Dairy Farm.

The procurement and upkeep of vehicles was not always above board. Vehicles officially on loan from other units were repainted in A&SH insignia and paperwork mislaid. As new vehicles were acquired above the scale, older more temperamental vehicles were handed on to other units. As the battalion made its way to the front, abandoned vehicles were

⁴⁵¹ Stewart, 1947. p39. This allocation includes all the frontline vehicles used for combat duties and does not include the 2nd Line transport from the RASC tasked with moving the men to and from the reserve areas. In the case of the A&SH this duty was carried out by the 2/3rd Australian Troop-Carrying Company.

quickly fixed up and returned to active service.⁴⁵² Fuel and spares were liberated at will from unguarded vehicles.⁴⁵³ As with the uniform and equipment, not all new vehicles proved suitable to the tropical conditions. The A&SH War Diary entry for 22 Jan 1941 states:

The new Ford Canadian type 15cwt. Trucks were received in lieu of 9 Morris 15 cwt trucks which have been handed over to another unit. These new Fords are more powerful than the Morris, but they have certain disadvantages, such as an uncomfortable driving position. It is difficult to drive them when wearing boots and the heat from the engine is considerable.

Among the vehicles initially allocated to the A&SH were armoured cars, of which five were the temperamental yet robust Lanchesters. This late addition to the inventory may seem to fly in the face of Lt Col Stewart's doctrine of jungle fighting but was an appropriate supplement to a unit destined to fulfil the roll of a mobile reserve.



Figure 24 - A still from the Pathe Newsreel entitled 'Singapore 1942' that featured the armoured cars of the A&SH

This footage includes images of the A&SH Lanchesters on exercise in Singapore before their departure to Malaya. All five vehicles are seen in the footage although only four went up country. The film is indicative of the local press's interest in all things to do with the Scots in Singapore (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yG4-JpILZ1o> viewed 02/01/2020).

⁴⁵² Moffatt & McCormick, 2003. p51. Stewart, 1947. p11.

⁴⁵³ Stewart, 1947. p10.



Figure 25 - Marmon Herrington Armoured Cars

The Marmon Herrington Armoured Cars being readied for handover at the Alexandra Depot in 1941. The A&SH were to receive a number of these vehicles as part of their commitment to the role of a mobile reserve. (IWM)

(<https://www.iwm.org.uk/collections/item/object/1060033174> viewed 02/01/2020)

Stewart envisaged the armoured cars acting as a mobile fortress with considerable anti-infantry fire power that could patrol the roads, offer fire support for the accompanying troops, provide mobile back stops to rally around and spray the trees with bullets to bring down snipers. They were effectively the most potent anti-infantry weapon the Scots had in Malaya and the nearest thing to a tank the British had in the armoury.⁴⁵⁴

Stewart in post combat commentary of the battalion's performance in Malaya stated:

'Our Armd Cars of which we had 7 in the Bn were invaluable and the crews magnificent. Nuttall, Darroch, Sgt Macdonald from Inverness. It was only the

⁴⁵⁴ Contrary to popular belief the British did deploy 'tanks' in Malaya. The 100th Indian Light Tank Squadron were issued with 16 of the Vickers Mk II/ IV tankette, but it was less well armed than the Lanchester and prone to breaking down. (<http://1942malaya.blogspot.com/2009/07/tank-squadron-that-came-too-late.html> viewed 29/04/2020. Cooper, 2016. p162.)

*extreme speed at which our bn (almost alone) had been taught to fight that got us through successfully.*⁴⁵⁵

There was another fatal flaw in the provisioning of equipment. The British soldier would go into battle heavily laden and over dependent on motorised transport. The theory was that all the equipment not required for combat could be kept in the main backpack and quickly jettisoned should the soldier be attacked. This left the soldier with enough ammunition, weapons, and water to sustain combat for the immediate action. Units heading into a predetermined engagement had more time to shed unnecessary equipment and take on extra ammunition and grenades. The surplus was then left behind the lines for later recovery.

Maj Angus Rose states that in the Termerloh Raid he carried:

*'...a bandolier, a slung haversack and a map case, if we had a map. The contents of my haversack consisted of five slides of Tommy gun ammunition, a full water bottle, a packet of dried raisins, a packet of biscuits, a first field dressing, a tin of mosquito cream, a bottle of water purification tablets and a couple of grenades. The latter I transferred to my trouser pockets, and I carried a rifle and bandolier of 100 rounds of small arms ammunition in addition. This was actually a great deal too much kit and in the next raid I cut it down drastically.'*⁴⁵⁶

The army seeking to mechanise its infantry units after the First World War along the borders of its Empire began to transport the troops in trucks.⁴⁵⁷ This meant that the individual soldier could take heavier equipment up to the front line and leave any surplus equipment on the trucks for later recovery. However, this reliance on the transport restricted the infantry to operations along the road which would soon clog up with traffic and the detritus of war.⁴⁵⁸

The logistics of putting a unit onto the roads is ably reflected in the Operation Order No.1 written by the adjutant of the Lanarkshire Yeomanry just prior to the outbreak of hostilities. The regiment had 16 x 4.6" howitzers to move along the roads with all the associated supplies of ammunition, equipment, and gunners. They were to deploy with

⁴⁵⁵ Stewart, 1942. Misc Papers. p2.

⁴⁵⁶ Rose, 2017. p100 – 101.

⁴⁵⁷ Ryan 1983. pp124 – 142.

⁴⁵⁸ Grehan & Mace, 2015. p344 states that Percival recognised the problems of having too many vehicles on the roads and ordered on 6th January that all units were to reduce their transport and to send all unnecessary vehicles 'well to the rear'.

other elements of the 11th Indian Brigade and were tasked with repelling Japanese invaders landing on the eastern beaches of Thailand.

Table 8 - A Summary of MT requirements - Movement Order No.1

	Formation	No. of Vehicles	Place		Start Point S.P.	Time Past S.P.	Speed & Density	
			From	To			Miles in the hour	Vehicles to the mile
1	Tps 273 Bty 80 th AT Regt	10	TJP	HAAD	See Note A	See Note A	15	17
2	155 Fd Regt	97	SGP	HAAD	Mile 34 SPT – ARS Rd	Q	15	17
3	9 Mobile W/S Coy	25	SGP	HAAD		Q + 25	15	17
4	13 Fd Amb + MT 13 Fd Hyg Sec	38	SGP	HAAD		Q + 35	15	17
5	MT 1/14 Punjabis	64	TJP	HAAD	See Note A	See Note A	15	17
6	? Ambs 5 MAS	4	TJP	SADAO	See Note A	See Note A	15	17
	Totals	238 vehicles	SGP to Haad	98 Miles			15 miles per hour	14 miles of convoy

Note A – ‘Will be ready in unit lines in TJP to move off at Q + 3. Representatives will report RHQ Field Regt mile 10 at Q + 3hrs for orders to move.

Route 1 – Sungai Petani (SPT), Kroh Gate, Short cut around stn to ARS Road, Alor Star (ARS) Road, Alor Star (ARS); Kepala Batas, Tanjong Piadang (TJP), Jitra (JTA), Bukit Kayu, Hitam, Sadao, Haadyai

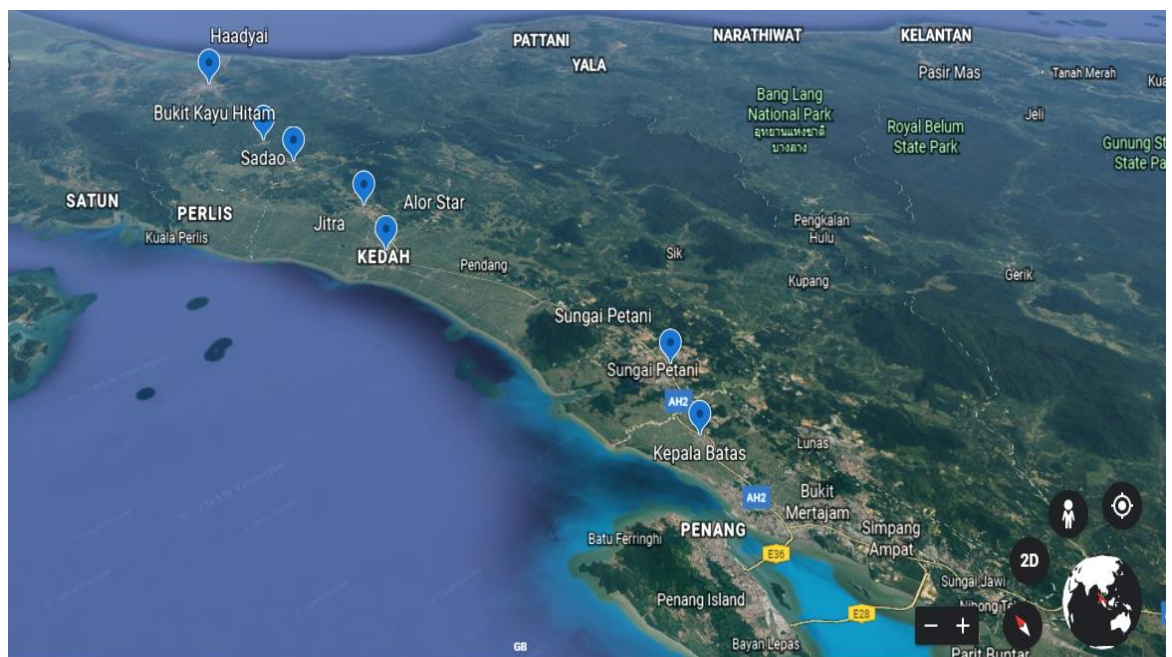


Figure 26 – The proposed route for MT Order No.1

An aerial view of the proposed route from Simpang Ampat to Bukit Kayu Hitam on the Thai – Malay Border and onto to Haadyai in Thailand. (Google Maps)

From the totals given the estimated travelling time from Sungai Petani to Haadyai, without stops, was 6.5 hours and the convoy would stretch to around 14 miles in length.

Considering this was just the artillery elements and the 1/14th Punjabis of the 11th Division moving into contact with the enemy, then it is easy to understand how the very few roads heading to the Thai border across a narrow neck of land could be quickly clogged with Allied transport. Combined with the probability that the Japanese would gain regional air supremacy then such convoys would undoubtedly be struck by ground attack aircraft and thereby seriously compromised.

The roads themselves were far from suitable for taking the amount of heavy traffic proposed. Notably main roads in Malaya, built by the British to facilitate the movement of rubber and tin, were generally only wide enough for two carriageways. They were also lined with deep drainage ditches designed to drain away the heavy rain during the monsoons. This had the unfortunate consequence of hemming the traffic onto the tarmac. Any vehicle being immobilised on the carriageway would cause, at best, the traffic to use a single track and at worse, block the road entirely. If the vehicle was pushed off the road it inevitably fell into the drainage ditches and was virtually impossible to retrieve without specialised recovery vehicles. Roads subjected to enemy aerial attack and pre-sighted artillery fire during the day could only be used at night when one slip to avoid a shell crater or flood would drop the vehicle into the drainage ditch. Bridges and culverts became choke points, especially if sabotaged, and it was straightforward to create a roadblock or launch an ambush from high sided ravines and encroaching treelines and to slowdown any movement along the road. The roads were so inhibitive that Stewart, and subsequently the writers of '*Tactical Notes for Malaya*' affirms that the roads should all be treated as '*defiles*', a military term defining the feature as susceptible to blocking actions and flank attacks from greater elevations.⁴⁵⁹

It is not surprising Lt Col Stewart expressed concern about the dependency the British had on motorised transport using the major trunk roads.

'Control [of the troops], therefore, depended entirely on keeping open the single artery of the road. It became absolutely the dominant tactical feature,

⁴⁵⁹ Tactical Notes for Malaya, 1940. p2, p5.

*the only one to attack or defend. The battle was always for control, and therefore always for, 'the road.'*⁴⁶⁰

In contrast, the Japanese looked upon the road system as means to pin the Allied troops and interdict behind fixed lines of defence. Tactically, as soon as the forward Japanese units engaged the enemy, they looked to send infantry to outflank the position and then set up roadblocks to cut off the enemy frontline from reinforcements.⁴⁶¹ As for the movement of their vehicles the Japanese philosophy is clearly portrayed in their own jungle pamphlet optimistically entitled '*Read This Alone and the War Can Be Won*':

If a man can pass so can a motor vehicle.

If the road is too narrow cut a way through, if there is a cliff in the way let forty or fifty men in a bunch haul you up it.

*Motor vehicles get through by determination. Force your way ahead, even if you have to carry the thing on your shoulders.*⁴⁶²

Stewart's insistence that the roads were critical to the strategy of the campaign, echoed by the thoughts of the high command, and the dependence of the allies on their own considerable transport assets, has been cited as a major contribution to the failure of the Allied campaign.⁴⁶³ Out flanked at the stop lines and out manoeuvred in the withdrawals meant that the allied units were constantly focused on the logistics of the next retreat, rather than considering any kind of advance or counterattack.⁴⁶⁴

Seabridge concluded in his report to the War Cabinet that the Allied failure to adjust to the flexible assaults by the Japanese was down to the dependency on the road to transport heavily loaded troops.

We were not under equipped in Malaya; we were over equipped. Our men were overburdened. We had motor transport everywhere and a large amount of it had to be abandoned.... Our own men seemed to expect transport to carry them immediately they withdrew from the fighting area.

The infantry had lost the art of marching – except for the Argylls whose commanding officer gave them as strenuous a preparation as could have been

⁴⁶⁰ Stewart, 1947. p2.

⁴⁶¹ Murfett et al., 2006. p221.

⁴⁶² Tsuji, 2007. p250.

⁴⁶³ Grehan & Machan, 2015. p325.

⁴⁶⁴ Moreman, 2005. p28.

*given to any troops...Like the Japanese they [the A&SH] were mobile as men and not mobile as units – if they could link up with their transport. Jungle fighting is a matter of feet more than wheels; this is proved by the success of infiltration tactics. We were bogged down by the weight of stuff which could have been dispensed with,...*⁴⁶⁵

Being out flanked at the stop lines and out manoeuvred in the withdrawals meant that the heavily equipped allied units were constantly focused on the logistics of the next retreat, rather than lightening their load and considering any kind of advance or counterattack. Ironically, it could be argued that the allies, once unburdened by their heavy equipment, were so good at retreating they eventually outran their enemy, ensuring the final withdrawal across the Johor Causeway into Singapore was carried out without intervention by the Japanese.

5.11 Conclusion

Much has been related within the primary sources about the training undertaken by the A&SH prior to the outbreak of hostilities, especially when contrasted with that undertaken by their fellow Scots and incoming reinforcements. In turn, many post war commentators cite the lack of ‘Jungle Training’ as a major cause for the British defeat. This may be so, but there is some debate as to what exactly this prophetic ‘Jungle Training’ regime entailed. As Malaya Command was starting from a low base, it is not surprising that the protestations of a local Scottish commander seemed the most reasonable basis from which to build a training doctrine upon, despite his fervent demeanour condemning him as being somewhat of a maverick and ‘crank’. Lt Col Stewart of the A&SH was convinced that his battalion’s training regime was the best way ahead given the circumstances.

However, it was to be these circumstances that would ultimately dictate the scope and depth of the instruction. The resulting training regime, and its accompanying training manual, proved to be little more than an extension of prevailing infantry doctrines created in Europe, shoehorned into the localised jungle environment, often no more remote than a couple of day’s march from the main roads and railways of Malaya. Certainly, the trained soldier would have been exposed to life under the jungle canopy and learned to move through the debilitating terrain. He would be able to overcome the fear of the unknown jungle, to avoid and exploit its potentially lethal fauna and flora and acclimatise to its

⁴⁶⁵ Seabridge, 1942. p3. Seabridge, the editor of the Straits Times, goes on to mention the Mersing March justifying Stewart’s decision to invite the press along on the exercise.

energy sapping temperatures and humidity. However, there was to be no new major innovations in technology, no plans for deep penetration patrols behind the enemy lines and most importantly no alteration to the grand strategy of defending stop lines, sticking to the roads, and fighting a staged withdrawal surrendering land for time.

To make matters worse the jungle training proved to be sporadic and of poor quality. There was little buy in from the delegated officers and despite the assertions of Lt Gen Percival, most of the allied troops in Malaya had little experience of jungle lore at the outbreak of the campaign. Only the A&SH and their colleagues in the 12th Brigade and the men of the Australian 8th Division were able to train for jungle operations on a brigade level, and only then when combined with their primary role as a mobile reserve.⁴⁶⁶

Yet the battalion diary entries, some added retrospectively, and the newspaper reports support the narrative of an apparently punitive training schedule for the garrison infantry. The Gordon Highlanders undertook numerous exercises appropriate to their role as a coastal defence unit. This included beach landings and rapid redeployment by road. There was some jungle lore to be taught but the priority was the defence of coastal fortifications against seaborne attack.

Both training regimes were ultimately undermined by the churn of personnel and the dilution of experienced men among the new battalions arriving in theatre. The continuous integration of the new replacements compounded the issue and being stationed in Singapore prior to the war did not ensure the unit was fully trained. The constant arrival of new personnel meant even the most established units were never totally proficient.⁴⁶⁷

The review of the battalion logbooks suggest that the A&SH and the Gordons believed they were fitted out in accordance with their wartime scales for equipment and men. It had not been an easy process. There had been a fair amount of compromise and adaptation to secure the necessary arms and equipment. The late inclusion of armoured cars, for

⁴⁶⁶ For the training undertaken by the 8th Australian Division see Farrell & Pratten, 2009. pp128 – 135.

⁴⁶⁷ Seabridge, 1942. p3. Seabridge in his reprise of the campaign submitted to the Cabinet stated that the Gordons had performed 'adequately' which was compared to the rest of the damning report, fair praise.

example, meant the A&SH had to adapt their tactics at the last moment to incorporate close support of the Lanchesters and Marmon Herringtons.

British kit designed for use in Western European or North African theatres was being issued to forces in the Far East with little or no consideration to the different conditions and nature of warfare.⁴⁶⁸ Despite having undertaken exercises in Malaya for many years the British military was unable to adapt the scales or successfully introduce new equipment to meet the new demands of mobile warfare in the jungles and mountains. As such the A&SH and the Gordons went into battle weighed down with what proved to be defective and inadequate equipment.⁴⁶⁹ To make matters worse, morale was severely dented by the threat to traditional regimental garb; kilts and glengarries were a rare sight and there was little to distinguish a Scot from an Englishman in combat.

This research has shown that it was the dependence by heavily burdened troops on road transport and not necessarily the lack of the pseudo jungle warfare training that was the primary cause for the army's tactical failings. The command strategy required that the soldier be laden down with personal equipment and heavy weapons which, in the tropical conditions of Malaya, limited the infantryman to operating near to the transport. In comparison, the Japanese also had little 'jungle training' and made great use of the same roads, but their troops carried lighter loads, survived off fewer rations and made every effort to move faster than the enemy. These were the same tactics that had been ably demonstrated by the A&SH on the 'Mersing March' earlier that year.

The question remains as to whether the British and Commonwealth forces would have fared any better in Malaya had all the Allied units undergone Stewart's jungle training course? The study undertaken here suggests not, if the Malaya Command stuck to the grander strategy of defending fixed positions and falling back when attacked. 'Jungle Beasts' were best used on the offensive, allowed to take the fight to the enemy, to probe deep into enemy lines or hold out for days in jungle and mountain strongholds. In fact, it will be argued that the newly acquired jungle lore served the Scots best during their

⁴⁶⁸ Even khaki drill bleached in the sun stands out in the lush green jungle of Malaya especially when the man is on the move. All khaki was replaced with jungle green uniforms in 1943 (Brayley, 2002. p35.).

⁴⁶⁹ It must be noted that the Scottish regiments were considered well equipped in comparison to the Indian and Australian army units and the British 18th Division which had been fitted out for warfare in the North African deserts before being diverted in transit to Singapore.

evasion from capture, however misplaced belief in their own jungle skills drove others to a lingering death in the Malay jungles.

The post campaign report submitted to the War Cabinet, written by Major H P Thomas of the Indian Army, ably summed up the issue behind the failure of the Allied preparations for war by blaming the Malaya Command for the inappropriate training and unimaginative approach to ‘Jungle Warfare’ which forced individual units to come up with their own theories and practice.⁴⁷⁰ Thomas goes on to single out the 12th Indian Brigade, and not just the A&SH, for credit without directly naming them, and suggests that there was one other drawback to claiming the title of the ‘Jungle Beasts’:

‘In this connection it is remarkable that the only formation which consistently faced the Japanese with confidence either in attack or defence, delayed them and inflicted severe loss was a brigade which had been in Malaya since 1939. It suggests that experience counts more in this type of fighting than any other. It was one of the tragedies that the very efficiency of this brigade necessitated their being employed until they ceased to exist.’⁴⁷¹

It is this apparent extermination that will be addressed in the next chapter.

⁴⁷⁰ Thomas, 1942. p14.

⁴⁷¹ *Ibid.*, p14.

Chapter 6 – War

6.1 Introduction

Grauer (2013), in his study on why soldiers surrender, suggests that battles are won not by killing more of the opposition, but rather by persuading the remaining enemy that giving up is preferable to continuing the fight.⁴⁷² This maybe a valid premise yet it assumes that the soldier is given a choice as to whether to surrender, flee or die. For most Scottish soldiers still willing to fight on 15th February 1942, the decision to surrender would not be theirs to make. It was Malaya Command, despite all their earlier public displays of bluster and belligerence in having ordered their men to fight to the last round, who were convinced that the troops were no longer ‘combat effective’ and any further sacrifice of life, both military and civilian, would be in vain.⁴⁷³ It was they who ordered the mass surrender of the forces in Singapore. But what had happened in the intervening 70 days of battle to create this apparent schism between the Scottish soldiers and their commanders?

Richard Holmes (2003) in his study of the behaviors of men in battle suggests that only a small proportion of soldiers would ever make it into combat. The number of troops to be found, as he puts it, between ‘*the tail and the teeth*’ of an army is surprisingly large. He also contests that fighting battles accounts for a very small part of the soldier’s time in the army and that many of the stresses that effect the efficiency and resilience of the soldier come as much from army life in general as it does from their experience of combat.⁴⁷⁴ Hence, to gain a full appreciation of the nature of warfare in Malaya and its effect on the mindset of the soldier, we must consider not only the experience of the Scots in the few days in the front line but also in those interminable weeks and months preparing to go into battle and the time spent recovering from its consequences.

Therefore, this chapter opens with a review of the unit diaries and discusses what they reveal about the day-to-day activities of the battalion from the time of the Japanese invasion of Malaya to the fall of Singapore. It will assess the nature and lethality of the combat as well as the intervening time away from the frontline that culminated in the

⁴⁷² Grauer, 2013. p622.

⁴⁷³ Farrell, 2006. pp384 – 385. Churchill, Wavell, and Percival all called upon the defenders of Singapore to ‘fight it out’, ‘fight to the end’ and to ‘stick it out’ in various telegrams and correspondence from 10th February onwards.

⁴⁷⁴ Holmes, 2003. pp74 – 76.

unique and somewhat surreal period of rest and recuperation in their own homes and barracks. The chapter will conclude with an assessment of the A&SH combat experience on the island and the evidence provided in the primary sources for the apparent collapse of combat efficiency which so alarmed Malaya Command and prompted their decision to surrender.

6.2 Between the ‘Tail and the Teeth’

Notwithstanding the benefits and drawbacks of using the battalion war diary as a definitive source of information, as discussed in the opening chapters of this thesis, a review of daily activity provides basic statistical information as to the undertakings of the battalion over the course of the campaign. Undoubtedly a simple statement written retrospectively into a diary cannot capture all the movements and undertakings of every subunit. A diary entry stating the battalion was in ‘combat’ may have only involved a single company or several aggressive patrols leaving much of the battalion in the relative safety of the rear lines, yet a broad appreciation of the battalion’s activity can be derived from the records and compared with the itinerary of other units.

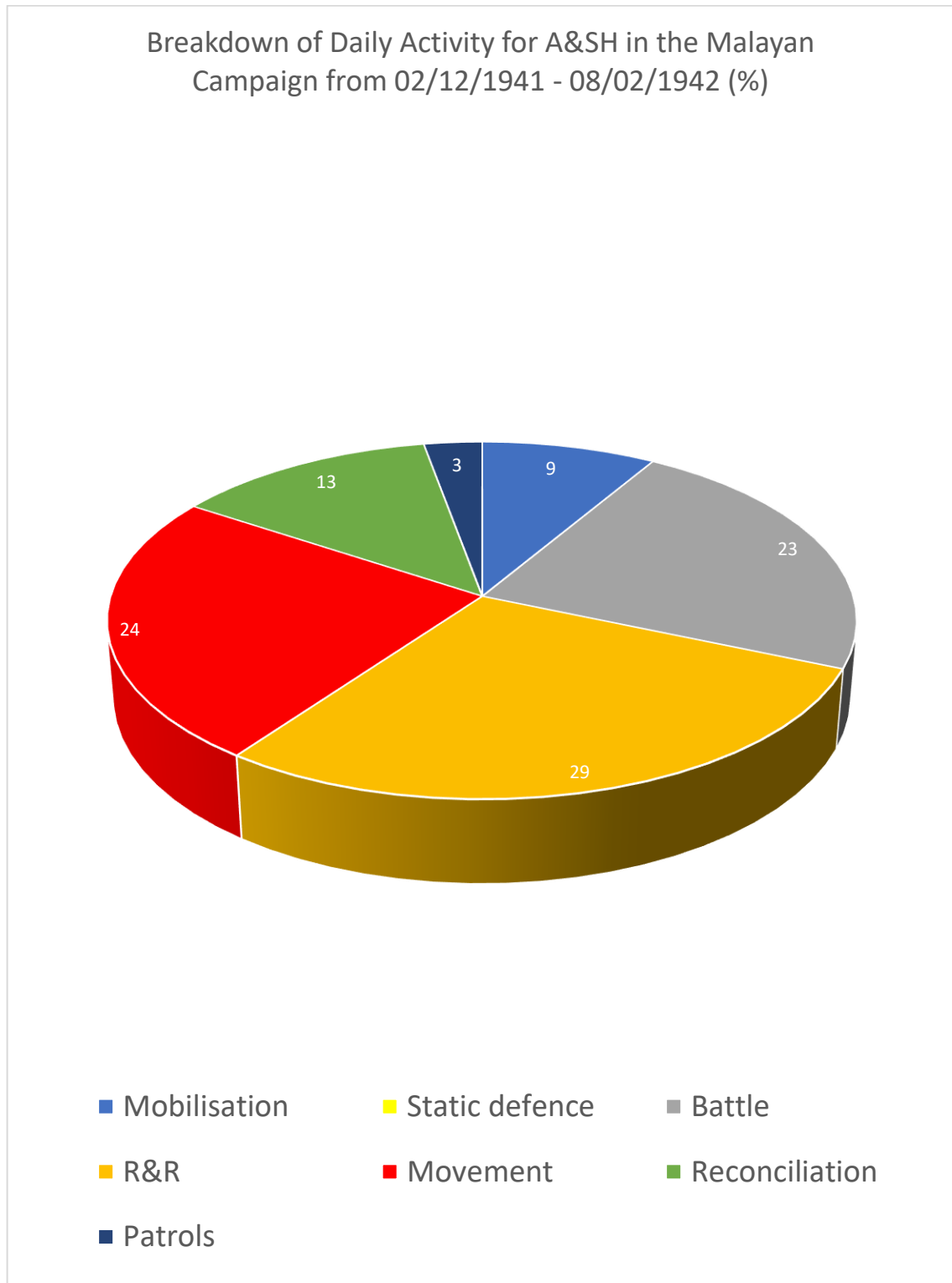


Chart 1 - Breakdown of daily activity for A&SH in the Malayan Campaign (%)

The A&SH had the most days in combat of all the Scottish units and most likely among the Allied battalions. 'R&R' is primarily the time spent between the battalion's return to Singapore on 14th January 1942 and the Japanese invasion on 8th February. 'Reconciliation' covers the time the unit spent preparing new positions for defence.

Breakdown of Daily Activity for the Gordon Highlanders in the Malayan Campaign from 02/12/1941 - 08/02/1942 (%)

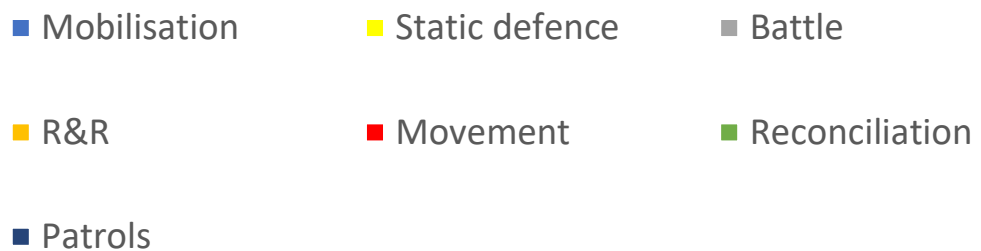
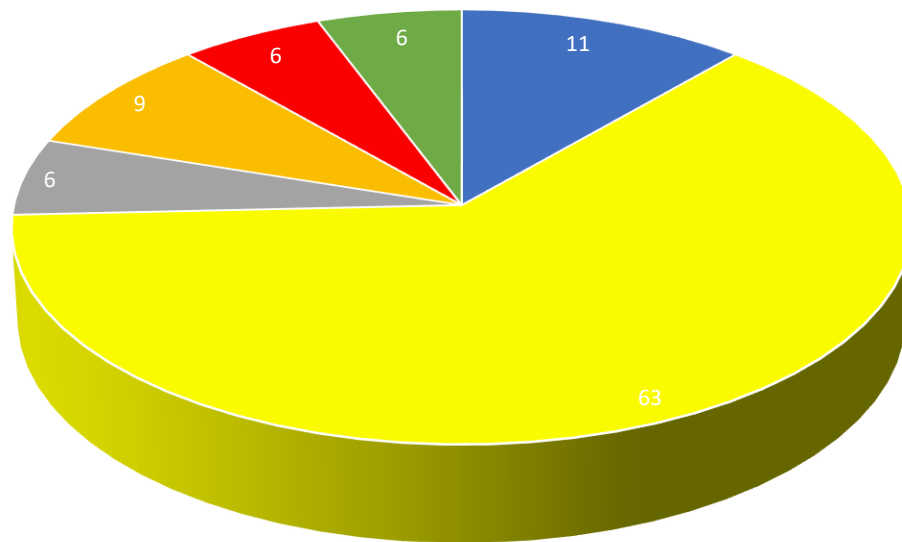
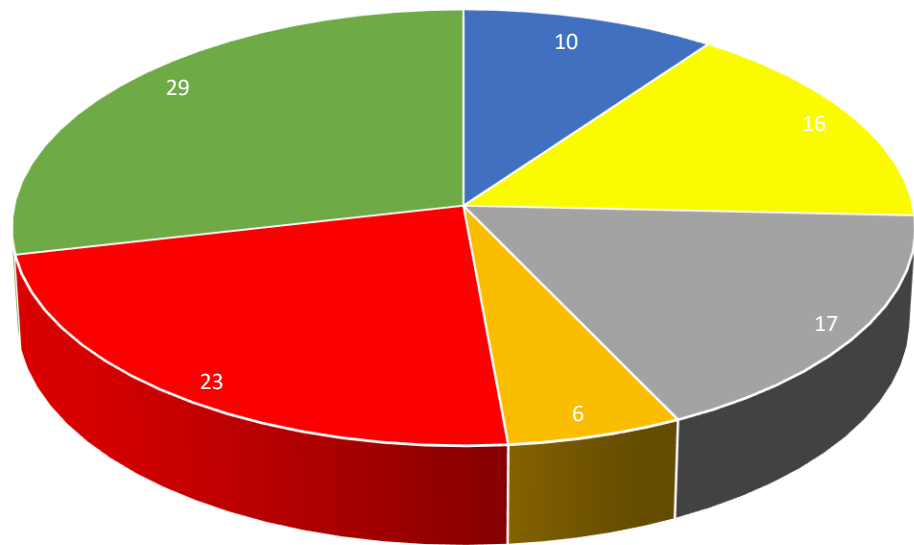


Chart 2 - Breakdown of daily activity for the Gordon Highlanders in the Malayan Campaign (%)
The term 'static defence' refers to the Gordon's time manning coastal defences in Pengerang Johor. (WO 172/96)

Breakdown of Daily Activity for Lanarkshire Yeomanry in the Malayan Campaign from 02/12/1941 - 08/02/1942 (%)



■ Mobilisation

■ Static defence / In support

■ Battle

■ R&R

■ Movement

■ Reconciliation

Chart 3 - Breakdown of daily activity for the Lanarkshire Yeomanry in the Malayan Campaign (%)

The term 'In Support' in the case of the Lanarkshire Yeomanry refers to their guns providing fire support for everyday operations. This would inevitably attract incoming Japanese shell fire, but it is not as deadly as the days in battle. (WO 172/77)

The study takes in the period from 2nd December 1942, when the units were mobilised, up until the invasion of Singapore on the night of the 8 / 9th February 1942; a total of 70 days.

The contrast in the role of the two Scottish infantry regiments could not be starker. The Gordons spent the vast proportion of their time guarding fixed defences in Pengerang spending only 6% (4 days) of their time ‘in combat’. In comparison the A&SH spent 23% of their days in combat, 24 % on the road and 29% in rest and recuperation (R&R) primarily recovering in Singapore. The Lanarkshire Yeomanry’s profile is complicated by the role they played as artillery supporting the frontline units. Much of their time (33%) was spent in close combat alongside units of the 11th Indian Brigade, at times engaging the enemy at close range, or providing fire support for other frontline units which may or may not attract enemy retaliation. They too spent around a quarter of their time on the road, primarily in the retreat to Singapore.

Table 9 - Activity for the Scottish Regiments in days

Total Days	A&SH	Gordon Highlanders	Lanarkshire Yeomanry
Mobilisation	6	8	7
Static defence	0	44	11
Battle	16	4	12
Patrols	2	0	0
Movement	17	4	16
Reconciliation	9	4	20
R&R in Singapore	20	6	4
TOTAL	70	70	70

Table 9 shows the number of days spent undertaking the various functions of the unit during the Malaya Campaign. The diary entries suggest that the A&SH and the Lanarkshire Yeomanry spent around 20 days each in the frontline mostly in the period from 17th December 1941 to the end of the battle of Slim River on 6th January 1942. The Gordon Highlanders exposure to four days of combat took place between 21st to 27th January.

Not all men of the battalion were engaged on every day of combat. The time between fighting was spent either on the road or preparing new positions. There was little opportunity to get a full night’s sleep and the troops were constantly tired.⁴⁷⁵ The threat of

⁴⁷⁵ McEwan, 1999. pp25 – 35. Stewart, 1947. p74.

enemy air attacks prevented the men from sleeping during daylight hours and the nightly redeployment in overcrowded lorries compounded the issue. The strain of being in constant peril and the effects of sleep deprivation was cumulative and pushed the soldier towards the limits of their endurance.⁴⁷⁶

Swank and Marchand (1949) writing of their observations of a U.S. Army unit fighting in Normandy suggest that the combat effectiveness of the unit follows a particular trend over time. They contest that the unit takes seven days to reach its peak of effectiveness and can maintain this for a further 21 days. Around the thirtieth day in combat the soldier then shows the first signs of ‘battle fatigue’. This may include unusual levels of tiredness which could not be restored by a couple of days of rest and a loss of confidence in his battlefield abilities. This was followed by feelings of insecurity, sleeplessness despite being exhausted, and irritability often manifesting as comments as to the performance of other ranks and units.⁴⁷⁷

The growing number of casualties would quicken the decline in performance, moving a soldier from a state of denial as to the likelihood of death to a degree of fatalism, believing his death would be inevitable. After forty days, and assuming the unit remained in the ‘combat zone’, symptoms of ‘emotional exhaustion’ could be seen. The anxious stare, tremulousness and general hyperactivity were substituted by an emotionless, lassitude and listlessness. Cases of suicide, reckless bravery, and self-wounding would rise. At sixty days the combat state was described as the ‘vegetative’. A near death experience in these later stages, be it to themselves or a friend would inevitably provoke a ‘violent emotional explosion’ often losing all control, writhing on the ground, or crying, symptoms often diagnosed as chronic ‘Shell Shock’ or ‘Battle Neurosis’.⁴⁷⁸ The man and his unit were no longer combat effective at this point.⁴⁷⁹

Subsequent critics of Swank and Marchand’s work have contested the validity of the time-period for this transition, stating this would vary according to the intensity of combat and

⁴⁷⁶ Holmes, 1986. p122.

⁴⁷⁷ Rose, 2017. pp106 – 107.

⁴⁷⁸ An example of shell shock can be found in the post-war investigation into the whereabouts of Sgt Purves, A&SH who was extracted from the front line after the battle of Lenggong and evacuated to Singapore. He was reported by witnesses as being ‘mad’ and having lost all reason. He had previously witnessed the destruction of his platoon and the loss of his close friend. He went missing during the subsequent evacuation to the hospitals. There are five cases of ‘Shell Shock’ reported in the A&SH Rolls.

⁴⁷⁹ Swank & Marchand, 1946. pp236 – 247.

the rate of casualties suffered by the unit, however the symptoms of the decline in combat efficiency remain valid.⁴⁸⁰ Wary army commanders mitigated the effects of combat fatigue by rotating the troops from the front line and thereby extending the combat efficiency from months to years. British commanders expected to give a frontline unit four days rest after 12 days in combat.⁴⁸¹

In many ways the ‘Staged Retreat’ strategy of the Malaya Command fed into this model as units leapfrogged the ‘stop lines’ as they retreated, spending relatively safer time resting and consolidating the next defensive positions. No one battle lasted more than four days. If Swank and Marchand are to be believed, then the A&SH and the Lanarkshire Yeomanry exposed to 20 - 25 days of intermittent combat with occasional days of rest in between would still be considered ‘combat efficient’ when withdrawn to Singapore. The Gordon Highlanders could be considered relatively fresh and peaking in their combat efficiency. In theory, once rested and re-equipped, the Scots should have been in a good condition to continue the campaign.⁴⁸²

The foregoing notwithstanding, the A&SH, as Thomas suggests, by the time of their return to Singapore had all but ceased to exist.⁴⁸³ Only 90 men were present at the first muster in Singapore. Over the course of the following days, another 140 men returned to the battalion either from escaping from the mainland or being recalled from the support staff duties on the island.⁴⁸⁴ According to the A&SH Rolls, out of the 1,195 listed in the roll, 126 men had died between 9th December 1941 and 30th January 1942 of which 31 had no location of death noted against their entry.⁴⁸⁵ The majority of deaths occurred at Slim River (16), Titi Kerangan (13) and Trolak (11), Dipang (7) Lenggong (6), with the remaining casualties scattered evenly across 23 other sites. However, 839 men remained unaccounted for, either having been previously evacuated, on duties in Singapore, evading the enemy or having been already captured. The battalion had effectively lost 75% of their manpower in the campaign on the mainland and yet only 10% had been killed. In comparison the

⁴⁸⁰ Holmes, 2003. pp216 – 217.

⁴⁸¹ *Ibid.*, p215.

⁴⁸² Grehan & Mace, 2105. pp328 -329.

⁴⁸³ Thomas, 1942. p14.

⁴⁸⁴ Stewart, 1947. p92.

⁴⁸⁵ These men were listed as missing (13), died in the jungle (4), in captivity (1), killed (9) or location listed as ‘not known’ (3).

Gordon Highlanders, having spent only ten days fighting off attacks along the Ayer Hitam Road, recorded 10 killed in action and 3 dying of wounds in this period.⁴⁸⁶

The combat experience of the Lanarkshire Yeomanry is more difficult to track as the gun batteries were often split up around the brigade and were frequently providing support fire when not officially engaged in a noted battle. The unit was represented at the battles of Jitra (11th – 12th December 1941), Gurun (14th -15th December 1941) and Kampar (30th December – 2nd January 1942) and they played a major part in stopping the Japanese tank column from advancing down the main road at the Battle of Slim River (7th January 1942). Capt Gordon Brown was awarded a Military Cross for his actions in knocking out the lead tank having manoeuvred his gun onto the road and firing at the enemy at close range.⁴⁸⁷ The Lanarkshire Yeomanry travelled as far as the A&SH and had debatably more time under enemy fire throughout the course of the conflict. They suffered fifteen men killed in action, 3 died while listed as missing and 2 dying of wounds in this period. Only 3 men had been captured.

These figures would therefore suggest that given time to rest and to replace lost equipment both the Lanarkshire Yeomanry and the Gordon Highlanders would be in a good condition to continue the fight. The A&SH, in contrast, had effectively ceased to exist.

⁴⁸⁶ Miles, 1961. pp 93 – 100. The number of wounded is not known but 39 Gordons were in the Roberts Hospital and Malay No.1 Hospital at the end of February 1942.

⁴⁸⁷ McEwan & Thomson, 2013. pp18 - 49. Holmes, 1982. p128. Holmes attributes the destruction to Sgt Keane C Battery and Bombardier Skone.



Map 6 - A map showing the movement and major engagements of Scottish units during the Malayan Campaign

The major engagements, the initial Japanese attacks and the Japanese seaborne assaults have also been added.⁴⁸⁸ Note the distance travelled by the Lanarkshire Yeomanry and the A&SH during the campaign.

⁴⁸⁸ Among the collection of maps held at the National Library of Australia collection are road maps issued prior to the outbreak of the war that show the road system along the peninsula which includes this detailed map published by the Singapore Japanese Club.

6.3 In Battle

The initial review of casualty figures suggests that the A&SH had in some way been engaged in a particularly brutal type of warfare. Lt Gen Percival in his summation of the campaign notes in Malaya suggests that:

‘...there was a great deal of heavy fighting at short range and often hand to hand in which our troops fought courageously and well.’⁴⁸⁹

He goes on to state that the engagements at Kelantan (12th - 22nd December 1941), along the Grik Road (19th – 21st December 1941), at Kampar (30th December 1941 – 2nd January 1942), Kuantan (30th December - 3rd January), Muar (15th – 16th January 1942), Gemas (14th – 15th January 1942) and Mersing (22nd – 25th January 1942) as well as certain engagements in Singapore (8th -15th February 1942), were in some way a novelty to the British forces unused to the intensity and intimacy of the combat. It is reasonable to assume that this ‘novel’ style of warfare would be reflected in the battalion casualty reports.

The lists of wounded for each battalion were often transcribed to the Regimental Roll Book as means of accounting for casualties still on the battalion strength but known to be in military hospitals. Wounded were listed by date and battle site, with the details of the injuries noting the cause and the area of the body affected. The lists only included the wounded who made it to the first line hospitals. Those wounded and who fought on and those who ‘died of wounds’ before reaching the aid posts are not recorded. The details of the wounded casualties in the roll books replicated the information found in Hospital Discharge books and used the terminology defined in the medical reporting procedures. The breakdown of the wounded A&SH is shown below along with data from other British units.

⁴⁸⁹ Grehan & Mace, 2015. pp 328 – 329.

Table 10 - Analysis of wounds sustained by the 2nd A&SH (12th Indian Infantry Brigade)

Total Wounded	GSW*	Shrapnel Wound	Fractures	Bayonet	Shell Shock	Blast	No Details
96	74	5	3	1	5	0	8
%	77.1	5.2	3.1	1.1	5.2	0	8.3

*GSW – Gun Shot Wounds

Table 11 - Analysis of wounds sustained by the 1st Leicestershire Regiment (11th Indian Division)

Total Wounded	GSW	Shrapnel Wound	Fractures	Bayonet / Sword / Sabre	Burns	Blast	No Details
46	22	23	0	0	1	0	0
%	47.8	50.0	0	0	2.2	0	0

Table 12 - Analysis of wounds sustained by the 2nd East Surrey Regiment (11th Indian Division)

Total Wounded	GSW	Shrapnel Wounds	Fractures	Bayonet / Sword / Sabre	Burns	Blast	No Details
63	27	33	0	1	0	2	0
%	42.9	52.3	0	1.6	0	3.2	0

Table 13 - Analysis of wounds sustained by the 4th Suffolks Regiment (18th Division)

Total Wounded	GSW	Shrapnel Wound	Fractures	Bayonet	Burns	Blast	No Details
153	70	75	1	0	0	3	4
%	45.8	49.0	0.6	0	0.0	2.0	2.6

Table 14 - Analysis of wounds sustained by the 1st Cambridgeshire Regiment (18th Division)

Total Wounded	GSW	Shrapnel Wounds	Fractures	Bayonet	Burns	Blast	Shell Shock
73	31	26	8	1	5	1	1
%	42.5	35.6	11.0	1.4	6.7	1.4	1.4

Table 15 - Analysis of wounds sustained by 5th Bedfordshire & Hertfordshire Regiment (18th Division)

Total Wounded	GSW	Shrapnel Wounds	Fractures	Bayonet	Blast	Shell Shock	No Details
70	33	24	1	2	3	6	1
%	47.1	34.3	1.4	2.9	4.3	8.6	1.4

Table 16 - Analysis of wounds sustained by the 2nd Loyals Regiment (Singapore Fortress)

Total Wounded	GSW	Shrapnel Wounds	Fractures Crushing	Bayonet / Sword / Sabre	Blast	Shell Shock	No Details
109	44	48	2	2	10	0	3
%	40.4	44.0	1.8	1.8	9.2	0	2.8

What is immediately evident is that the A&SH report a higher proportion of gunshot wounds to shell fragment wounds in comparison to all the other units. This would infer that they had engaged in the unique close quarters combat mentioned by Percival.⁴⁹⁰ A review of the battalion history of the battles concurs, in that Stewart makes little reference to any of the actions being accompanied by shellfire.⁴⁹¹ In comparison, those units of the 18th Division that arrived in theatre at the end of the campaign, suffered a higher degree of shrapnel wounds. It could be concluded that they did not engage in the close quarter fighting that the A&SH did and had suffered most of their casualties while engaging in the urban fighting in the suburbs of Singapore and Johor. Certainly, the accounts of the campaign suggest that the Japanese, by the time of the final battles, where they found themselves outnumbered and attacking built up areas, had changed their tactics and were employing more artillery pieces and aircraft to soften up allied positions before launching their attacks.⁴⁹² However, the analysis for the Leicestershire and East Surrey battalions, units who were also heavily engaged in the northern campaign and suffered similar numbers of casualties as the Argylls, suggest they too were submitted to a degree of shellfire and bombardment typical of more conventional actions.⁴⁹³ The analysis for the 2nd Loyals battalion who, like the Gordons, had spent much of their time manning the island's defences and had only been committed to the battle in Johore and then Singapore, likewise had a high degree of shrapnel wounding.⁴⁹⁴

The figures for the A&SH have been compared with similar data found for the 'English' Regiments fighting alongside them in Singapore but not necessarily with them in Malaya. Analysis of the nature and location of wounds reveal some interesting trends.

⁴⁹⁰ References to sword, bayonet, and knife wounds may indicate close quarter fighting. However, it may also be evidence of massacres, as Japanese troops tended to bayonet their victims rather than shoot them.

⁴⁹¹ Stewart, 1947. pp19 – 94.

⁴⁹² Tsuji, 2007. pp168 – 169.

⁴⁹³ Both units had been heavily engaged at the battle of Kampar.

⁴⁹⁴ Wound data was not available for the Gordons or the Lanarkshire Yeomanry for this thesis.

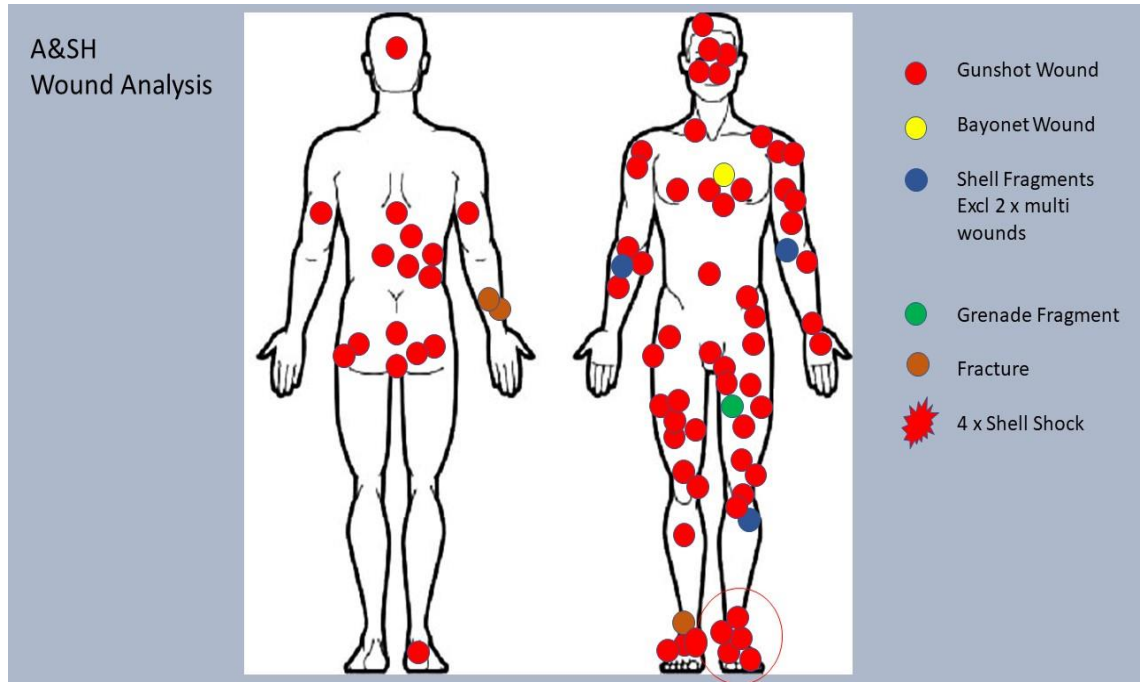


Figure 27 - Analysis of wounds sustained by A&SH

Not only are the numbers of reported wounds small in comparison to the other regiments, but there are very few shell fragment injuries.

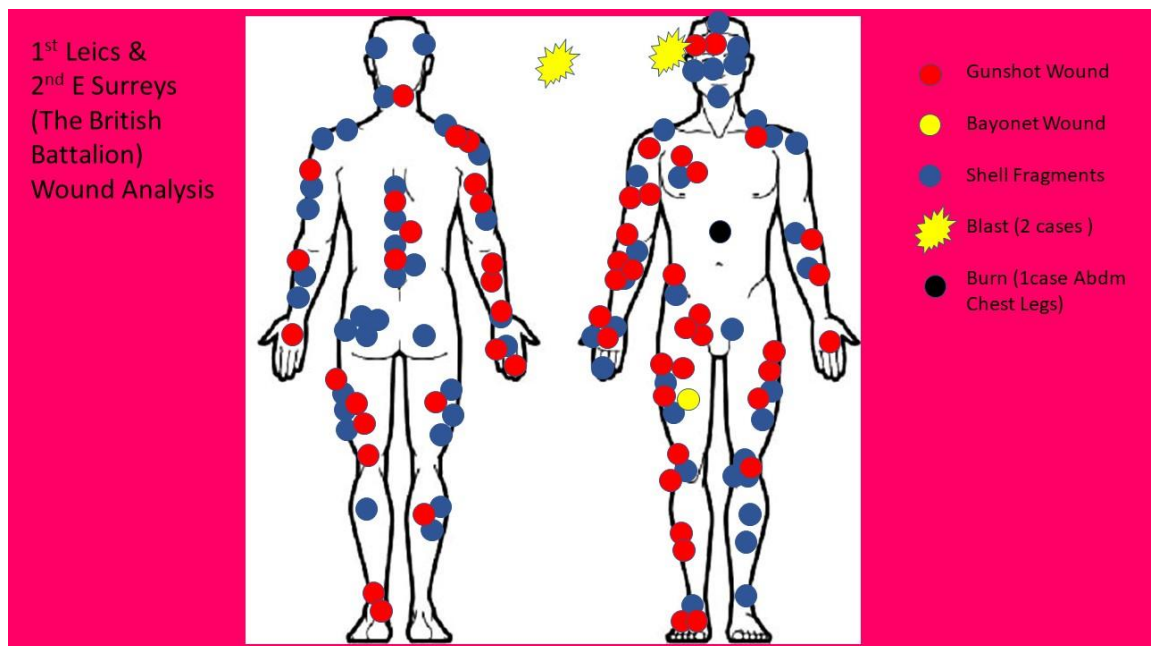


Figure 28 – Analysis of wounds for the 1st Leicestershires and 2nd East Surrey (The British Battalion)

The British Battalion fought in Malaya with the 11th Indian Brigade and sustained similar casualties to the A&SH.

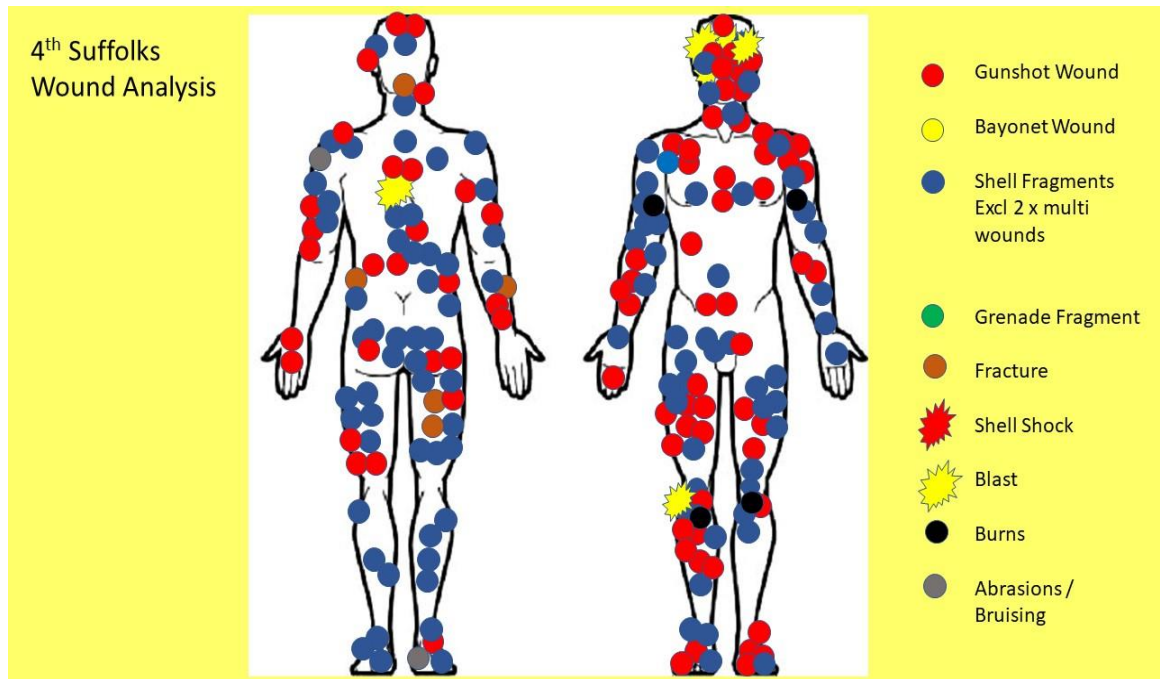


Figure 29 - Analysis of wounds sustained by 4th Suffolks who fought in Singapore in 4 days of combat.

There are many more men reported with wounds for the 4th Suffolks and a high proportion of shell fragment injuries. This is indicative of the sustained combat and an organised triage to hospitals undertaken during the fighting in Singapore.⁴⁹⁵ There is also a notable amount of 'lower left leg / foot injuries' synonymous with self-wounding.

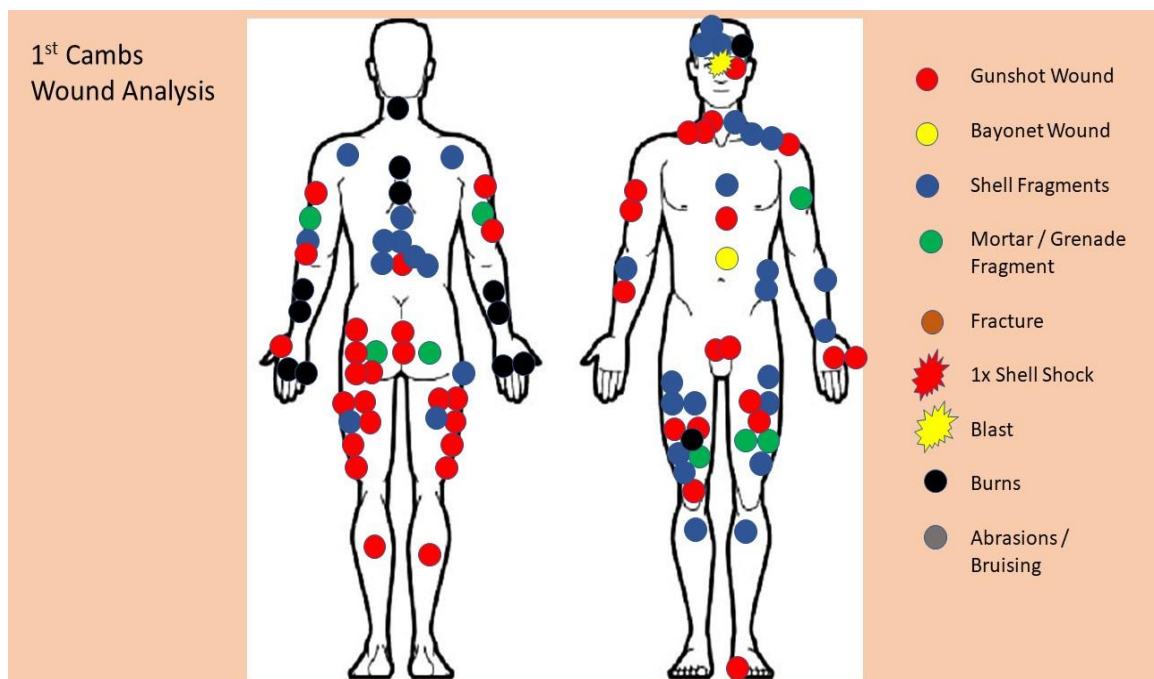


Figure 30 - Analysis of wounds sustained by 1st Cambridgeshires who fought only in Singapore in four days of combat.

The increase in the number of burns recorded corresponds with the reports that the Cambridgeshires were at one point caught in their trenches by a grass fire.⁴⁹⁶

⁴⁹⁵ Cooper, 2016. pp79 – 82, pp161 – 188.

⁴⁹⁶ Cooper, 2016. pp192 – 193.

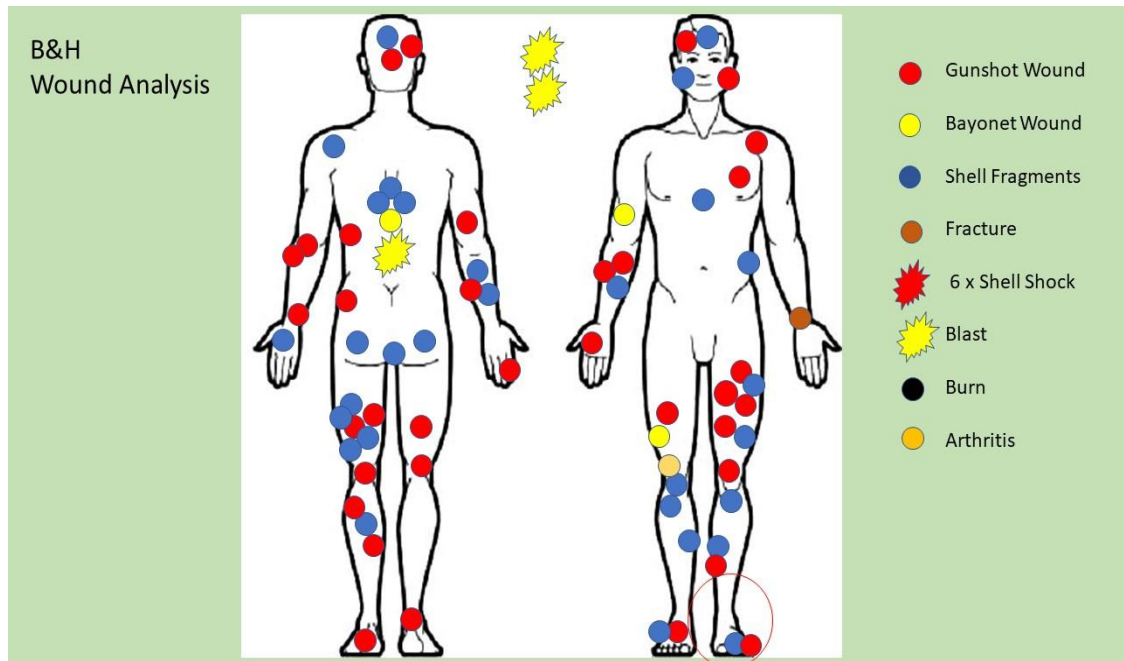


Figure 31 – Analysis of wounds for 5th Beds & Herts who fought only in Singapore in three days of combat.

The Beds and Herts diagram shows fewer reported wounds and a three bayonet wounds associated with hand-to-hand fighting and massacre victims.⁴⁹⁷

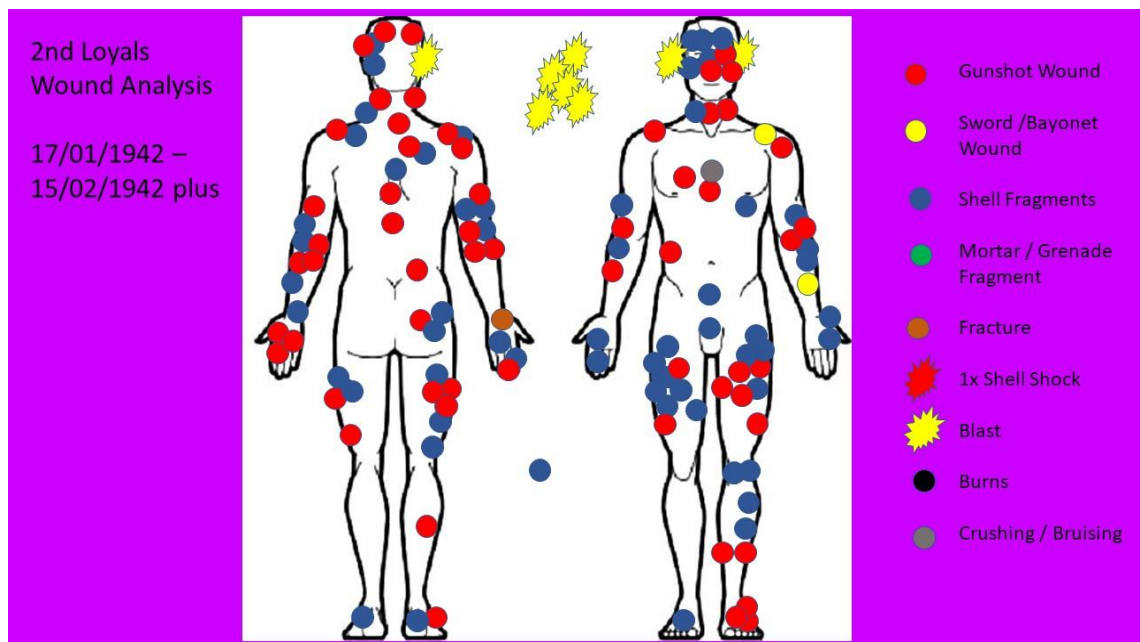


Figure 32 - Analysis of the wounds sustained by 2nd Loyal Regiment

The Loyals diagram shows an equal number of gunshot wounds and shell fragment injuries. The number of blast injuries is indicative of the heavy bombardment of positions in Johor and at the Gillman Barracks near the end of the fighting.⁴⁹⁸

⁴⁹⁷ Fryer, 2018. pp112 – 191.

⁴⁹⁸ Loyals, 1942.

This analysis therefore indicates that the A&SH had indeed engaged in a unique type of warfare in Malaya, suggesting that they had put to good use their jungle training and aggressive patrolling tactics and thereby engaging the Japanese in the ‘close quarters’ combat noted by Percival and advocated by Stewart. However, their reputation and performance ensured that they were returned to fight time and time again until the battalion ceased to exist as an effective fighting force and was withdrawn to Singapore

6.4 Rest and Recuperation in Singapore.

It must have been a surreal experience for the Scottish troops to return to Singapore for some rest and prepare for the inevitable invasion. In a space of twenty-four hours the A&SH had been extricated from the front line and returned to their billets.⁴⁹⁹ Many officers were able to spend time with their wives and family. Capt Doherty, for example, having cadged a lift off the padre, was welcomed at the door of his married quarter by his wife who had cooked up a breakfast of bacon and eggs.⁵⁰⁰

Facilities at Tyersall remained unchanged despite the occasional bombing. Wounded soldiers were triaged to the base hospitals, many within a short taxi ride from the barracks and were treated by military nurses and laid up in pristine wards. Nightlife continued at a pace and sporting events were organised to welcome the new arrivals to the regiment.⁵⁰¹ Troops with back pay were able to indulge in the bars and brothels in town and the officers returned to games of golf, lunches at the country clubs and sundowners at Raffles.⁵⁰²

The new reinforcements from the British 18th Division took over the billets in Tyersall of the Indian Army units lost in Malaya and the ‘Jocks’ tried to cheer them up in their own inimitable way. When one newly arrived soldier glumly remarked *‘I think it’ll be another Dunkirk’*, a battle-hardened Argyle responded, *‘Don’t kid yourself laddie, there’s no place to go from here.’*⁵⁰³

⁴⁹⁹ Stewart, 1947. pp89 – 92.

⁵⁰⁰ Moffatt & McCormick, 2003. p182.

⁵⁰¹ Bayly & Harper, 2004. p132. p138.

⁵⁰² Rose, 2017. pp131 – 135.

⁵⁰³ Moffatt & McCormick, 2003. p188.

This quote illustrates the dilemma faced by the Scots recovering from the campaign in Malaya. They were by that time fully aware of the fighting potential of the Japanese and the likelihood of their own defeat. As the days and weeks went by and the Japanese presence across the straits increased, there was a growing realisation that there was little chance of a further evacuation and that the only viable alternative to death was surrender. It also reminds the reader that the fate of the men in Dunkirk still played heavily on the minds of the men in Singapore, some of which had experienced the evacuation across the English Channel, just twenty months earlier.

In the meantime, the return to camp allowed the A&SH to rebuild the strength of the unit. The regiment was amalgamated with 210 Royal Marines, survivors of the sinking of *HMS Prince of Wales* and *HMS Repulse* and a cadre of men from the local volunteer forces.⁵⁰⁴ Although the Royal Marines had proven to be able fighters, they had not undergone any jungle combat training, but it was hoped their knowledge of boats and seaborne landings would give the remaining Argylls a chance to launch seaborne raids once the Japanese had invaded the island, disrupting their supply lines to the mainland.⁵⁰⁵ However, the remnants of the 12th Indian Brigade under Brigadier Archie Paris, were to continue their role as a mobile reserve, initially stationed at Tyersall.⁵⁰⁶ The Royal Marines joined them there, the men moving into five attap huts and the officers taking up residence in tents.⁵⁰⁷ Unsurprisingly, a fight broke out in the NAAFI between the two factions on the first evening. Later the action was taken to the football field in which the two teams, depleted through battlefield losses, played out a close game of which the Royal Marines won.⁵⁰⁸

Stewart set about training the Royal Marines up as fast as he could, and they were quick learners although they tended to group too closely together when deploying in the jungle and they had little experience of fighting alongside the armoured cars.⁵⁰⁹ Thirteen temporary commissions were given out to Federated Malay States Volunteers, Straits Settlement Police Officers, and civil servants, many of whom were ex pat Scots. Sixteen

⁵⁰⁴ Rose, 2017. p147.

⁵⁰⁵ Moffatt & McCormick, 2003. p208.

⁵⁰⁶ Stewart by this time had dismissed the Indian battalions as being no use at all being so depleted during the fighting in Malaya (Farrell, 2015. p383)

⁵⁰⁷ Moffatt & McCormick, 2003. p209.

⁵⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, p210. The combined unit was quickly named the 'Plymouth Argylls' as most of the Royal Marines had been previously based in the town. There is some speculation that the local football team had adopted the name after being originally raised from the ranks of the A&SH detached to the town in 1880s (Moffatt & McCormick, 2003. p208.). However, it is more likely that the team was named after a local street and pub (Tonkin, 1963. p7.)

⁵⁰⁹ Moffatt & McCormick, 2003. p209.

new Chinese stretcher bearers also joined the battalion.⁵¹⁰ However, this influx of new personnel only strengthened the unit on paper. The integration of the recruits was interrupted by the Japanese invasion on the evening of 8th February and the fighting ability of the unit remained severely reduced.⁵¹¹

In comparison, the Gordon Highlanders crossed the Causeway on 30th January and made their way to Birdwood Camp to regroup. Here they were subjected to several bombing raids by the Japanese Air Force in which at one point caused several of the attap roofed huts to burn down. They lost four men killed and nine wounded in the raids and their battalion paperwork was destroyed.⁵¹² The Quartermasters store was also attacked, and much equipment was lost. To make matters worse, a visit to the gymnasium at Selarang, in which they had stored much of their personal kit before deployment to the mainland, revealed that many of the items had been looted.⁵¹³

The sense of impending defeat was deepened by the evacuation of the family members, non-essential battalion personnel and the wounded.⁵¹⁴ Wives and dependents were allocated berths on the troopships bringing in the 18th Division reinforcements over the last days of January 1942.⁵¹⁵ The married Gordons returned to their quarters to find their families had already been evacuated. This could be a traumatic return as all the vestiges of family life had been simply left behind. Bomb damage to the houses told of near misses and the danger the families had been in during the absence of the soldier.⁵¹⁶ However, comfort was to be had in the fact that the families had been evacuated and that they were probably on their way to safety in India or Australia. Such loss and uncertainty would weigh heavily on the minds of the soldier facing the final days of the campaign. No longer were they fighting to protect the family and home.⁵¹⁷

⁵¹⁰ *Ibid.*, pp184 - 189

⁵¹¹ Both Rose and Stewart remark on the poor quality but avid enthusiasm of the B Echelon and Volunteers who joined the battalion. (Stewart, 1947. p94. Rose, 2017. p148.)

⁵¹² Miles, 1961. p103.

⁵¹³ Mitchell, 2012. pp46 – 47. Word also went out that all the army stores were to be written off and that the men could help themselves to the stores. This not only promoted the feeling of impending defeat but also ensured the stores would be emptied before the men returned as POWs to Selarang after the campaign had finished.

⁵¹⁴ Grehan & Mace, 2015. p328. Rose, 2017. p148. This included the withdrawal of the dhoby boys and tailors who had travelled with the battalion from India. The names and dates of departure of these individuals are recorded in the A&SH Muster Roll

⁵¹⁵ The families of the Gordons were evacuated on the *Duchess of Bedford* on 30th January. Not all family members made it out on these ships. (Mitchell, 2012. pp40-41.)

⁵¹⁶ Mitchell, 2012. p47.

⁵¹⁷ War Office WO/172/77, 1942. pp8 - 9.

The arrival of the Lanarkshire Yeomanry into Singapore from the Malayan mainland was a complete contrast to that of their fellow Scots in the infantry. The nature of artillery warfare meant that the batteries had been split up to support various elements of the army and had made their way back to Singapore in piecemeal detachments. Units who had abandoned their guns and much of their equipment needed to be re clothed and re-armed and in the case of the 155th Field Regiment this meant retraining on the 25pdr field guns. New positions were identified, and artillery pieces dug in. Surveyors were sent out to seek out alternative harbours and signallers laid communications between command posts, their forward observers, and gun batteries. Ammunition was brought forward; it was estimated that the island garrison now had around three months' worth of stockpiles, although 25pdr rounds was limited but once the invasion started any restrictions were removed.⁵¹⁸ Unlike the infantry battalion, the Lanarkshire Yeomanry could engage with the enemy in the days before the invasion. They undertook daily artillery duels with their Japanese counterparts, relishing the chance to pit their skills against the targets on the other side of the straits.⁵¹⁹ This not only honed their abilities, familiarised them with the new weapons and allowed them to sight their guns but it also gave the opportunity to fight back. There was little spare time to acquaint themselves with the city or the people they guarded.⁵²⁰ Having no previous experience of living in Singapore and having no family and friends on the island, the Yeomanry had no real connection with the city. They had been told that the island fortress could not be taken, however their experience of the Japanese army in Malaya would suggest that this might not be the case. For the Yeomanry, Singapore would be, at best, a temporary stopover in a longer retreat, at worse, a dead end.⁵²¹

6.5 Crossing the Causeway – creating a Scottish legend from a British defeat.

Halfway through the period of rest and recuperation in Singapore an opportunity arose for the A&SH to return to the fight and raise the morale of the unit. What transpired was a piece of military drama that was to uphold the fighting reputation of the regiment in the hour of their greatest defeat. On 30th January, the battalion was sent to the north side of the

⁵¹⁸ *Ibid.*, pp 8 – 9. Grehan & Mace, 2015. p281.

⁵¹⁹ War Office WO/172/77, 1942. p9.

⁵²⁰ *Ibid.*, p9.

⁵²¹ McEwan, 1999. pp35 - 36.

Causeway to reinforce the final perimeter and tasked to hold the bridgehead until the last of the allied forces had been evacuated to Singapore.⁵²²

The battalion was suitably equipped and had previous experience in defending a bridgehead having held the north end of the Kota Tampan Causeway at the end of the Grik Road the previous month.⁵²³ The armoured car section had been reinforced and apposite transport acquired to ensure the rapid withdrawal across the causeway. Their ranks were supplemented by the inclusion of anti-tank and anti-aircraft guns as well as a Royal Navy detachment of small craft.⁵²⁴ The only issue was the number of men available for the operation, as the Royal Marines had yet to join them and only 250 Argylls were mustered. Pipers would provide the fitting musical accompaniment.⁵²⁵ Markedly, when the retreating Gordon Highlanders filed onto the causeway, they were accompanied by a lone Argyll piper, who saluted them across with a rendition of ‘*Cock of the North*’ and ‘*Blue Bonnets O’er the Border*’ which could be heard along the north coast of the island.

At 0700hrs on 31st January 1942, Major Rose gave the command for the remaining Argylls, posted on the inner cordon, to withdrawal back to the Causeway.⁵²⁶ One by one the armoured cars and trucks were driven away, and troops shipped by launches, supplied by the Royal Navy contingent, across the straits, until only two Bren gun teams and the ‘Stirling Castle’ armoured car remained. Then on the signal the remaining gunners pulled back with the regimental pipers striking up the tunes ‘*Hielan Laddie*’, ‘*Jenny’s Back E’en*’ and ‘*A Hundred Pipers*’.⁵²⁷ Stewart was the last to leave Johor accompanied by his drummer and batman, Albert Hardie, who reportedly ‘sauntered’ down the causeway. By 8.15am all formed allied units were across the straits in Singapore and Stewart personally gave the order for the demolitions placed at the drawbridge at the Johor end and among the foundations of a 60ft central section of causeway, to be blown. Not a man had been lost or enemy sighted in the final withdrawal and the Argylls were back at Tyersall for breakfast,

⁵²² Stewart, 1947. p95 – 99. Stewart dedicates a whole chapter of his book to this event and adds an appendix written by Lt Cdr J O C Hayes R.N. the Naval Liaison Officer for the operation.

⁵²³ *Ibid.*, pp43 - 45

⁵²⁴ *Ibid.*, p96.

⁵²⁵ *Ibid.*, p97.

⁵²⁶ Rose, 2017. p145.

⁵²⁷ Bayly & Harper, 2004. p130.

at 10.00 hrs.⁵²⁸ As Maj Angus Rose observed ‘*I might as well have been watching a turn at the Aldershot Review.*’⁵²⁹

Stewart was reported as saying to Major John Wyett of the Australian 8th Division, the man responsible for laying the demolition charges:

*‘You know Wyett, the trouble with you Australians is that you have no sense of history. When the story of the Argylls is written you will find that they will go down in history as the last unit to cross the causeway and were piped across by their pipers.’*⁵³⁰

It was a moment in history that was steeped in Scottish tradition and demonstrates Stewart’s determination to write the regiment’s name into the archives. However, there was a precedence for this orchestration of the historic record. Stewart had made his name by being the first of the British Expeditionary Force to set foot in France in 1914 and the first officer to be mentioned in despatches.⁵³¹ He was also very aware of the sacrifice of the 51st Highland Division and many of his fellow A&SH officers at St Valery in 1940, much of it from the reports in the local papers.⁵³² Writing after the war to a regimental colleague, Stewart alluded to what the incident meant to him personally:

*I was put in charge of the final withdrawal 31 Jan / 1 Feb out of Johore...before Jap gained contact and blew a hell of a hole in the Causeway. I was the last man out of Johore! And we played our pipes once.*⁵³³

Only the destruction of the causeway proved a failure as the gap proved narrow enough and the water shallow enough for the Japanese to quickly bridge the gap. However, the cacophony of the demolition and the towering spout of water and debris cascading down into the straits was just the grand finale Stewart and vast array of onlookers expected.⁵³⁴

⁵²⁸ Moffatt & McCormick, 2003. pp196 – 198.

⁵²⁹ Rose, 2017. p146.

⁵³⁰ Moffatt & McCormick, 2003. p196.

⁵³¹ *Ibid*, p12. Holmes 1982. p140.

⁵³² Hayes in his post war account compares the retreat across the Causeway with the evacuation of Dunkirk. (Stewart, 1947. p133)

⁵³³ Misc Papers, 1945.

⁵³⁴ Holmes, 1982. p140. McEwan & Thomson, 2015. p53. Sgt Edwards of the Lanarkshire Yeomanry working on an observation post on the shoreline stated that the breach was a ‘pitifully small gap’. ‘We had hoped for a complete demolition or at least a wide breach.’ Edwards adds that his driver Eddie Morris, a Welshman serving in the regiment, summed up the feelings of the many thousands of soldiers who watched the demolition ‘Sarge... the fucking Japs will spit across that. It won’t stop them an hour.’

It is not stated whether Stewart volunteered the battalion for the task of holding the final perimeter in Johor, but he was happy to exploit the historic significance of the occasion with all the flair a Scottish regiment could offer. If Stewart was aware of the prevailing risk to his men, then he did not let this effect the execution of the task. What resulted was an unforgettable incident commented on by most historians and memoirists vindicating Stewart's comments to Wyett. This was quintessentially a Scottish event reminiscent of the tattoos and parades undertaken by the regiment before the war. It was choreographed with every care to promote the regiment and its commander.⁵³⁵ This subject was chosen above all other combat and captivity incidents in Malaya to be the subject of a post-war artwork, entitled 'Sans Peur', commissioned by the A&SH veterans to commemorate the role of the regiment in the campaign.⁵³⁶



Figure 33 - 'Sans Peur' by Peter Archer.

This painting of the A&SH's withdrawal across the Causeway on 30th January 1942 hangs in the A&SH museum at Stirling Castle. The picture, sponsored by the regimental association, includes many features associated with the A&SH including the Lanchester Armoured Car, 'Stirling Castle' and the pipers playing as the last few bonneted troops march off the mainland. Lt Col Stewart, who worked with Archer on the image, can be seen wearing his Glengarry in the centre left of the image.⁵³⁷ (courtesy A&SH Museum)

⁵³⁵ Stewart, 1947. p195.

⁵³⁶ An article appeared in the Regimental magazine the 'Thin Red Line' in Autumn 1984 stating that the well-known military artist Peter Archer was to paint the picture in conjunction with Brig Stewart and technical advisor Brigadier David Wilson. (Stewart, 1983)

⁵³⁷ Stewart, 1983. p1.

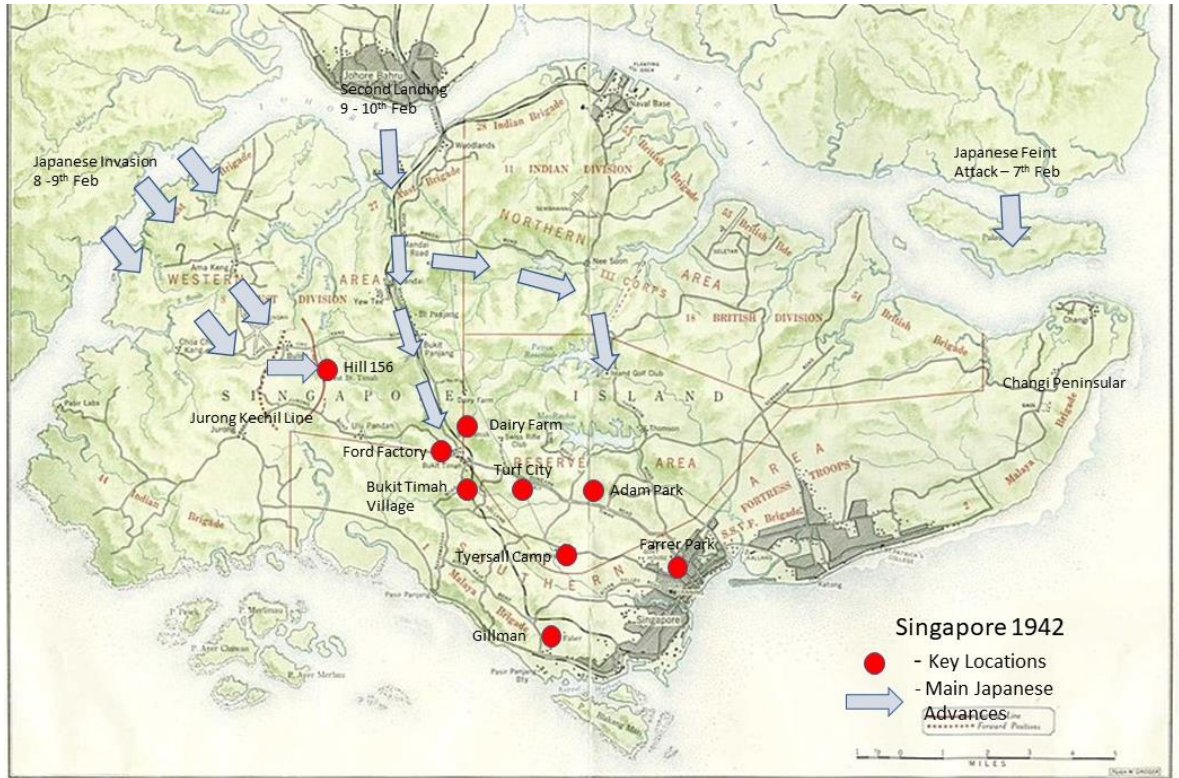
The destruction of the Causeway marked the end of the Malaya campaign. For the A&SH it concluded an honourable and bloody chapter in their rich regimental heritage, a final show of defiance in a long and bitter battle.⁵³⁸ There was little glory left to be attained, which for some was the main reason for being there.

6.6 The Last Round – Combat in Singapore

Doing things ‘by the book’, in this case *Tactical Notes for Malaya*, demanded a detailed understanding of the content and the willingness of the commander and his men to implement the guidance. Stewart, a keen advocate of the doctrines, was first to apply the guidelines in Malaya. However, by the time the A&SH had rallied in Singapore, circumstances conspired to prevent the battalion from repeating these tactics.

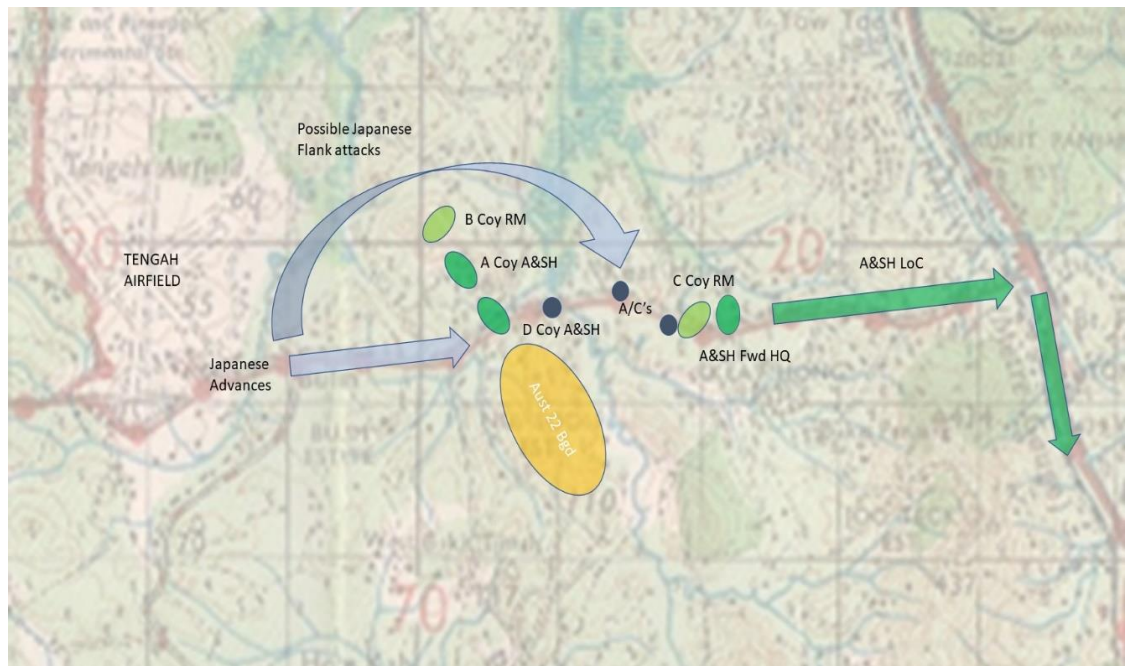
The Japanese invaded Singapore on the evening of 8th February 1942, landing two divisions of men along the north-western mangrove swamps held by a thin line of Australian battalions. By the morning of the following day, they had pushed towards the outskirts of Tengah airfield, with the Allied refugees retreating towards the Bukit Timah Road that linked the Causeway over the Straits of Johor with the city. 12th Brigade were ordered to bolster the defences of what was known as the ‘Jurong - Kechil Line’ running across the headland of the peninsula between the sources of the Kechil and Jurong tributaries. The A&SH were to defend Hill 156 on the northern end of the line.

⁵³⁸ Farrell, 2006. p335.



Map 7- A map of Singapore showing the Japanese advances and key locations.

During the early days of the invasion the A&SH were deployed to hold positions at Hill 156 and the Dairy Farm. They ended the campaign at Tyersall Camp.



Map 8 – A map showing the disposition of the A&SH at Point 156 in defence of the Tengah Road, 8th – 9th February 1942.

Stewart adopted a deployment which corresponds with those presented in chapter five of the pamphlet *'Tactical Notes for Malaya 1940'*, entitled *'Defence and Withdrawal'*. The A&SH knew the area well having staged several pre-war exercises in the vicinity and this position had been identified in advance as being a noteworthy ambush point.⁵³⁹

At 0930hrs, in broad daylight, with little sign of promised reinforcements arriving and believing his northern positions were to be imminently outflanked, Stewart extricated the A&SH along the road into positions a mile to the rear. They then held the line with the help of some anti-tank guns until 11.00am.⁵⁴⁰ Unusually the post combat accounts are devoid of any references to the aggressive offensive patrolling or motions towards outflanking the enemy as strongly advocated by Stewart and described in the *'Tactical Notes for Malaya 1940'*. Stewart acknowledges the lack of aggressive patrolling and goes onto explain why this is so:

*'It is pertinent to ask why the Argylls, weak as they were, did not now put into practice their doctrine of aggressiveness and attack either by encircling or filleting. ⁵⁴¹ But the essential combination of jungle training and individual aggressiveness that alone makes encircling attack possible no longer existed. For filleting, the only alternative to encirclement, artillery support was lacking; successful attack without heavy fire support was no longer feasible.'*⁵⁴²

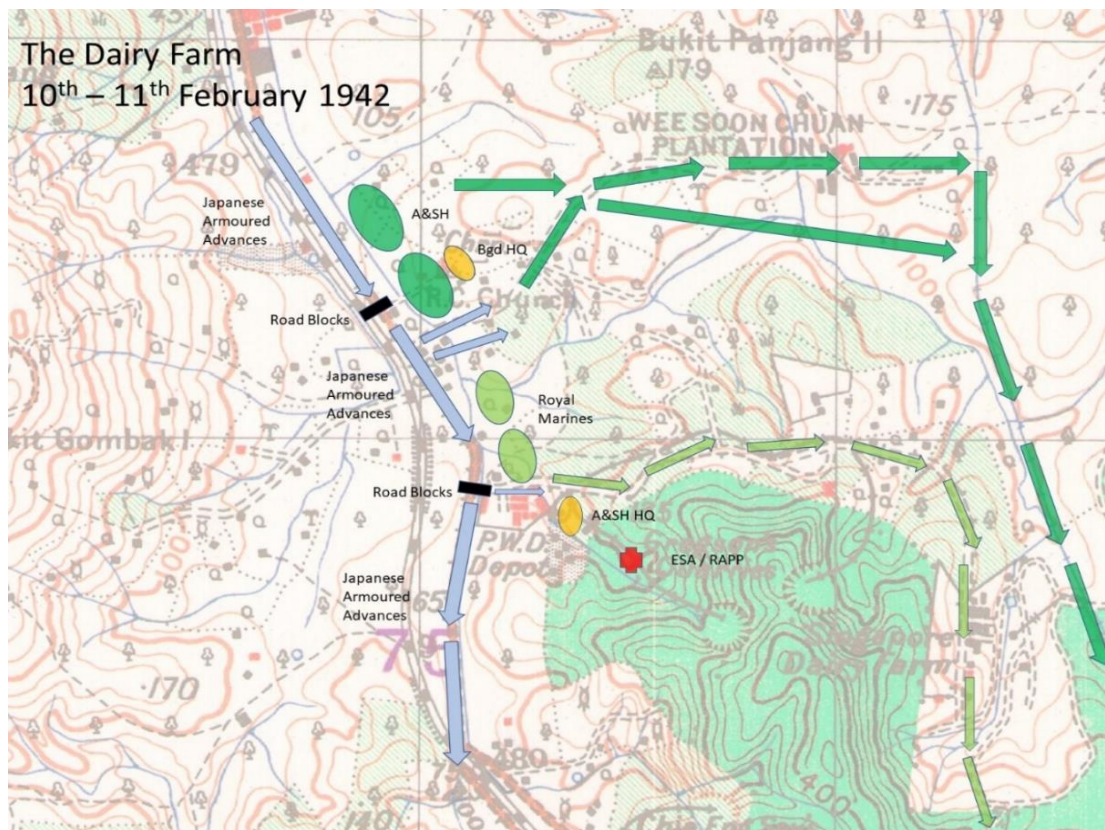
Later at the Dairy Farm, the A&SH were given the opportunity to launch attacks on a column of Japanese tanks and trucks backed up along the road to the Bukit Timah village. However instead of engaging with the enemy, Stewart decided to pull his men back. Groups of Highlanders and Royal Marines made their way through the pitch darkness towards the water pipeline that marked the route back down to the Bukit Timah Road towards the Adam Road stop line and to their agreed rendezvous at Tyersall barracks, with many officers and men making good use of their local knowledge and jungle training.

⁵³⁹ Stewart, 1947. p103.

⁵⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, p105.

⁵⁴¹ 'Filleting' was the description derived by Stewart for the rapid advance of armoured forces along a single line of approach which smashes through the defensive line and sends the survivors into the adjacent forestation – like a chef opening the guts of a fish by cutting along the spine. It is an indication as to Stewart's influence in the creation of this document that this term is used. (Stewart, 1947. p3.)

⁵⁴² *Ibid.*, p105.



Map 9 – A map of the battle for the Dairy Farm

This map shows the dispositions of the A&SH at Dairy Farm from the 10th – 11th February 1942 and their line of retreat to the Dairy Farm and the Water Pipeline

Once more Stewart later stated in writing to a friend after his escape to India the reason for the incongruous retreat:

*'Again our tactics did well but it was hopeless, and then next night I sat within 100 yds of the Bukit Timah road between B.T. [Bukit Timah] & Bukit Panjang and listened to between 50 and 75 Jap tanks and carriers passing down the road after we had failed to stop them – again no ATK. defence to speak of properly organised.'*⁵⁴³

As Stewart goes on to say, the new officers had not enough training in leading 'Tiger Patrols' and their efforts had little effect on the enemy column as they were quickly spotted and captured.

This review of the A&SH's battle abilities in Singapore reveals several contrasting themes. Certainly, despite the lack of specialised equipment such as compasses, good maps and luminescent wrist watches, the later narratives suggest that the pre-war jungle training the men received in Singapore helped them in their attempts to disengage through plantations

⁵⁴³ Misc Papers – Letter dated 25 Feb 1942 N.G2 Mal

and jungle, fight their way past Japanese patrols and rendezvous at an agreed location.⁵⁴⁴ However, the terrain these men were moving through was not jungle, but familiar training grounds with roads, pipelines, farmland, golf courses and racetracks to negotiate and all well known to the officers. Local knowledge helped save many lives. Of the approximately 250 A&SHs committed to the battle, 34 died or went missing in the fighting of which 18 were later reported as being bayoneted after surrendering.⁵⁴⁵ Fourteen men were listed in the Muster book as being wounded.

It could be argued that the A&SH had, by the battle at the Dairy Farm, fallen foul of the ‘retreat mentality’ and were effectively incapable of taking the fight to the enemy. As it turned out, once again, the withdrawal ended up being the most effective part of the operation. At what point Stewart began believing that his battalion was no longer an effective fighting force is hard to say. Certainly, his refusal to launch a night attack on an exposed enemy convoy along the Bukit Timah Road, contrary to all his previous assertions about taking the fight to the enemy, is telling. Arguably, he had already decided to avoid extra casualties after the success of the Causeway operation, the abandonment of the Navy and Royal Air Force bases and the safe evacuation of the civilians. The unit had sacrificed enough men in the defence of the island.

But what is perhaps more telling is that even the best trained units in the British Army in Malaya, when faced with an aggressive enemy, poorly equipped and after many weeks of campaigning, were too fatigued, too demoralized, and too inexperienced to carry out such aggressive manoeuvres.⁵⁴⁶ No amount or manner of jungle training would have created a durable and enduring army of ‘Jungle Beasts’ under these circumstances. Here was the most highly motivated and efficient jungle trained unit in the British army reduced to mere interested onlookers and skilled evaders.

6.7 Conclusion

This chapter began with an assessment of the role each Scottish unit played in the campaign and how that was reflected in the battalion records. The A&SH were first and foremost deployed as a rapid mobile column suitably trained in embussing and debussing and moving across a hundred miles of road in a day. Only once they were dug into their

⁵⁴⁴ Rose, 2017. pp163 – 167.

⁵⁴⁵ War Office *WO/361/219*.

⁵⁴⁶ Farrell 2006 p336

stop lines, could they make good use of their training and launch aggressive but limited ‘Tiger Patrols’ often meeting the enemy at close quarters and without the usual preliminary bombardments. Arguably the jungle training was best employed during the retreats through the jungle after the men had been isolated from the transport. The Lanarkshire Yeomanry and the Gordons carried out the role they were trained for, and the gunners excelled in their duties, manning their guns to the last moment in the face of the advancing enemy.

Once back in Singapore the comparatively surreal period of rest and recuperation was an ideal time, not only to allow men to recover mental fortitude, but also train up new arrivals. However, the evacuation of the battalion’s civilian personnel and families not only signified the imminent threat of invasion and the possibility of defeat, but also removed one of the corner stones of their reasons to fight on. Perhaps recognising the need to instil some extra fighting spirit into the A&SH, Lt Col Stewart committed the unit to the potentially calamitous defence of the Johor bridgehead. Stewart, never missed an opportunity to promote the reputation of his men before the war, orchestrated a glorious victory in defeat in his perfectly executed withdrawal across the Causeway.

The crossing of the Causeway may well serve as a warning to modern historians as they search for valid primary sources. Stewart’s stage management of the post incident reports, including the commission of an appropriate painting, shows how particular narratives are promoted to establish a legacy and to dominate the historic record. It created a legend from a crushing defeat and in the mind of their commander closed a chapter in their glorious heritage.

The interlude in Singapore and the excursion across to Johor however failed to restore the fighting efficiency of the A&SH. Once back in combat, Lt Col Stewart was reticent to employ his much-vaunted jungle tactics once the battalion had been reduced in experience and numbers. His self-confessed reluctance to take on the enemy at the Dairy Farm and Hill 156 is indicative of the need for trained men to undertake aggressive jungle warfare and the fact that by the time of the invasion of Singapore even the ‘Jungle Beasts’ had been stripped of their ability to take the fight to the enemy.

The evidence presented in this chapter suggests that the ‘Jungle Training’ and aggressive close combat, championed by Stewart and then carried out by the A&SH, had little bearing on the outcome of the campaign. The strategy employed by Malaya Command did not

require jungle trained soldiers to penetrate enemy lines. Dependence on the roads meant even the A&SH kept close to their transport and what little time that was spent in the plantations and jungle usually ended with a return to the vehicles. It could also be argued that it was not the lack of jungle training that lost the battle, but the strategy of a fighting retreat through defended ‘stop lines’ along congested transport links with overburdened infantry that sapped the will of the unit commanders to go onto the offensive through the jungle. The ‘Retreat Mentality’, which meant that each commander was more concerned about extracting his men from combat rather than taking the attack to the enemy, played into the hands of the Japanese. Retreating under constant threat of air attack and ambush sapped the energy of the soldier and destroyed the confidence in the commanders. Retreating off the roads and through the jungle effectively took the unit out of the fight for good.

As perhaps Stewart planned, it is easy for the historian to concentrate on the A&SH, and to some extent the Gordons, without reflecting on the performance of the subsidiary units such as the Lanarkshire Yeomanry. However, the paperwork associated with the unit provides a fascinating insight into the role and experience of the artillery in the Malayan campaign. Their story is in complete contrast to their fellow Scots. The Yeomanry conscripts were brought into theatre at a late date, had little time to acclimatise yet had managed to fulfil their role with aplomb and gusto. Their rapid deployment across unfamiliar terrain in the face of overwhelming air superiority is an impressive feat of arms and their training in Scotland was just as useful for their role in Malaya as was the jungle training for the Argylls. There were issues around modifying tactics to a heavily wooded terrain and extreme meteorological conditions, but the Yeomanry adapted well and performed their allotted tasks with skill and alacrity. Their experiences however have been overwhelmed by the narratives of the regular army units whose post war regimental historians were able to continue to promote the role of their battalions through books and artwork.

Assessing whether the Scottish regiments took a disproportionate number of casualties is problematic. Certainly, the casualty figures suggest the A&SH suffered proportionally heavier losses in the campaign than the other units in their brigade. Arguably the Scots’ martial repute, born from their pre-war press coverage and carefully crafted stint as a garrison unit, may well have influenced the decision of the command when it came to deploying troops on more risky tasks, thereby increasing the casualty count. The wound

analysis suggests they engaged in a unique style of warfare but there is no evidence to say it was more lethal than the experience of their more traditionally trained colleagues. If there was glory to be earned in Malaya, then Lt Col Stewart and the A&SH's officers ensured they received their fair share. However, in contrast, the Gordon Highlanders, another pre-war darling of the Singapore social scene, were kept behind to defend the southern defences of the island, again a task they had trained for. Their one foray into Johor to do battle was also in line with their pre-war training regime. The Gordons suffered few casualties, performed their tasks well and, at least on paper, remained a potent fighting unit for the defence of Singapore. Yet they too played little part in the battle for the island, with the Malaya Command unable or unwilling to commit the battalion to the attack.

By the time of the surrender, the three Scottish units had carried out their duty in accordance with their pre-war training, fulfilled their prescribed role in the grand strategy and met their own high standards required of their regimental tradition. Their command believed that they had done all that was asked of them and that they and their men were not to blame for the defeat.

But they had been defeated. The A&SH and Gordons as garrison troops had failed to defend their adopted home. Their families had been attacked and forced to flee and their homes had been destroyed. The Yeomanry were lost in an alien world. They were to surrender to an army that they had been led to believe were somehow inferior and they had been abandoned by their mother country, on the edge of empire facing a very uncertain future.

Chapter 7 – Surrender

7.1 Introduction

This chapter considers the process of surrender and the transition from combatant to captive for the Scots in Malaya and Singapore. It will review the circumstances in which the Scots found themselves surrendering and assesses the impact this had on their mental and physical health in the first few months of captivity. It will also reflect on how the training undertaken before the war and the reputation of the regiment determined the mindset of any would be evaders and the chances of their surviving the transition into captivity. It will conclude with an assessment as to what factors convinced a soldier to surrender. Consideration will also be given to the deaths of Scottish soldiers during their transition into captivity and it will be proposed that the mortality rate during the first weeks was dependent on the nature of their defeat, an unforeseen consequence of their training and their misplaced trust in their own and their officers' abilities.

The process of surrender can be split into two distinct scenarios for the Scots.⁵⁴⁷ In the first instance, the surrender of most of the troops in Singapore complied with orders received from high command on 15th February 1942. Malaya Command had not only negotiated the surrender but were also tasked with the implementation of the ceasefire. Over 100,000 Allied troops surrendered within the space of a few hours in an organized and regulated manner. There then followed a process of disarmament, temporary internment, and rest before being transferred to their POW camp which was no more than a day's march away.

The second scenario considers the capitulation of troops after the battles in Malaya in the early days of the campaign. Here the A&SH who were forced to evade the enemy after a stint of combat, took to the jungles and plantations under the leadership of the SNCO's and junior officers. There followed a traumatic journey through unfriendly and unfamiliar territory often culminating in either death, an unwanted contact with the enemy or a deliberate act of surrender initiated by the survivors who had been forced by disease and starvation to seek assistance. They then faced a harrowing journey by road and rail into the overcrowded ex-civilian jails. Without facilities, provisions or discipline that defined the

⁵⁴⁷ Stewart, 1947. p134.

‘Total Institution’ of pre-war garrison life, the camps were to become a death trap for the inmates.

However, this chapter opens with a study into the mindset of the protagonists towards surrender and how these beliefs affected the transition into captivity for the Scottish soldier.

7.2 Attitudes to Surrender.

Capt A L Cochrane RAMC in his post war paper on the psychology of prisoners of war, while reflecting on his own experiences in Crete, comments that for much of the retreat he paid little thought to the process of surrendering. His main concern was helping the injured and his main fear was that he would be critically wounded despite being aware that the likelihood of capture was extremely high. This, he suggests, proved that ‘*rather deep unconscious factors are involved*’ in the denial of his likely fate.

If the Scots had not given much thought to surrendering, they were certainly aware of the likely process. The Straits Times on 6th October 1940, published an account in the paper entitled ‘*The Glorious 51st. Gallantry in France of the Battalions with Sister Units in Singapore*’.⁵⁴⁸ This was among several articles appearing in the papers over the course of the previous months which related the surrender of the 51st Highland Division at the end of the campaign for France fought over the summer.⁵⁴⁹ The correspondent had a difficult remit to fulfill. Reporting the fact that the sister battalions of the Gordons and A&SH had been defeated in France risked undermining the reputation and public confidence in those units assigned to the defence of their city. There was subsequently a need to justify the defeat to the public and protect the reputation of the regiments.

It is therefore not surprising that the article extols the tenacious fighting ability of the Scots in France and puts the blame for their defeat on the incompetence of the French command and the lack of adequate equipment. It reflects upon the heritage of the units and refers to their First World War title as the ‘*Ladies from Hell*’ to praise the fighting qualities of the Scots. The piece describes the attempt to evacuate the division by sea and the close co-

⁵⁴⁸ The Straits Times 6 Oct 1940.

⁵⁴⁹ The loss was seen as a national tragedy by the Scottish public. So much so that the 9th Highland Division was renumbered the 51st and went into training in the NE of Scotland. Its commander Maj Gen Wimberley insisted kilts be worn wherever possible, pipe bands to play at every opportunity and junior officers taught Highland dancing. (Crang, 2014. p573.)

operation between the Royal Navy and the Army command and, when the bridgehead finally collapsed, it describes how the survivors took to any boats they could find to avoid capture. The article concludes with a note on the process of surrender in which the arms and equipment of the Scots was systematically destroyed to deny its use by the enemy. The final paragraph is telling. It states that the troops asked for and received all the honors of war after their capture with the Germans '*treating them with marked respect. They deserve it, the Glorious 51st*'.

In many ways this article portends, and arguably influences, the subsequent process of surrender in Singapore sixteen months later. It reinforces the notion that surrender was not only a viable option, all be it as a last resort, but also such a capitulation could be transcribed into a narrative worthy of the reputation of the unit providing they put up a good fight. The message must have resonated with the commanders of the Scottish garrison. Many of the older officers in the battalions had fought in the First World War and experienced at first hand the act of surrender by both sides and seen how the POWs had been treated. The only issue was that they would be surrendering to the Japanese, who were still to ratify the Geneva Conventions, and not the Germans.⁵⁵⁰



Figure 34 - Scottish POWs of the 51st Highland Division being marched into captivity by their German captors in the summer of 1940.

Viewed at <https://www.pinterest.com/pin/192740059023318195/> on 21/01/21.

⁵⁵⁰ Kovner, 2020. pp34 – 36.

Like Capt Cochrane in Crete, the option of surrender was simply not considered by the Japanese.⁵⁵¹ However unlike their British counterparts, there was no need to define the circumstance and process of surrender when it was not a viable course of action for the Japanese soldier. This philosophy subsequently influenced the treatment of enemy prisoners. Little or no thought had been given to the process of surrender or the care of enemy POWs capitulating in such vast numbers as was to be found in Singapore and the Philippines.⁵⁵² It is therefore understandable that the process of surrender in Singapore was delegated by the Japanese to the British command as they were better versed in the process.⁵⁵³

The attitude of the Japanese to the act of surrendering had taken a remarkable reversal in the intervening years between the wars. Before the outbreak of the Great War, surrendering, although discouraged was not considered dishonorable. Likewise, the Japanese had ratified the Hague Convention in 1900 which stated that the treatment of POWs was to be undertaken ‘*on the same footing as the troops of the government which has captured them.*’⁵⁵⁴ To this extent the Japanese had looked after their Russian POWs during the Russo – Japanese war (1904 - 1905) with great compassion and care.⁵⁵⁵ Singaporeans had witnessed at first hand the fighting ability and ethos of the Japanese in the First World War with the pursuit and capture of German Kriegsmarine crews and their involvement with the suppression of the mutiny of Indian troops at the Tanglin Barracks in 1915.⁵⁵⁶ The troops and sailors behaved impeccably.⁵⁵⁷ However, there was a growing sense of tension between the allies as the war progressed. When the Japanese forces were called upon to police the Straits Settlements, one observer commented that they were ‘*The Germans of the East*’.⁵⁵⁸

Interwar nationalism in Japan, born out of the army’s relative success in the Russo-Japanese war (1904 – 1905) and the countries apparent exclusion from the peace accord following the First World War, reversed the attitude to martial discipline. The extraordinary numbers of troops surrendering on the Western Front and the sustained

⁵⁵¹ Kovner, 2020. p43.

⁵⁵² Bartlett-Kerr 1985 pp46 – 47.

⁵⁵³ Tsuji, 2007. pp200 – 201. Havers, 2003. pp27 – 28.

⁵⁵⁴ Hack & Blackburn, 2008. p12.

⁵⁵⁵ Notably 95% of the Russian POWs survived the internment. This contrasted with the poor conditions suffered by the Japanese POWs in Russian camps (Kovner, 2020. p20 – 21)

⁵⁵⁶ The Straits Times, 12 May 1915. p10.

⁵⁵⁷ Header, 2004. p76.

⁵⁵⁸ Shennan, 2015. p142.

warfare in occupied territories convinced the Japanese authorities that strict military discipline for its own troops and for those civilians who came under their control was essential. A military ethos was introduced into the education system and boys were taught that their role was to defend the country and protect the emperor.⁵⁵⁹ Although the army modelled itself on European counterparts when it came to uniforms, weapons and tactics, the authorities imposed a type of patriarchal discipline, treating the lower ranks as children. Punishment resembled that which would be meted out to an unruly toddler by their parents.⁵⁶⁰ Officers and senior NCOs were encouraged to beat their subordinates as a form of informal punishment designed to strengthen the soldier's military spirit.⁵⁶¹ 'Barrack Room' justice, where men were expected to strike a colleague should they transgress, was encouraged.⁵⁶² The POWs would find themselves on the bottom of the hierarchical heap and could expect a beating from the lowest army private as a matter of course.

The nationalist leaders also believed that superior morale would ultimately bring victory over an enemy with superior technology. This martial spirit would convince the soldier to choose an honorable death rather than captivity and by 1927 the very mention of surrender was removed from the General Principles of Strategic Command.⁵⁶³ The Japanese officer class had been instructed in the need for them to evade capture since the beginning of the century, however it was not until 1940 that the training manuals began to promote the idea that surrender would bring dishonor on the soldier's family.⁵⁶⁴ Troops surrendering were listed as '*killed in action*' effectively wiping their existence off the record and thereby denying them the chance to return to their homes after the war.⁵⁶⁵ The men were advised never to live to experience the shame of surrendering.⁵⁶⁶ Reports from China began to appear in the papers of the '*heroes*' who had surrendered and had later taken their own lives and of units who, surrounded and facing annihilation, chose to commit suicide rather than face captivity. Such stories were turned into films and literature for public

⁵⁵⁹ Kovner, 2020. p27.

⁵⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, p29

⁵⁶¹ Sakai, 1991. p59.

⁵⁶² Kovner, 2020. p29 pp142 – 143.

⁵⁶³ Benesch, 2014. p177. Japan had signed the Geneva Convention in 1929, the latter of which contained 97 articles relating to the treatment of POWs but had failed to ratify it. (Rollings, 2008. p4, Hack & Blackburn, 2008. p14)

⁵⁶⁴ Hack & Blackburn, 2008. p14.

⁵⁶⁵ Kovner, 2020. p39.

⁵⁶⁶ Hearder, 2004. p76.

consumption providing a model by which the new wave of recruits could determine what was expected of them.⁵⁶⁷

The stresses of the interwar year economy had led to a degree of xenophobia percolating through the ranks of the Japanese military and the subsequent invasion of Manchuria and China provided the perfect opportunity to express the national sense of racial superiority. There followed several well publicized atrocities including ‘*The Rape of Nanking*’ in which not only were civilians butchered but Chinese POWs were summarily put to death.⁵⁶⁸ In the light of growing criticism, the western doctrine for the handling of POWs was dismissed as a weak and feeble system, something to be mocked rather than adopted.⁵⁶⁹

The poor treatment of the Chinese soldiers was compounded by the fact that the Japanese considered the intervention in China not as a war but a ‘limited engagement’ and thereby the enemy soldiers were not POWs but ‘bandits’ fighting for an illegitimate government.⁵⁷⁰ Despite this aberration, Japanese command insisted the Chinese prisoners be well treated but were reluctant to set up an organization in line with wartime legislation to handle the problem. Thus, the fate of the POWs was left to the local commander who had no resources or guidance as to what to do with them. This confusion over status and lack of instruction led to many abuses and violent executions including the bayoneting of live prisoners.⁵⁷¹ This butchery was seen by many in the Japanese military as natural extension to their own policy of no surrender. In their eyes, any enemy soldier surrendering was a shameful sub-human not worthy of compassion.⁵⁷² Facilitating a noble death would be an honorable alternative to imprisonment. The consequence of this potent mix of the refusal to surrender and the condemnation of those that did was ably demonstrated in the killing

⁵⁶⁷ Western observers have often linked this radical post war shift in attitude with the adoption of the Bushido code within the Japanese armed forces. It could be argued however that it was this same martial code that had influenced the Japanese army in the opening years of the century. Bushido did extol the virtue of death before dishonor but did not promote the execution or exploitation of prisoners. (Kovner, 2020. p32 – 33.)

⁵⁶⁸ The International Tribunal of the Far East (IMTFE) estimated that more than 260,000 non-combatants died in the winter of December 1937 in Nanking at the hands of the IJA although this figure has been set as high as 350,000. The majority of the 17,000 POWs captured in the battle were rounded up and executed. (Chang, 1997. p4. pp100 – 104. pp42 - 46).

⁵⁶⁹ Hack & Blackburn, 2008. p14.

⁵⁷⁰ Kovner, 2020. pp37 – 38.

⁵⁷¹ *Ibid.*, p38.

⁵⁷² Rollings, 2008. p6.

fields of China and appropriate evidence was widely circulated among the Allied soldiers defending Malaya.⁵⁷³

In contrast to the Japanese philosophy, the act of surrender was an accepted part of the process of war in the British Army. However, the regulations clearly stated first and foremost that it was the duty of every individual soldier to fight to the last round even if death or wounding seemed inevitable. The 1929 Field Service Regulations (FSR) explained that:

‘There is only one degree of resistance for troops . . . that is to the last round and the last man, unless definite orders to the contrary are received by the commander of those troops.’

This was only mitigated by the issuing of the *‘every man for himself’* command which effectively gave the individual the right to decide his own fate providing it prioritised evasion over surrender. However, until that time, surrender was not a decision to be made by the man on the front line.

The Manual of Military Law stipulated that surrender:

*...can only be committed by the person in charge of the garrison, post, etc, and not by the subordinate under his command. The surrender of a place by an officer charged with its defence can only be justified by the utmost necessity, such as want of provisions or water, the absence of hope of relief, and the certainty or extreme probability that no further efforts could prevent the place with its garrison, their arms and munitions, falling into the hands of the enemy. Unless the necessity is shown, the conclusion must be that the surrender or abandonment was shameful, and therefore an offence under this section.*⁵⁷⁴

Yet things looked somewhat different from the Scottish soldier’s perspective when the order came through to surrender Singapore. According to the battalion memoirists and historians the Scots had plenty of ammunition with many men of the 18th Division on their flanks having hardly fired a shot in anger and more small arms rounds being recovered from the Alexandra Road depot and the Tyersall armoury.⁵⁷⁵ They had plenty of food as they were pilfering out of the local houses and feeding from the rations at the Tyresall

⁵⁷³ The Malaya Tribune, 13 January 1938. Page 18. The Singapore Free Press and Mercantile Advertiser, 27 September 1937, Page 1

⁵⁷⁴ War Office, Manual of Military Law, 1939. p427.

⁵⁷⁵ Miles, 1961. p105. Rose, 2017. p174, Fryer, 2018. p181.

barrack storerooms.⁵⁷⁶ Dug in as they were, they were not intending to travel much further hence there was little need for transport or petrol. As for water, it was true there had been minimal rain over the past few days, but the men had filled every container and bath they could from the remaining mains water supply. A broken water main at Tyersall flooded the road.⁵⁷⁷ Water bowsers were making regular runs up to the front line despite leaking badly from bullet holes and there was plenty of alcohol being acquired from local residents and the mess canteens.⁵⁷⁸ The order was to fight to the last man and this was what they were prepared to do.⁵⁷⁹ It was therefore understandable that many men were surprised by the decision to surrender and felt, unlike their officers, that they had much more fighting left in them.

It could be reasoned that the Scottish troops' acceptance of surrender was informed by the experiences of their colleagues in France at the outbreak of the war. It would therefore appear that the troops were fully aware of the moral dilemma of capitulation, the lawful obligations according to King's Regulations, and the various options open to them when it came to the point of surrender. As to which course of action the individual would choose to take would depend on his physical and psychological state when told to lay down his arms. For many, fatigue and relief would prevail, overcoming the fear of the supposed merciless actions of an inscrutable enemy. When the command came on 15th February the Scots surrendered without question or deviation despite many in the ranks not believing they were beaten. There were to be no epic last stands or defiant gestures of futile resistance.⁵⁸⁰ The Scots laid down their arms and accepted their fate in tacit imitation of their colleagues in France, believing they had earned an honorable reception from their captors. The only issue was that the IJA were not abiding by the same rules as the Germans nor had the same mindset towards the act of surrendering.

⁵⁷⁶ Rose, 2017. p173.

⁵⁷⁷ Bayly and Harper, 2005. p139.

⁵⁷⁸ Cooper, 2015. p180. Rose, 2017. p173, p176. Bayly and Harper, 2005. p138.

⁵⁷⁹ Havers, 2003. p19 – 20. On 10th February General Wavell issued his daily orders stating that 'Commanders and Senior Offices must lead their troops and, if necessary, die with them... every unit must fight it out to the end and in close contact with the enemy.' (Chippington, 1992. p230. Warren, 2007. p243.). This mimicked Churchill's signal Wavell had received the same day in which he states that the battle must be fought to the 'bitter end at all costs' (Holmes, 1982. p161).

⁵⁸⁰ Felton, 2008. p83. Rose, 2017 pp174 – 176. Rose describes the final excursion by the Argylls as he led 50 men along the Holland Road. The patrol was called back but Rose was very proud of the fact that the men were still willing to fight.

7.3 The Process of Surrender - Singapore

By 15th February 1942, the survivors of the A&SH had gathered in the perimeter of the Tyersall barracks. Air raids and occasional shelling had continued to wound and maim however there had been little further contact with the enemy since the withdrawal from the Dairy Farm.⁵⁸¹ Men rested the best they could in their slit trenches, fed on army rations and had time to contemplate their options. Lt Col Stewart and many of his close entourage had been chosen for the battalion escape party and had left to start what was to be their successful bid for freedom. The remaining officers were fully aware of the options left open to them.⁵⁸² It was clear from the previous days' combat that there was little fighting ability left in the battalion. Preparations were being made for a final stand and the growing possibility of surrender.⁵⁸³

A similar sense of inevitability was prevailing over the men of the Gordon Highlanders. They were dug in a mile to the west of Tyersall in positions overlooking the Holland Road and patrolling towards the most likely route of the next Japanese thrust along the Bukit Timah Road.⁵⁸⁴ They too had seen limited action against the same enemy tanks that had passed by the A&SH and were probing towards the city.⁵⁸⁵ Casualties had been light and there had been little contact with the enemy. By 15th February all was quiet on their front with only the occasional artillery and mortar barrage and circling reconnaissance aircraft to disturb their rest.⁵⁸⁶ The mood at the time of surrender was one of reluctance to give up the fight and relief of surviving the battle.⁵⁸⁷ The prevailing emotions felt by the men are ably reflected in the post war account by Pte John Emmett of the Gordon Highlanders where he describes the surrender as a hard pill to swallow:

*A feeling of shame that we had not done our bit all caused our morale to fall to an all-time low fear thus became a part of us, we had become naked.*⁵⁸⁸

The Lanarkshire Yeomanry had spent the last week of the campaign providing fire support for the ever-shrinking pocket. Their final location was at Farrer Park to the north of the city

⁵⁸¹ Moffatt & McCormick, 2003. pp241 – 244.

⁵⁸² Rose, 2017. p177.

⁵⁸³ *Ibid.*, pp176 – 178.

⁵⁸⁴ Magarry, 1994. p143. The Gordons HQ was located at the point where the water pipeline crossed Farrer Road.

⁵⁸⁵ Miles, 1961. pp105 – 108.

⁵⁸⁶ Mitchell, 2012. pp50 – 59.

⁵⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, p59.

⁵⁸⁸ Emmett. No date. p1

providing sporadic fire for the forward units along the Braddell Road. On the previous day they had purposefully expended as much ammunition as possible in anticipation of their surrender. A handful of men had been killed in the last actions but overall, they had come off quite lightly. They now prepared their guns for demolition.⁵⁸⁹

The order to cease fire at 8.30pm local time was promulgated by the Malaya Command.⁵⁹⁰ This order percolated down to the frontline units at different times and was implemented with reluctance and a degree of trepidation. This left the men of the Gordons in their foxholes unsure as to the arrangements for the surrender and uncertain as to whether they would be shot if they climbed out of the trenches. White flags were temporarily raised and then taken down and the Japanese continued to sporadically shell the front line.⁵⁹¹ Section by section were told to disable their weapons and destroy any ammunition.⁵⁹² Documents were to be burnt and communication equipment wrecked. Vehicles were to be disabled and petrol stocks destroyed.

The practicalities of disposing of weapons aside, many men saw their disarmament as the first physical recognition of surrender. The emasculating process left the frontline soldier impotent and without purpose. There are many comments detailing the physical destruction of their weapons.⁵⁹³ The removal of the firing mechanism, the mutilation of the breach block and the burial of vital parts became a necessary ritual and the last notable measure of defiance as a free man.⁵⁹⁴ Once disarmed and confident that the Japanese would not fire upon them, the soldiers got out of the trenches and mingled with their comrades catching up with the fate of their friends in the other units or commenced looting nearby buildings.⁵⁹⁵

Memoirists often remark on the first contact they had with the Japanese.⁵⁹⁶ Many note the stature, dress, equipment, and filthiness of the soldiers who were to be their captors.⁵⁹⁷ These precise recollections are not necessarily inspired by subconscious need to collect

⁵⁸⁹ McEwan & Thomson, 2013. pp50 – 59.

⁵⁹⁰ Magarry, 1994. p148.

⁵⁹¹ Miles, 1961. p109.

⁵⁹² One man from the 5th Beds & Herts Regiment threw down his weapon in frustration only for it to discharge the bullet in the breach killing him instantly. (Fryer, 2018. p181.)

⁵⁹³ Moffat & McCormick, 2003. p273.

⁵⁹⁴ Magarry, 1994. p159.

⁵⁹⁵ Fryer, 2018. p181. Bayly and Harper, 2005. p145.

⁵⁹⁶ Havers, 2003. p26.

⁵⁹⁷ Lomax, 1995. p70.

intelligence, but a vivid portrayal of the soldier first facing his demons. So much had been said of the Japanese soldier, most of it very derogatory and erroneous, that the British troops were particularly affected by the inevitable meeting with their nemesis.⁵⁹⁸ Many descriptions compare the man in relation to the stereotype fostered in the propaganda. Stature and height are often commented upon.⁵⁹⁹ This is frequently accompanied by a statement of incredulity as to how anyone could be beaten by an army of shorter soldiers.⁶⁰⁰ References to camouflage and uniform prevail with the Japanese soldiers' helmets covered in foliage and their rubber soled split toes combat boots, empowering them with the supernatural ability to creep up undetected on the enemy and climb trees with incredible alacrity, reflecting the pre-war propagandist analogy with monkeys, snakes and rats.⁶⁰¹

This pervading shock of surrendering to men who had been portrayed as an inferior race is summed up in a 1945 operational research pamphlet entitled the '*Japanese Soldier*' that states:

*The Japanese soldier is after all a human being... After the considerable battering the white race as represented in the Far East received in the four months following Pearl Harbor, opinion, not unnaturally, swung the other way. The Jap became a superman, a master of jungle warfare, capable of living for months on a handful of rice, brilliant, resourceful, and entirely without fear. It was a horrible picture.*⁶⁰²

The shock of first contact left the POW caught between the need to justify their own surrender to a superior enemy and to ridicule the opposition as an act of defiance in front of his peers. It was an uneasy and unsettling procedure especially as the soldier that came to detain them resembled neither a superman nor a bestial demon.⁶⁰³

The initial process of capture usually concluded with a body search. Whereas up to that point the process of surrender had been a personal act, being searched was often the first action undertaken by the captor on the captive. The search was also a submissive and intrusive act, deliberately orchestrated not only to strip the prisoner of weapons and personal artefacts, but often undertaken in the presence of his comrades, ridding the

⁵⁹⁸ For a full appreciation of the pre-war Japanese soldier see Ferris 1993

⁵⁹⁹ Coast, 2014. p5.

⁶⁰⁰ Baynes, 2013. p30. Thompson, No Date. Chapter VII. Gillies, 2011. p563.

⁶⁰¹ Gillies, 2011. p105.

⁶⁰² WO/208/1447.

⁶⁰³ Havers, 2003. p26.

hapless prisoner of the last vestiges of self-respect. The items taken were often of substantial monetary value such as watches, rings, and cash; items which would have later proved their worth in the early days of captivity.⁶⁰⁴ Personal objects such as photographs, letters, and souvenirs, unless of value, were generally returned after a period of retention, an act designed to provoke and annoy the owner.⁶⁰⁵ This was a degrading process designed to repress the prisoner. However, the search also gave the POW his first opportunity to resist.⁶⁰⁶ The secreting of items, either in the local area for later retrieval or about one's person, offered the captive an opportunity to outwit the captor. Successful efforts to retain illegal artefacts are again often recalled with relish by the veterans.⁶⁰⁷ This was to be the beginning of an ongoing tussle for dominance within the prison camp society which could, especially at the point of surrender, prove fatal.

⁶⁰⁴ Jennings, 2011. p32.

⁶⁰⁵ Urquhart, 2010. pp 92-95. The archaeological record found in the tennis courts and gardens at the Adam Park estate, reflect the surrender process. The flat open areas were used to process the men of the 1st Cambridgeshires at the time of their surrender and before they were confined to temporary holding area in a nearby tennis court. Artefacts recovered during the surveys include loose change, rings, unfired ammunition often dropped within areas of burning, webbing buckles, abandoned gas masks and military badges. (Cooper, 2016. p202, pp204 – 206.)

⁶⁰⁶ McEwan & Thomson, 2013. p61.

⁶⁰⁷ Moore, 1988. p75.



Figure 35 - British and Indian troops in the process of surrendering.

This scene has been staged for the Press photographers attending the final surrender negotiations at the Old Ford Factory at Bukit Timah on 15th February. Accompanying film footage and the remaining photographs identify this location as the Hume Industries Factory. Note the condition of both the captors and the captives as well as the equipment strewn around the yard.



Figure 57 - British troops of the 18th Division marching into temporary holding areas on 16th February.

A review of similar images taken at the time suggest these scenes took place at the Raffles Institute adjacent to Tyersall and the Botanic Gardens. Japanese soldiers appear relaxed in the background. The prisoners have abandoned much of their fighting equipment including weapons, webbing, and gas masks. Only one man has retained an A Pack. The others have stuffed their shirt pockets with supplies. Many would later regret not retaining vital packs and haversacks.



Figure 36 - Australian troops gathering for the march to Changi.

In contrast to the previous image each soldier is laden down with a full A – Pack and a selection of bedrolls and equipment. This image was taken by a Japanese soldier from the back of a passing truck. (Authors Collection).



Figure 37 - The Allied Surrender Party photographed by Yamashita's Press corps after the signing of the surrender documents.

It was these same photographers who took the photos at the Hawes Factory. This image is taken just outside the Ford Factory lobby. In the background are the lower slopes of Bukit Timah Hill and quarry. Note in the foreground the Japanese guard with his white linen shirt adorned with foliage, the 6ft long Arisaka rifle and helmet liner with havelock as headgear.

Cochrane's study (1946) into the psychological impact of the process of surrender continues with observations as to the physical signs of the emotional damage. He states that it was difficult to assess symptoms as the average soldier would only display one or two of the indicators and would seldom share his thoughts with the medical staff at the interview due to the perceived shame of his actions. However, he does describe the extreme case, embodying all the anticipated symptoms into one patient.

He will be lying down, alone and will be silent. If others are near, he may exchange a few words but will oddly enough not grumble. If one asks how he feels he will almost certainly tell you to 'fuck off', but if pressed will say he's 'buggered' or dead.

In appearance he will be disheveled and dirty and unshaven even though water be plentiful, and he has a razor in his pocket. Order and requests by his own officers will have no effect on him.

He will obey his captors slowly and sullenly. He will be deaf to all ideas of escaping and often be surprisingly uninterested in food. Such were the extreme cases which were not rare but nearly all showed something of the syndrome.⁶⁰⁸

Cochrane's observations seem unerringly accurate when reviewing the comments made at the time of surrender in Singapore on the state of allied soldiers awaiting transfer to Changi. In many cases this melancholy persists into the first few months of captivity and in certain cases beyond repatriation.⁶⁰⁹

In August 1942, Dr A T Macbeth Wilson, a doctor of the RAMC and one of the psychiatrists attached to the War Office, warned of an impending influx of POWs returning home traumatised by surrender and captivity. He described the psychological process of surrender as being like a deep-sea diver descending through different levels of atmospheric depression. The soldier, he contends, had first faced the shock of surrender and '*felt the complex poison of guilt shame and dishonor*'⁶¹⁰. This was often amplified in the well-trained veterans by the relatively greater fall from grace when compared to that of greener troops. The trauma was further compounded had the man been captured during a renown military disaster where the consequence of the defeat had directly affected the well-being of his family and friends at home.⁶¹¹ Macbeth Wilson agrees with Cochrane in that the

⁶⁰⁸ Cochrane, 1946. p1.

⁶⁰⁹ Shepherd, 2000. p314.

⁶¹⁰ Dunlop, 1990. p6.

⁶¹¹ Shepherd, 2000. p314.

symptoms would include lethargy, disobedience and in extreme circumstances, the loss of the ‘*will to live*’. Any man succumbing to disease or trauma in this time would most likely die.⁶¹²

Havers (2003) suggests that the overriding feeling among the troops in Singapore was not one of disgrace from being beaten, as defeat had seemed inevitable for many weeks, but that the soldier had been denied the chance to meet the expectation of fighting to the bitter end, as instructed by Wavell and Churchill.⁶¹³ This would effectively render a stain on their character which would be difficult to expunge no matter how resistant they may prove to be in captivity. This would be particularly hard felt by those men of the A&SH who had been led to believe that they were elite soldiers and superior to the opposition. This repressed anger was only offset by the relief of surviving the conflict and battle fatigue. It was resentment and frustration that was to fuel the need to apportion blame on others and shame and dishonour that would impel the soldier to validate their own performance and that of their unit.⁶¹⁴

However, and perhaps somewhat predictably, the A&SH in Singapore seemed to have stumbled upon the perfect antidote for such melancholy and resentment helped by the fact that they had been billeted in their old barracks at the time of surrender. The Scots at Tyersall, were comparatively well rested and fed. They saw very few Japanese and were not searched. The men had disabled and stacked their weapons and retained their personal items without the presence of the Japanese.⁶¹⁵ Some men had even ventured into the city and dined at the remaining food halls open to the military or lounged in vacant department stores.⁶¹⁶ The A&SH officers were able to organize work parties to strip the barracks of anything of use and scrounge transport for their men and newly acquired booty, thereby keeping the men productively busy to the benefit of all.⁶¹⁷ The officer’s standing and confidence, battered by the terms of the surrender, were also bolstered.

⁶¹² *Ibid.*, p314.

⁶¹³ Havers, 2003. p7, p19.

⁶¹⁴ *Ibid.*, pp20 – 21.

⁶¹⁵ This was in line with the agreement Percival had negotiated with Yamashita. 1,000 British army personnel were kept under arms to guarantee the peace in the city. The Japanese were kept out of the city until a peaceful transition of power could be arranged. (Tsuji, 2007. p201.)

⁶¹⁶ Moffatt & McCormick, 2003. p273. Holmes & Kemp, 1982. p179.

⁶¹⁷ Coast, 2014. p3. Coast states that ‘*The old Singapore troops [i.e., Garrison troops] and the Australians are the most realistic and manage to lay their hands on as many valuables as possible, some taken from bombed shops and some perhaps not*’.

According to Lt Col Stewart's memoirs, a convoy of trucks pulled out of Tyersall on 17th February loaded with the survivors and equipment destined for Changi. The procession was led by Capt Lang of the Royal Marines and his staff adorned in their white hats with Piper Stuart striking up an appropriate tune as they sped past marching columns of less fortunate units including the Gordon Highlanders. Japanese manning roadblocks were so overawed by the sight and sound of the approaching outriders that they opened the barricades and waved the convoy through without question. It appeared more like a victory parade than a march into captivity, all of which promoted the repute of the battalion within the army and the officers within the battalion.⁶¹⁸

The Lanarkshire Yeomanry, in comparison, had a relatively less spectacular transition into captivity. Having expended much of their ammunition on 14th February, firing over 300 rounds per gun per night in support of the northern sector of the city defensive line, they had continued to take casualties from shelling and air attack.⁶¹⁹ The most notable indication of the onset of the surrender for the artillery crew was the eerie silence that descended across the battlefield.⁶²⁰ The Yeomanry, otherwise, constantly enveloped in the sound of their own guns and the landing of incoming rounds around them, were very aware of the enveloping stillness.⁶²¹ Significantly the only explosions heard after the ceasefire was caused by the destruction of their own pieces.⁶²² Gunner Peter Rhodes described the sound of the detonations.

*'The silence was shattered by a series of very loud noises best described as a mixture of a loud bang, a 'do-ingg' and a mournful whine. Some of us had heard that sound before and we felt very sad, knowing that it was the death cry of our gun destroying itself.'*⁶²³

This poetic mournful comment alludes to a phenomenon often felt by the gun teams at the point of surrender. Unlike the infantry units, artillery regiments were not issued with colours and the guns themselves took on the role as the symbol of the unit's spirit. Their destruction, a necessity to avoid weapons falling into the enemy hands, was to the

⁶¹⁸ Moffatt & McCormick, 2003. p273.

⁶¹⁹ McEwan & Thomson, 2013. pp58 – 60.

⁶²⁰ Gillies, 2011. p108.

⁶²¹ Holmes & Kemp, 1982. p177 – 178.

⁶²² *Ibid.*, p174. General Wavell issued orders for the destruction of all artillery pieces despite the terms of the surrender stating that the guns were to be handed over in full working order. As Major General Keys said to Toosey 'even 25pdrs sometimes blew up by accident' making 'a hell of a lot of noise doing it.'

⁶²³ McEwan & Thomson, 2013. p60.

artillerists the equivalent of burning the regimental colours by the infantry. The demolition of the guns marked the end of the regiment's contribution to the fighting and effectively the end of the regiment.⁶²⁴ The sense of loss described in Rhode's statement is profound.

Otherwise, the gunners had manned an outer cordon until the peaceful arrival of the Japanese. They took time to bury the dead and collect personal belongings out of the trucks before disabling them. Later that day they were searched, and fed. Men were seen gathering into small groups of friends, something which was encouraged by the NCO's, anticipating such camaraderie would serve them well during the days ahead in captivity. The following day they marched to Changi.⁶²⁵

7.4 The Process of Surrender - Malaya

The cavalcade of the A&SH and the relatively easy one day route march of the Gordons and Lanarkshires sits uneasily with the transition to captivity experienced by their surviving colleagues on the Malayan mainland. According to the battalion rolls, more A&SH died in the jungle than in combat. Aitken detailed their fate in his Muster Book:

Table 17 – A review of A&SH casualties found in Aitken's Muster Book

	Officers	O ranks	% of total
Prisoners of War	47	583	63.6
Missing	2	147	16.0
Missing believed Dead	13	23	2.5
Evacuated	4	9	1.0
Absent	blank	34	3.7
Absent Officially	4	2	0.2
Killed in Action	2	31	3.4
Died of Wounds	2	12	1.3
Died in Captivity	3	47	5.1
Died in Jungle	2	29	3.2
Totals	79	917	

⁶²⁴ The guns were destroyed by 'exploding a shell up the spout', destroying both the barrel and breech block at the same time (*Ibid.*, p61. Walker, 2011. p126.)

⁶²⁵ McEwan & Thomson, 2013. pp60 – 61.

31 men are listed as ‘Dying in the Jungle’, 149 listed as ‘missing’ and 36 listed as ‘missing believed dead’. This accounts for 21.7% of the roll call taken in Changi.⁶²⁶

The speculative figures shown in Table 18 will remain difficult to verify as many men died alone without being properly accounted for. This fact is telling, suggesting the transition into captivity for men caught up in the fighting on the mainland was a confused and uncoordinated affair. Unsurprisingly successful evasions were recounted in the post war narratives; notably that undertaken by Major R W Kennard appearing as an appendix in Lt Col Stewart’s history of the campaign.⁶²⁷ These accounts extoll the character of the leaders and the fortitude of the men to overcome the hardships. This in turn notably reflects upon the methods used to navigate through the jungles, cross rivers, avoid enemy patrols and administer first aid, much of which compares favourably with the pre-war training undertaken by the A&SH and tacitly endorses Stewart’s training policies.

Many of the unsuccessful attempts to escape only came to light after the survivors had been returned from internment in Taiping and Pudu Gaols. Other men in small groups simply disappeared into the jungle never to be seen again and it is impossible to determine what happened to them and why their bids for freedom failed. However, by interpolating between those accounts that have survived it is possible to identify a series of characteristics that illustrates the most likely nature of these failed attempts.

The first contact with the enemy was usually a surprise. The Japanese tended to launch attacks in Malaya with little or no pre-bombardment or tell-tale reconnaissance. Limited contact with the scouting patrols was quickly followed up by an assault.⁶²⁸ The Japanese were sometimes seen to approach the Scottish lines apparently oblivious of their presence or in ‘mufti’, local dress, attempting to trick the Scots. Commentators refer to columns of enemy troops marching with weapons slung or riding in convoys of trucks stumbling into well prepared ambushes.⁶²⁹ Once in contact however the Japanese deployed rapidly, either

⁶²⁶ Moffatt & McCormick concur that the exact casualty figures for Slim River are hard to establish. They suggest that out of 576 men at Slim River around 75 were KIA, forty died in the breakout, around 30 escaped by boats to Sumatra, nearly 300 were captured and 94 made it back to British lines (Moffatt & McCormick, 2003. p177)

⁶²⁷ Stewart, 1947. pp124 – 127.

⁶²⁸ Ferris, 1993. pp234 – 235.

⁶²⁹ Stewart, 1947. p37, p56, p79, p109.

driving tanks directly through the roadblocks and past the roadside positions of the Scots or taking to the rubber themselves to out flank the British positions.⁶³⁰

This rapid escalation of the attack put the defenders on the back foot, with men finding their line of retreat along the road swarming with the enemy and under fire from their own forces. This effectively forced the Scots into the rubber plantations, abandoning anything heavier than their personal arms and the packs on their backs. Contemporary accounts of the fighting in Singapore suggests that where men were sent on patrols or sent out to defend prepared or fixed positions, they tended to replace personal equipment carried in their packs and pouches with extra ammunition, believing they could return to gather their belongings should they win the battle.⁶³¹ This meant that they often started any subsequent evasion with little more than the clothes on their back, a water bottle, 24 hr ration pack and the weapons they carried.

Equipment shortages meant that only officers carried their maps and compasses into the battle which would later turn out to be vital for their subsequent escape.⁶³² The other ranks had no choice but to keep close to the officers or else they would be lost without any navigation aids to help them get back to allied lines. The few radio sets that survived contact with the enemy soon ran out of charge or failed to work.⁶³³ Later officers, worried that the large number of men tracking through the jungle would slow progress, create too much interest among the local population and be difficult to feed, began to break down the groups into smaller escape parties.⁶³⁴ Again those left without a map and compass would be greatly disadvantaged. This process of picking teams, as if on the school play yard, again led to resentment and the apparent ostracization of individuals. Friends, neighbours, and associates usually grouped into teams whereas relative strangers were left to their own devices. New men were often yet to establish relationships within the unit which not only limited their chance of selection but threatened to fatally isolate them in the party they were allocated to.⁶³⁵

⁶³⁰ *Ibid.*, pp73 – 86. pp170 - 171. Stewart's account of the battle at Slim River is a good example of the disorder and confusion of the battle and subsequent retreat of British forces in Malaya.

⁶³¹ Rose, 2017. pp101 – 103.

⁶³² *Ibid.*, p94. Maps were often out of date and of poor print quality. Stewart, 1947. pp125 – 126.

⁶³³ Lomax, 1995. p59. Moffatt & McCormick 2003, p51.

⁶³⁴ Moffatt & McCormick 2003 pp170 – 177.

⁶³⁵ *Ibid.*, pp166 – 167.

Men unable to walk were left behind. This caused great debates within the escape parties especially as rumours had circulated that the Japanese would execute any wounded men they found. Believing the abandonment would lead to certain death; friends of the wounded would fervently argue the case for their portage.⁶³⁶ This also triggered division among the groups which in turn bred resentment. Volunteers were often left behind to aid the injured on the promise of their rescue should the escape party make it through. The breakdown of trust and discipline witnessed on the evasions was to persist through the early days of captivity especially when many sick men later surrendered and were treated well by the Japanese before being transferred to POW camps.⁶³⁷

An unforeseen consequence of poor training was the number of non-swimmers to be found in the ranks. River crossings therefore became even more perilous and laborious when special attention had to be given to their safety. Those who could swim were often tasked with the risky work of taking the first rope across the fast-flowing rivers. They would also escort the non-swimmers across on makeshift rafts. Sometimes the men panicked in the water causing the loss of men or equipment as homemade rafts and borrowed canoes tipped over.⁶³⁸ Physical capabilities and general fitness also influenced the work undertaken within the group. Those new to theatre would tend to succumb to the hardships of trekking before those conditioned to the climate and as such were more likely to be a burden in any escape group.

However, no matter how long the soldier had been in theatre the inevitable onset of malaria and dysentery would eventually prove to be the biggest killer and death from disease could be extremely rapid. Evidence suggests that once such diseases took hold and the party was forced to stop, then starvation and melancholy prevailed, and the death toll rose until the few survivors had no choice but to attempt a final march to a local village.⁶³⁹ The demise of such an evasion party is ably described by the Australian POW Russell Braddon who encountered the survivors of one such group in the Pudu Gaol.

'One after the other died. Carefully each was buried and a cross with his name and number placed on his grave. By July only four remained. One day all four fell ill and two died. The remaining two buried them and then realising that they had not long to go and yearning for the company they had heard was to be

⁶³⁶ *Ibid.*, p167.

⁶³⁷ *Ibid.*, p171 – 175.

⁶³⁸ Stewart, 1947. p125 - 126. Moffatt & McCormick, 2003. p152.

⁶³⁹ *Ibid.*, p170.

*found in Pudu Gaol they handed themselves up to the Japanese. They came to us emaciated and dying.*⁶⁴⁰

It could be argued that the training and reputation of the A&SH fostered a stubborn determination to never surrender to the opposition which ultimately accounted for the high number of missing men noted in the rolls. Whereas other units would surrender to the enemy without attempting evasion, A&SH officers, buoyed in confidence through their pre-war jungle training, were adamant that they could lead their men to safety. Such was the attitude of Lt Col Robertson who led a party of a dozen A&SH on a 200-mile march to the Batu Caves only to be ambushed by a Japanese patrol.⁶⁴¹ Captain David Boyle initially led a party of 40 men from the battlefield but later had to split the group into smaller units as food ran low, discipline faltered, and illness took its toll. The majority died on route and Boyle and the survivors captured. However, the group, it was noted, had a dogged ‘*Argyll persistence*’ that drove them on. In this case to their captivity and death.⁶⁴²

7.5 Conclusion

Until this chapter, this thesis has plotted the life of the Scottish soldier from arrival through training and into combat, in which the individual had a certain degree of autonomy within the confines of military discipline. It is at the point of surrender, a process determined primarily by circumstances beyond the soldiers’ control, that everything was set to change. Should the negotiated protocol be followed then there should be nothing to fear. But if the rumors about the way the Japanese looked after their POWs were true, then there was a chance of a massacre.

A comparison of Connelly and Miller’s (2004) study of the capitulation of the Scots in France in 1940 and Connelly’s article in the surrender in Singapore in 1942 (Connelly 2012) suggests that there was much in common between the two events. He concludes that the surrender of the British in both campaigns was due to poor command, poor equipment, and poor training. He adds that the fact the British had been stationed in Belgium and France for much of the ‘Phoney War’ preceding the invasion allowed them to acclimatize to the surroundings and establish relationships with the local community which would benefit them immediately after their capture.⁶⁴³ It could be argued that such similarities

⁶⁴⁰ Braddon, 1953. p162

⁶⁴¹ Moffatt & McCormick, 2003. p162.

⁶⁴² *Ibid.*, p166-167.

⁶⁴³ Connelly & Miller, 2004. pp426 – 430.

would not have gone unnoticed by the garrison in Singapore on reading the commentary on the French campaign in the local press in 1941 and would have set expectations.

However, there are also many glaring differences in the transition into captivity between the two campaigns. Firstly, the number of men surrendering in Singapore vastly outnumbered those who surrendered in France.⁶⁴⁴ Unlike the transitional collapse of resistance in France, most men in Singapore surrendered quickly, overwhelming any plans for internment the Japanese had, if they had any at all. Unlike in Europe, there was nowhere to run to; whereas troops in Belgium and France could hope to escape during their transportation to the camps and make their way to the coast and then to Britain, the evaders in Malaya and Singapore had to cross thousands of miles of ocean to make landfall in India and Australia.⁶⁴⁵ The FEPOWs in Singapore marched in a day to their camp and remained around the battlefield for the following six to twelve months, allowing for the dead to be buried and abandoned supplies to be gathered. Officers were kept with their men, command structures maintained, and units kept together.⁶⁴⁶ Finally, and perhaps most importantly for the garrison troops, the FEPOWs were billeted in the familiar surroundings of their pre-conflict life, some in or near their old barracks, unlike their European counterparts who were moved into purpose-built Stalags far behind the frontline in enemy territory.⁶⁴⁷ It is hard to believe that the Scots in Singapore could not have had a better transition into captivity had they planned it all themselves, which for the most part, they had.

In stark contrast was the fate of the Scots captured in Malaya. Their experience was the complete reverse to that of their comrades in Singapore. The survivors of a vicious combat dispersed into the jungle to avoid being killed or captured and had, in accordance with their training, attempted to regain their own lines. Lost in the jungle, forced to split into smaller groups to aid foraging and evasion, the Scots struggled to survive. A few succeeded in escaping, but the majority were captured or killed.⁶⁴⁸

⁶⁴⁴ Crang states 10,000 Scots of the 51st Highland Division surrendered at St Valery on 12th June 1941 (Crang 2014. p572.). Connolly and Miller state 8,000 (Connolly & Miller, 2004. p454.) 41,567 British troops who were captured during the Fall of France (WO10810 / Battle Casualties all Theatres)

⁶⁴⁵ Connelly & Miller, 2004, pp434 – 435

⁶⁴⁶ Felton, 2008. p87.

⁶⁴⁷ Gillies, p7, pp108 – 109.

⁶⁴⁸ Connelly, 2012. pp6 – 7.

Simon Wessely (2006, 2014) explains that the accepted philosophy as to why soldiers were prepared to go into battle changed between the wars.⁶⁴⁹ He proposes that the motivation shifted from being based on patriotism and duty to a soldier fighting for the sake of his ‘mates’ and what Wessely termed, the ‘*Primary Group*’. He goes on to discuss why the trauma and shock experienced by the destruction of that group can devastate the will of the individual soldier and induce a physical and mental break down.⁶⁵⁰ This argument could be extended to address the question as to why soldiers surrender to the enemy.

Certainly, this model holds true when we consider the demise of those men attempting a jungle evasion. It was only when the combat group was split up, whether deliberately or by circumstance, that the surviving individuals lost the will to continue the evasion and looked to surrender. It may also account for the dismay and surprise the troops demonstrated in Singapore when they were told to capitulate by Malaya Command. For many in Singapore their ‘*Primary Group*’ was still very much intact, and they believed they had the ability to fight on. They were however oblivious to bigger issues which were being considered by the Malaya Command and therefore resentful of the decision to surrender thereby denying them the accepted alternative of fighting to the last man.

The preservation of the ‘*Primary Group*’ within the battalion may also account for the remarkable survival rate of the Scots in Singapore post surrender. For the main, these small groups of pals were preserved throughout the transition into captivity, giving the individual the support, shared resilience, and regimental structure to survive the oncoming internment. The Scots in Singapore could thank their commanders for instilling a rich combination of both a sense of pride in a campaign well fought and enough honour worthy of a friendly reception from the enemy, but also the close teamwork and camaraderie within their battalion. However, in complete contrast the Scots surrendering in Malaya had survived a harrowing experience and seemed condemned to a pitiful future. The ‘*Primary Group*’ in this case had been split apart often by circumstance and sometimes at the bequest of the commanding officer. The consequences of this disparity in the process of surrender in Malaya and Singapore is played out in the initial months in captivity.

⁶⁴⁹ Wessely, 2006. pp271 – 273.

⁶⁵⁰ Wessely, 2014. pp326 – 328.

Chapter 8 – Changi

8.1 Introduction

As discussed in Chapter 2, much of the history of the internment in 1942 in Singapore has been bypassed by historians as they have concentrated on recalling the time on the Thai Burma Railway. The void has been filled with the myth of the ‘Hell of Changi’ that has been perpetuated through film and fiction.⁶⁵¹ Yet, such sentiments were not held by the veterans who lived in the camp for the first months of their captivity.⁶⁵² This chapter presents statistical evidence from the BRE Records and camp logbooks that corroborates the veteran’s claims that life in Changi for the first year was in fact the best months of their entire incarceration. Evidence will also be presented to explain how the living conditions for the Scots in Singapore were heavily influenced by their pre-war experiences as garrison soldiers. The reinstatement of the ‘Total Institution’ not only provided a framework by which to rebuild the garrison in captivity but also provided familiar and comforting surroundings for the POWs to recover their health, fortitude, and hope. The transition into captivity had effectively come full circle.

The process of rehousing the POWs was greatly enhanced by the fact that their future prison had been purposefully built as accommodation for the garrison. Every facility that was provided for a pre-war barracks could be and would be required in a future place of internment. Such comparatively luxurious facilities such as sports fields, theatres, chapels, and messes were all eventually reinstated by the POWs. However, the sheer number of men expected to live in the confines of the old barracks meant that many of these superfluous buildings had to be initially turned over for accommodation. Living quarters were in such great demand that many men found themselves billeted in tents in the quarry, outhouses behind the married quarters and empty ammunition dumps. Much had been destroyed in the bombing and degree of self-help home husbandry was required to make the building habitable once again.⁶⁵³ Only when troops began to be dispersed to camps beyond Changi was there an opportunity to reclaim buildings for their original purpose.

⁶⁵¹ Grant, 2015. pp15 – 16.

⁶⁵² Hearder, 2009. p31.

⁶⁵³ Grant, 2015. p35.

What is clear from the construction of the POW camp at Changi is the desire for the allied authorities to build a facility in the manner of the previous barracks. Whereas other camps were built by the captors specifically to detain POWs behind a cordon of barbed wire and sentry posts, such as the Stalags and Gulags in Europe, Changi was designed and built by the captives.⁶⁵⁴ Many Scots would return to familiar surroundings if not under unusual circumstances. How they coped with the internment is reflected in the BRE records.

8.2 Defining Changi

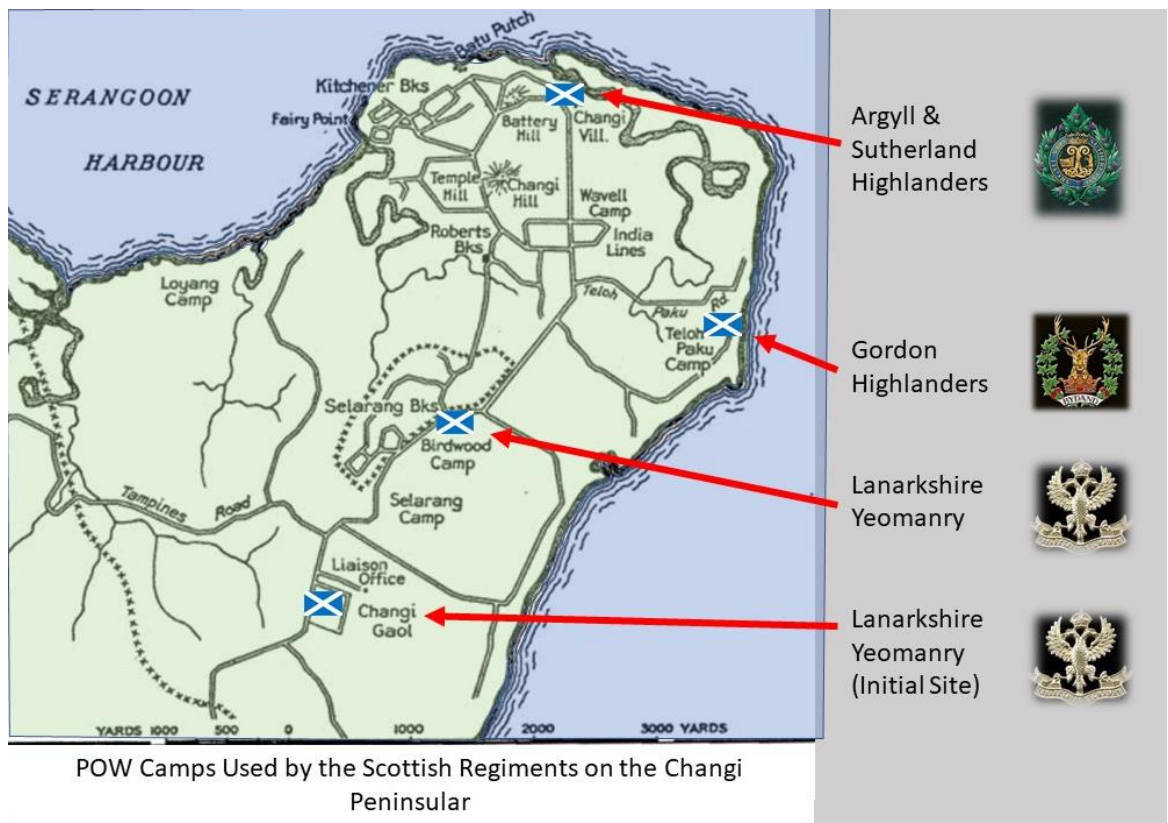
Before we look at what the records and rolls can reveal about the life of the Scottish soldiers in Changi, we must consider how the BRE administrators accounted for the movement of men around the various camps.

Firstly, it is necessary to define what exactly determines the confines of the ‘Changi POW Camp’.⁶⁵⁵ Many relatives will mistakenly state that their family members were held in the notorious ‘Changi Jail’ rather than the larger camp. The Jail was the original civil penitentiary at the southern perimeter of the POW campus which was used to house 3,000 POWs.⁶⁵⁶ Some will refer to the capture and imprisonment of men in Changi and assume the subject spent all his time on the peninsula, before being transferred to the Thai Burma Railway, oblivious to the fact that many men spent the majority of 1942 in workcamps around the island or were captured ‘up country’ in Malaya, Java, and Sumatra with many POWs spending only a few days in transit through Singapore. Finally, there are records and statements that suggest the soldier was not held in Changi at all, but in ‘Temple Hill’, ‘Roberts Barracks’ or ‘Selerang’ which are some of the subsectors of the greater ‘Changi Camp’. Any researcher must therefore be aware of the aberrations in the nomenclature and remain consistent in the use of the terminology.

⁶⁵⁴ The barbed wire was installed by the POWs on the bequest of the Japanese. A single layer of concertina wire, easily breached, was laid around the perimeter and dividing internal sectors of the camp. The job was completed ahead of time and the Japanese authorities granted the acquisition of 50 stoves as way of reward. (Grant, 2015. p38).

⁶⁵⁵ Moffatt & McCormick, 2003. p275.

⁶⁵⁶ Gillies, 2011. pp109 - 110.



Map 10 - A map showing the location of the POW camps on the Changi peninsula occupied by the Scottish units.

The BRE team derived a code for recording the locations and movement of troops listed in the rolls. This combination of abbreviations and dates defines the movement of the POW from camp to camp. For example, entries that begin with ‘CHA’ infer the POW was, at the time of the review, housed in the Changi Camp. Movements thereafter were annotated by a series of codes and dates. Entries were crossed out as a subsequent move was added, sometimes obliterating the detail of the text. POWs returning to Changi for rest and recuperation would have their temporary stay in Singapore noted with a second entry of ‘CHA’ with an appropriate date of arrival. Alternatively, some entries include the abbreviation ‘RV’ used to describe POWs returning to the transit camp along the River Valley Road, in the suburbs of the city rather than returning to Changi. Onward movements from camps out with Singapore were seldom recorded.⁶⁵⁷ An exception to this is the transfer of POWs from Pudu Gaol in Kuala Lumpur to Thailand in October 1942

⁶⁵⁷ Nelson, 2012. p33.

which included men of the A&SH, as the lists of those who had been sent onto the railway was secretly despatched to Changi before they left.⁶⁵⁸

At first battalion records were updated based on a roll call of men arriving in Changi during the first few days of confinement. Those POWs not accounted for and still being held in other locations were initially listed as ‘missing’. It was not until survivors of these other camps returned to Changi that the lists could be compiled of men being originally held in Java, Sumatra, Kuala Lumpur, Taiping, and numerous other smaller camps around Southeast Asia.⁶⁵⁹ For example, those men of the A&SH returning from Pudu Gaol in late 1942 were given the initial entry of ‘LPR’ on arrival followed by the move to ‘CHA’ along with the date of that move.

3323242	Pte X	McCULLOCH X JC		LPR OVL
2979593	Pte X	McCUSKER X P		14.10.42 CHA OVL 22.6.42
2970887	Pte X	McCUTCHEON X P	S. Mrs. Robb, 26 Kings Rd, Whitehorn, Wigton.	LPR CHA CHA 15.10.42 OVL/F 29.4.43 LPR OVL 14.10.42 K
2988143	Pte X	McDADE X P		
	Pte X	McDERMOTT X		
2979298	Pte X	McDERMOTT X W (Indep. Coy.)	Mr. J. Kennedy, 14 Camdren Rd, Paisley.	CHA OVL D 29.4.43
2985359	Pte X	McDIARMID X P		

Figure 38 - An example of the movement codes created by the BRE.

These entries are taken from the A&SH roll:

McCulloch moves from Kuala Lumpur (LPR) overland on 14.10.42 directly to the Thai Burma Railway.

McCusker moves from Changi (CHA) overland (OVL) on 22.6.42.

McCutcheon moves from Kuala Lumpur (LPR) to Changi (CHA) then to Thailand as part of F Force (OVL/F). He survives and returns to Changi (CHA handwritten in).

McDade moves from Kuala Lumpur (LPR) overland (OVL) directly to Thailand.

McDermott has been killed (K)

McDermott W posted to the Independent Company before the fighting, was moved from Changi (CHA) overland on the 29/4/1943 (not stated but the date suggests this is also as a part of F Force) where he has died (D)

(WO 361/1639)

⁶⁵⁸ Nelson, 2012. p53.

⁶⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, p32.

It is therefore possible to estimate how many men from the Scottish regiments were initially held in Changi or arrived there sometime in 1942. This analysis suggests that approximately 1,800 to 1,900 prisoners (3 – 4 % of the POW population in the first weeks at Changi) were men from the three Scottish regiments studied for this thesis.

Table 18 – The number of men from Scottish regiments held in Changi and other Prison Camps in 1942.

Regiment	Originally in Changi*	Arrivals into Changi from other camps in 1942						Total	Unknown
		TPG	LPR	PAL	PAD	JAVA	SUM		
	*CHA incl WP, AP SR, Hospitals etc								
A&SH	328	1	127	8	1	19	0	484	23
Gordons	863	0	0	3	0	0	1	867	11
Lanarkshire Yeomanry	504	0	0	0	0	0	0	504	0
								1855	34

Note that there are 34 entries which do not state the POW's initial holding camp.

The BRE created lists showing the movements of troops through Changi throughout 1942. It is therefore possible to attach the movement of Scottish troops from the battalion rolls with these parties heading out of Singapore. Units arriving and departing from Changi were often defined by a letter, their destination, their departure point or from the name of the commander in charge of the party. Units leaving directly from work camps in Singapore or from camps abroad were not named and to compound the issue, many were combined into larger parties as they reached the railhead.⁶⁶⁰

The possible combinations of moves for each battalion roll is enormous. For example, the Lanarkshire Yeomanry's log lists five possible departure points for the men in Singapore in 1942; Changi, Sime Road, Adam Park, River Valley, and Great World. The initial migration of troops found the artillerymen despatched on to eight different work parties as well as entries which simply states the man was sent 'overland', with only the associated date giving tentative indication as to which party this was on. There are also blank entries inferring the POW never left Singapore, either dying in the interim or fortunate to remain in Changi for the course of the war.

⁶⁶⁰ For a list of parties departing Changi see Nelson, 2012. pp202 – 205.

However, for the purpose of identifying how much time the Scots spent in Changi and the work camps of Singapore in 1942, all that is needed is a statement that the POW was initially held in camps on the island and the date on which he was sent abroad.

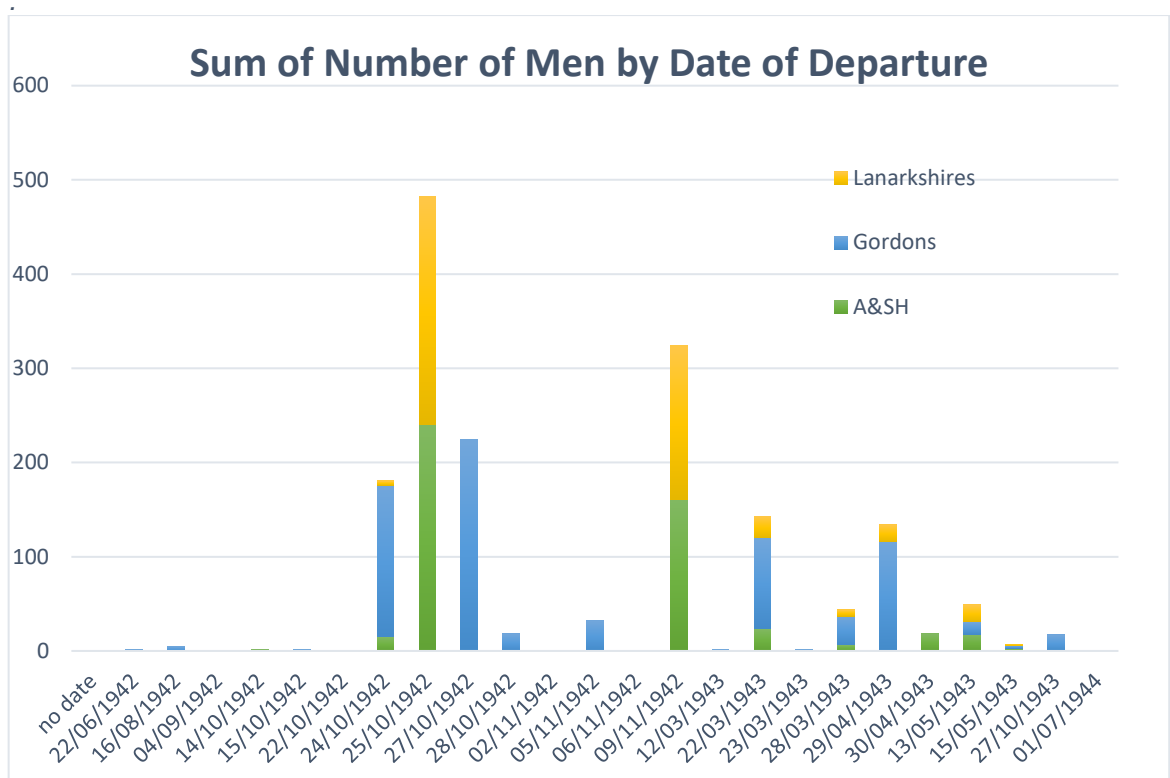


Chart 4 - Graph showing the movement of men from the Scottish Regiments out of Changi

The data suggests most Scots have left Changi by early 1943, having completed between 8 to 12 months on the peninsula or workcamps around Singapore. The clustering of colours shows how the men were kept together in their units rather than nationality, as they were sent away, a policy which would ensure a POW would have the benefit of being with colleagues, if not fellow countrymen, from their own regiment at the new camp.

8.3 The Move to Changi

It remains unclear as to which command decided to initially use the Changi Peninsula as a holding camp but using a military establishment to house POWs was mutually accepted as a viable alternative in accordance with the Hague Convention and repeated in the Japanese Army Regulations for the handling of Prisoners of War.⁶⁶¹ Certainly, the Japanese were

⁶⁶¹ Hack & Blackburn, 2008. p12. Bartlett-Kerr, 1985. p336.

overwhelmed by the number of POWs now in their jurisdiction. Housing 100,000 tired, hungry, and defeated soldiers was a logistical problem few in the Japanese high command had anticipated.⁶⁶² The negotiated terms of the capitulation meant that there would be no immediate occupation of the city. A thousand-armed Allied troops would keep order and the handover of civilian administration would take place over the following months, with many British staff kept on to help with the changeover.⁶⁶³ Any march to captivity would therefore become a British responsibility.

On the 16th February, orders were sent out for Allied units to move into the holding areas.⁶⁶⁴ Rank and file of the Indian Army troops were to converge on the Lanarkshire Yeomanry's old gun positions at Farrer Park and the Alkaff Gardens in Serangoon for sorting and to be recruited into the Indian National Army.⁶⁶⁵ Their 'white' officers were added to the ranks of British and Australian prisoners.⁶⁶⁶ Allied civilians were initially assembled on the Padang outside the City Hall and then marched to Siglap, a suburb on the south east coast, a few miles from the centre of the city, where they were billeted among the abandoned seaside villas for three weeks before alternative accommodation could be found at the Changi Jail.⁶⁶⁷

Around 52,000 British and Australian troops, mustered at approved meeting points behind the front lines, and then, gathering all the salvageable equipment they could carry, made their own way to Changi.⁶⁶⁸ This was a journey from anywhere between 10 and 24 miles from their rendezvous depending where on the battlefield they were starting from.⁶⁶⁹

⁶⁶² Moffatt & McCormick, 2003. p275.

⁶⁶³ Farrell 2006, p412. Tsuji, 2007. p200.

⁶⁶⁴ Holmes & Kemp, 1982. p184 – 185.

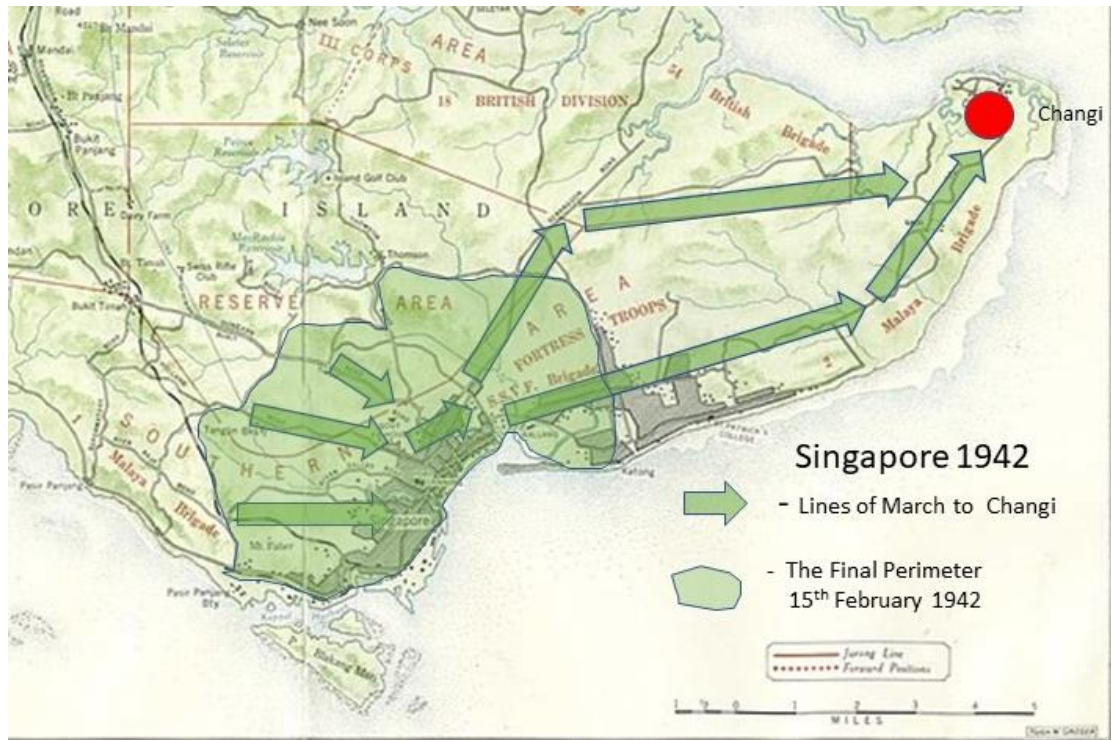
⁶⁶⁵ Those prisoners not joining the INA were initially housed at Kranji Seletar, Bidadari and Tyersall (Murfett et al., 2006. p321.)

⁶⁶⁶ Nelson, 2012. p11. Farrell, 2015. p438.

⁶⁶⁷ Peet, 2011, pp12 – 13.

⁶⁶⁸ Nelson, 2012. p10. Rollings, 2008. p73. Magarry, 1994. pp161 - 165.

⁶⁶⁹ Havers, 2003. p27.



Map 11- A map of Singapore showing the lines of march for the POWs moving to Changi.

Some commentators relate this as a ‘Death March’, a foretaste of those in Bataan and Sandakan.⁶⁷⁰ In fact, it was a logistic conundrum handed on by the ambivalent Japanese staff to the British command personnel who still had the authority to organise the transfer.⁶⁷¹ Even so, from a soldier’s point of view, the march seemed unorganised and unnecessarily arduous.⁶⁷² Fit men, as proven by the pre-war training of the A&SH, could cover the distance without trouble in a day’s march. However tired, traumatised, and hungry men carrying all their belongings and escorting their wounded, found the distance a tougher proposition in the tropical heat.⁶⁷³ Those who dropped out on route were loaded onto the few trucks following on behind each column, or rested by the roadside until fit enough to continue.⁶⁷⁴

Numerous units simply took to the road in column of march following the assigned and most direct routes to the east of the city.⁶⁷⁵ Others reinstated otherwise sabotaged vehicles

⁶⁷⁰ Lane, 2011. p1039.

⁶⁷¹ Murfett et al., 2006. p322. Sturma, 2019. p12.

⁶⁷² Felton, 2008 pp84 – 85. Felton suggests that the music of the A&SH pipers far from cheering up the men added to the terrible melancholy of the event.

⁶⁷³ Holmes & Kemp, 1982. p184 – 185.

⁶⁷⁴ Dean, 1998, p28. Grant, 2015. p35.

⁶⁷⁵ Havers, 2003. pp27 – 28.

or surreptitiously obtained enough transport to allow their wounded, larger items of kit and those who were exhausted by the march to be loaded onto the trucks.⁶⁷⁶ RAOC drivers ran shuttle runs along the Tampines Road to hasten the movement of troops.⁶⁷⁷ Those fortunate to arrive first had the choice of accommodation within their allotted zones. Those who came in last found themselves relegated to the growing canvas city of tents erected along the verges, parade squares and remaining open spaces.⁶⁷⁸

8.4 The Early Days in Changi

Of the three Scottish units fighting in Singapore, arguably it would be the Lanarkshire Yeomanry who would face the harshest introduction to imprisonment. They were new into theatre, bloodied by combat yet suffering few battlefield casualties and thrown into captivity in a completely foreign and alien environment.

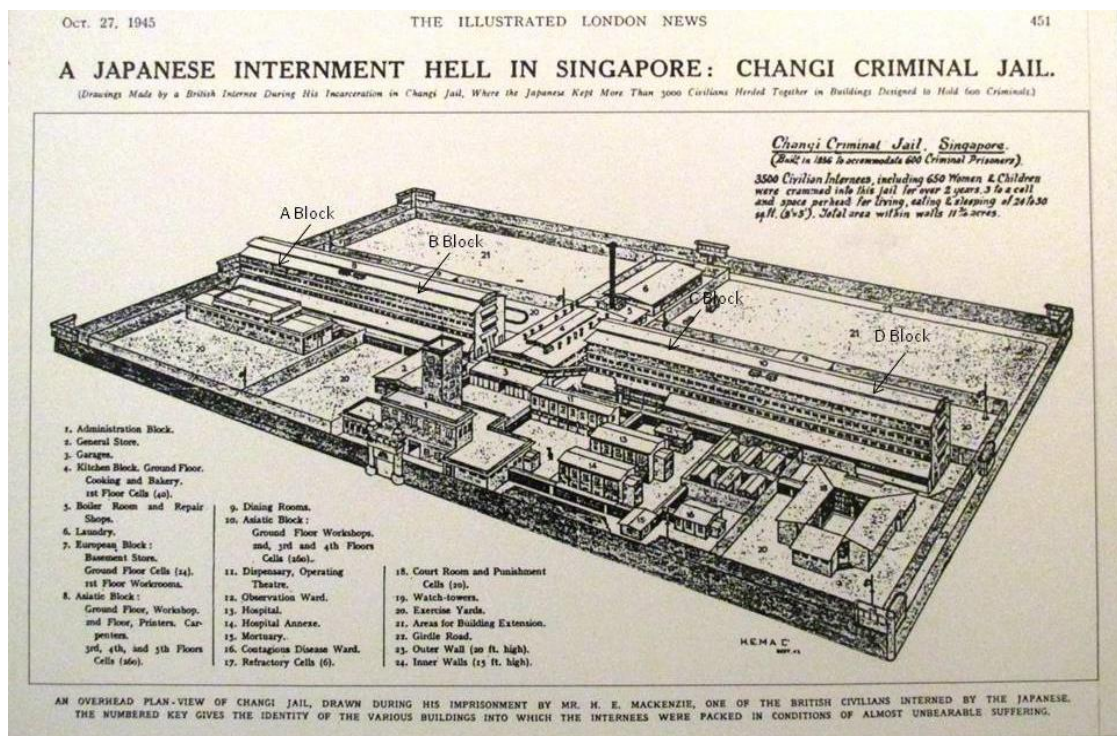


Figure 39 – The article in the Illustrated London News on 27th October 1945 showing the layout of the Changi Jail.

Note the reference to the 'Internment Hell'; reinforcing the post war belief that conditions in Changi were horrific. The plan was drawn by H E MacKenzie, a civilian internee.

⁶⁷⁶ Moffatt & McCormick, 2003. p273. Magarry, 1994. p161. Coast, 2014. pp4-6.

⁶⁷⁷ Magarry, 1994. p161.

⁶⁷⁸ Cooper, 2016. p213. Officially the honour goes to 1st Battalion Cambridgeshire who had been held in a tennis court at Adam Park for four days.

The Yeomanry were initially allocated accommodation in the Changi Jail, the civilian prison built in 1936 and designed to hold 650 civilian prisoners and now expected to house over 3,000 POWs. The men were accommodated three to a cell, lying on the concrete floors with a blanket for warmth. There was a single well in the compound for fresh water.⁶⁷⁹

Pte John McEwan related his time in Changi Jail in his book *'Out of the Depths of Hell'* (1999). His passage focuses on the cramped conditions in each cell, the lack of mattresses and a bucket in the corner:

'for our convenience.... And who could complain that it was not convenient it being so close to hand.'

He also comments that the prison was soon packed to capacity and that the Medical Officer insisted that the 'buckets' were to be removed and latrines dug in the exercise yard. The facilities became a *'welcome distraction from the increasing hardships'* as men shared a common space and function, exchanging banter and jibes as they did so. McEwan goes onto comment on the importance of discipline and morale to help men get through the hard times. He remarks on the fortitude of the average British 'Tommy' and the character of the disparate recruits.

*'Rough and ready when they enlist or are 'press ganged' in time of need, the naturally inherited coarse, but light-hearted humour is further polished by 'Colonel Bogey's finishing school' and its hardened Regular Army NCOs. Hard boiled eggs we are – but with soft centres. Well, most of us anyway.'*⁶⁸⁰

In contrast to the cramped surroundings of Changi Jail, the Lanarkshire Yeomanry were pleasantly surprised to find the conditions of their next accommodation much better. Birdwood Camp was a pre-war Australian barracks and temporary accommodation for the Gordon Highlanders before the invasion, set within a spacious compound within the Changi cordon. It consisted of wooden and attap huts, dry and airy and capable of sleeping 40 men to each building with enough floor space to allow the POW a decent space to lie down on the timbered floors. Once again, the overcrowding meant new latrines were needed, but now there was enough distance between the 20ft deep boreholes and bunks to

⁶⁷⁹ Watson, No Date, p34.

⁶⁸⁰ McEwan, 1999. p41.

ensure more sanitary conditions. The expansive parade square provided adequate room for exercise. There was little interference from the Japanese with just the occasional lorry passing through for an inspection.⁶⁸¹

Most of the Yeomanry remained at the camp until their dispersal onto various work parties in Singapore and their eventual despatch overseas to Kinkasaki in Formosa.⁶⁸²



Figure 40 – A pre-war image of Birdwood Camp, Singapore.

This image is one of 202 images taken by NX37745 Private (Pte) George during his time in the AIF and as a POW. Many of his images taken in the POW camps were done so secretly. (AWM P02569.068)

The Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders had an easier time than the Lanarkshire Yeomanry in adapting to their new surroundings. Although now housed in accommodation somewhat remote from their own barracks at Tyersall, the unit remained in familiar surroundings, environment, and community. They had managed to collect a good haul of supplies and equipment from the wreckage of their former home and had then consolidated their supplies on route to Changi, calling in favours from civilian friends and contacts as they roamed the island on work parties and sanctioned visits into the city. The Argylls took over

⁶⁸¹ Watson, No Date. p35.

⁶⁸² The Lanarkshire Yeomanry were shipped to Formosa on the 'England Maru' which despite its name was built on the Clyde. (Watson, No Date. p38.)

premises in Changi Village including old shops and the school. They searched the buildings vacated by the local civilians and picked up anything of use including notably exercise books, writing paper and chickens.⁶⁸³

Moffatt and McCormick suggest the A&SH officers were quartered in much better facilities than their men, sharing two large classrooms with ‘*a pleasant veranda*’. The surviving staff officers of 12th Indian Brigade were housed in similar surroundings at the Chinese boy’s school, 200 yds up the road. The Medical Inspection Room was established in the former Teck Soong Photo Co. shop with Captain Patrick McArthur as the MO for the battalion.⁶⁸⁴ The battalion ‘Detachment Office’ was set up by the administration team in a shop next to the village cinema, which later became a regular rehearsal venue for a POW concert party.⁶⁸⁵ The chapel was a ten-minute walk away across the football field and beyond the dental centre. Very soon many of the facilities found in Tyersall had been duplicated in the immediate area of Changi Village. Later detachments of Argylls were taken to Kranji, River Valley and Havelock Road camps to help with the reconstruction of China Town and to unload ships at Keppel Docks.⁶⁸⁶



Figure 41 - A 1970's image of the Changi Cinema

This was used by the A&SH during their captivity in Changi Village. The Administration Office was in a shop adjoining the building. (Viewed at <https://thelongnwindignroad.wordpress.com/2010/10/29/the-changi-village-that-i-loved/>) on 14/04/20

⁶⁸³ Moffatt & McCormick, 2003. p275.

⁶⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, p276.

⁶⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, p277.

⁶⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, p283. Gordon, 1963. pp48 – 56.

The Gordon Highlanders marched towards their own barracks at Selarang but were disappointed to find they had already been allocated to the Australians.⁶⁸⁷ Instead, the Gordons took possession of the hutted camp along the Changi beach at Telok Paku.



Figure 42 – An aerial photograph taken by the RAF in 1946 showing the layout of the Telok Paku Camp at Changi (NAS Accession Number 158708)

The Telok Paku camp was well known to the Straits Settlement Volunteers Force reservists of ‘S’ Company, who had spent much of their pre-war free time undertaking basic training at the unit under the supervision of the Gordon’s NCO’s. The camp consisted of four main huts overlooking the parade square with a mess hall, sergeants mess, guard house and administration block. It was designed to hold one company of troops, around 100 men, at a time. It was a minute’s walk from the ocean and regarded by the volunteers as a ‘beautiful’

⁶⁸⁷ Magarry, 1994. p161. Keith Stevens of the 8th Division Signals recalls how the A&SH and the Gordons were happy to mix with the Australians in Selarang. The Scots bands provided instruments for the Australian Concert party and sporrans to be used as wigs for the female impersonators. (Stevens, 1983. AWM.)

facility'.⁶⁸⁸ It was remote from the main camp and the Gordons set up their HQ facility nearer the Selerang Barracks. The remote location ensured the Gordons were left very much to themselves, visited only by the infrequent patrolling of Sikh guards.⁶⁸⁹

Safely ensconced in their new surrounding and left to their own devices the Scots and their colleagues set about settling in. Unfettered by Japanese overseers, the POWs naturally turned to their officers for guidance and instruction. In turn the officers contrived to recreate the only 'total institution' they were familiar with; Changi was to become a garrison of prisoners.

8.5 Familiarity Breeds Content

The battalion adjutants and their administrators were among the first sections to be re-established. Each battalion, brigade and division command set up an administration function within its own assigned area of the camp.⁶⁹⁰ Adjutants issued Standing Orders, parades were organised, duty rosters established, and the King's Regulations enforced.⁶⁹¹ Senior officers were segregated where possible and junior officers and SNCOs were allocated to look after accommodation blocks. Duty Officers were on hand to tackle immediate issues of discipline and welfare at unit level.⁶⁹² A programme of sick parades, work parties and recreational activities was established. 'Diet Centres' gave out pooled supplies for those particularly malnourished men.⁶⁹³ Troops remaining in camp were submitted to occasional drill sessions.⁶⁹⁴ In effect, everything that could be found in the pre-war barracks at Tyersall, Gillman, Tanglin and Selerang was replicated on the Changi peninsula in some way.

Once again, as in the pre-war days of the garrison duties, the heat, boredom, isolation, and homesickness fostered discontentment and ill-discipline.⁶⁹⁵ The rations brought in by the

⁶⁸⁸ Kruesmann V 1983 Reel/Disc 2 ,00:29:36.

⁶⁸⁹ Indian Army soldiers who had transferred to the Indian National Army were employed to guard the allied POWs. There was a mutual animosity between the POWs and the Indian soldiers they saw as turning traitor. Japanese troops also looked down on the Indian troops for having surrendered and changing allegiances. Many POWs and Japanese took mutual pleasure in teasing the Indian guards which sometimes led to wounding and deaths.

⁶⁹⁰ Nelson, 2012. p10.

⁶⁹¹ *Ibid.*, p14. Dunlop, 1986. p47.

⁶⁹² Farrow, 2007. p91.

⁶⁹³ Rollings, 2008. p158.

⁶⁹⁴ Farrow, 2007. p92.

⁶⁹⁵ Urquhart, 2010. p102.

POWs off the battlefield quickly ran out.⁶⁹⁶ Discontent was soon enflamed by constant hunger pains and the fear of an uncertain future. Eric Lomax sums up the psychological effects of the internment as a negative force feeding off anxiety and fear which stifled any ideas of active resistance:

*'We still wanted to fight but our bitter young energy had to be bottled up. We began to experience the overriding dominant feature of POW life: constant anxiety, and utter powerlessness and frustration. There was no relief from these burdens, not even in sleep. So, we filled our days organising ourselves and our men, underemployed and angry.'*⁶⁹⁷

Lt Montgomery Campbell of the A&SH, having been captured in Java and then transferred to Kuching via Changi stated that even day to day existence was a struggle but it was the regimental structure that bolstered morale. He particularly singled out the A&SH as having high morale:

*'This cohesive military discipline managed to withstand the worst shocks which the Japs could inflict. The mind had to be exercised and the will to live and to help one's friend followed.'*⁶⁹⁸



Figure 43- Des Bettany's Cartoon entitled 'Forced March to Changi'.

This cartoon appeared in a 1946 Calendar illustrating a retrospective appreciation of the growing resentment between the officers and men in the first weeks of captivity in Changi. Note the men depicted as being overloaded with equipment.

Viewed at <https://changipowart.com/the-artwork/calendar-for-1946>

⁶⁹⁶ Header, 2009. p23.

⁶⁹⁷ Lomax, 1995. p72.

⁶⁹⁸ Moffatt & McCormick, 2003. p266.

This growing anger, anxiety and frustration among Allied troops was a major issue which was compounded by the necessity of maintaining military discipline and the rank structure.⁶⁹⁹

Many diarists comment on the absurdity of the segregation and preferential treatment given to officers. Camp commanders, the adjutants, and their staff, were often housed in separate buildings and were given roomier accommodation with fewer occupants.⁷⁰⁰ Officer only messes were established where ‘dining in nights’ and bridge evenings were held.⁷⁰¹ They were paid more by the Japanese, though many agreed to maintain a mess kitty, through which they paid for extra drugs, food and luxury items for the men.⁷⁰² Officers were excused duties on working parties, but went along none the less, or took on the role of the officer in charge of various domestic duties within the camp. They were also ordered to wear a single star to represent their rank and to wear a shirt while on duty.⁷⁰³ All officers were referred to as ‘captain’ by their guards and had to salute Japanese officers.⁷⁰⁴ The Allied rank and file were still expected to salute them.⁷⁰⁵

The first weeks in Changi saw the most cases of insubordination, bordering on mutiny, among the men.⁷⁰⁶ Many Australians scoffed at the apparently pointless charade of maintaining the chain of command especially by the ‘Pommy’ officers.⁷⁰⁷ Colonel Toosey at the Sime Road work camp in the summer of 1942 noted in his diary that the Australians felt resentful of the Allied command and showed little respect for Brigadier Duke [OC Sime Road POW Camp].

Things reached a climax on 11th June 1942, when the Japanese called a parade and held the first formal count. Discipline almost broke down and the Australians began to roar abuse as the adjutants stepped forward to Brigadier Duke to report the numbers of men on parade. This spread to the British ranks

⁶⁹⁹ Urquhart, 2010. p100. Grant 2015. p33.

⁷⁰⁰ Coast, 2014. p9.

⁷⁰¹ *Ibid.*, p14.

⁷⁰² *Ibid.*, p23. Grant, 2015. p252.

⁷⁰³ *Ibid.*, p44

⁷⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, p59

⁷⁰⁵ Dunlop, 1986. pp142 – 145. Hearder suggests British Officers and specifically doctors, were treated with less respect than their Australian, American, and Dutch counterparts on the grounds of their insistence on maintaining British Army regulations while in captivity (Hearder, 2009. pp 139 – 149.)

⁷⁰⁶ Moffatt & McCormick, 2003. p276. MacArthur, 2005. p33. Dunlop, 1990. pvii. p47.

⁷⁰⁷ Coast, 2014., p10

*who joined in the shouting. Duke restored order but it was an unsettling episode.*⁷⁰⁸

Toosey commended the early instigation of the ‘Army Act’ by the high command at Changi as being ‘*essential to ensure that discipline was maintained to prevent anarchy breaking out*’, but noted that the newly arrived Australians, many of whom had only been in the army for a matter of months, found the discipline unnecessary and unpopular.⁷⁰⁹ He also concluded that the men considered that the British command had forgone the right to preserve the officer status within the camp regime having lost the battle.⁷¹⁰ He notes that the ‘*resentment was keenly felt.*’⁷¹¹

Many soldiers, especially among the new volunteers, believed that once captured, the officers were no longer in charge and King’s Regulations no longer applied. To appease their collective guilt over the surrender, the more rebellious soldiers thought they could disassociate themselves with the organisation that had, they believed, lost the battle and the right to lead.⁷¹² Yet the insistence on maintaining military discipline and regimental traditions was not just solely down to the obstinacy of the officer class clinging onto their power base and unwilling to change their ways, as the Australian commentators asserted. The camp commanders recognised that recreating the social structures and discipline of pre-war life was essential for the smooth running of the POW camp and the rehabilitation of the men. Without it, life in Changi would have been like any judicial civilian prison, where status and power come with violence and men are forced to fight every day to maintain their current situation or improve it. Regimental discipline, official or unofficial, imposed on a ‘Total Institution’ such as Changi, created a familiar societal structure which harked back to better days in peacetime barracks. This sense of independence and intimacy instilled a feeling of autonomy among the POW community and adopting a regime of familiar military discipline became a means of displaying a passive resistance to the Japanese.⁷¹³

Much has also been written about the ingenuity, resilience, and resourcefulness of the FEPOW community in Changi in overcoming the tedium and uncertainty of imprisonment,

⁷⁰⁸ Summers, 2005. p110.

⁷⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, p99.

⁷¹⁰ Havers, 2003. p39.

⁷¹¹ Summers, 2005. p99.

⁷¹² Havers, 2003. p41.

⁷¹³ *Ibid.*, pp28 – 29. Magarry, 1994. p68.

but much of what they created was an imitation of their life in pre-war military billets and made possible by the social diversity of the citizen army and their familiarity with the local amenities.⁷¹⁴ Where services had been destroyed in the fighting or denied by the Japanese authorities, then there were suitably skilled tradesmen at hand to build an alternative facility.⁷¹⁵ Men of the Hygiene Units ensured the safe reconstruction of existing latrines, washrooms and fresh water supplies. Medical staff set up hospitals, padres built the churches with the help of the congregation, education staff created libraries, NAAFI and Mess staff opened canteens and grave diggers undertook the upkeep of the new cemeteries.⁷¹⁶ There was even a need to build prison cells, for those offenders punished for the breach of King's Regulations and sentenced after a subsequent court-martial and manned by the military police.⁷¹⁷ Workshops, factories and gardens were created to make good the deficiencies in consumables.⁷¹⁸ Notably, it was only after a few weeks that the Japanese authorities insisted the camps be segregated by wire and the points of entry guarded, primarily to control movement of inmates and visitors around the facility.⁷¹⁹ Life within the wire otherwise went on without too many concerns on outside matters unless it was about the supply of food and medicine.⁷²⁰

8.6 Heaven or Hell on Earth?

Despite all the hard work to instil discipline and order in the new camps, the consensus suggests that life in Changi for the first few weeks was the worst experienced by the POWs in 1942. Ominously, Gunner Jim Watson recalled awaking to:

⁷¹⁴ Grant, 2015, pp27 – 28.

⁷¹⁵ MacArthur, 2005. p31. Gillies, 2011. pp134 – 143. Grant, 2015. pp185 – 225.

⁷¹⁶ Farrow, 2007. p103. Prisoners on work parties were initially paid 10 cents day and could spend their money at the official camp canteen.

⁷¹⁷ The irony of this was not overlooked by camp commanders. Often the miscreants were only asked to sleep in the cell at night and promise on a gentleman's agreement not to abscond. Visitors were free to sit outside the open door and pass the time smoking and playing cards. POWs found contravening Japanese orders were tried, sentenced, and subsequently imprisoned at Outram Park in Singapore. (Cooper, 2015. p 257, p 270)

⁷¹⁸ Grant, 2015. p255, pp290 – 300, pp185 – 224.

⁷¹⁹ Nelson, 2012. p11. Grant, 2015. p38. The numbers of Japanese sentries were so limited that some Japanese camp commanders requested POWs guard themselves, punishing any man on duty if POWs were found beyond the wire without permission or local unofficial traders within it. (Farrow, 2007, p96, Cooper, 2015, p267)

⁷²⁰ The irony of POWs wiring themselves into a prison did not go amiss among the many diarists with one observer declaring Changi as the 'funniest camp in the world'. (Havers, 2003. p56.)

‘...the pipes being played along the road to the burial ground indicating another brave Argyll or Gordon had died. This was a daily occurrence while I was in hospital.’⁷²¹

Despite the best efforts of the camp administrators there was little that could be done about the lack of suitable accommodation space in the short term. The Selarang barrack blocks, for example, designed to house 100 men of the Gordon Highlanders was now expected to house 900 Australians.⁷²² Space was at a premium, but the overcrowding was not to last too long.



AUSTRALIAN WAR MEMORIAL

ART 25094

Figure 44 - The Old Print Room at Changi Jail by Murray Griffin

This image shows the cramped conditions within the ancillary accommodation in 1945. The drawing should be compared with that of the Gordons' barrack blocks at Selarang (Chapter 4). It would appear soldiers were quite used to sleeping in such confined conditions. (Australian War Memorial ART25094).

⁷²¹ *Ibid.*, p36.

⁷²² Magarry, 1994. p163. Grant, 2015. p35.

Captain David Nelson kept a diary of his time in imprisonment and recorded the Changi camp population throughout his time in captivity.⁷²³ A review of his entries suggests that the overcrowding was only a temporary occurrence.

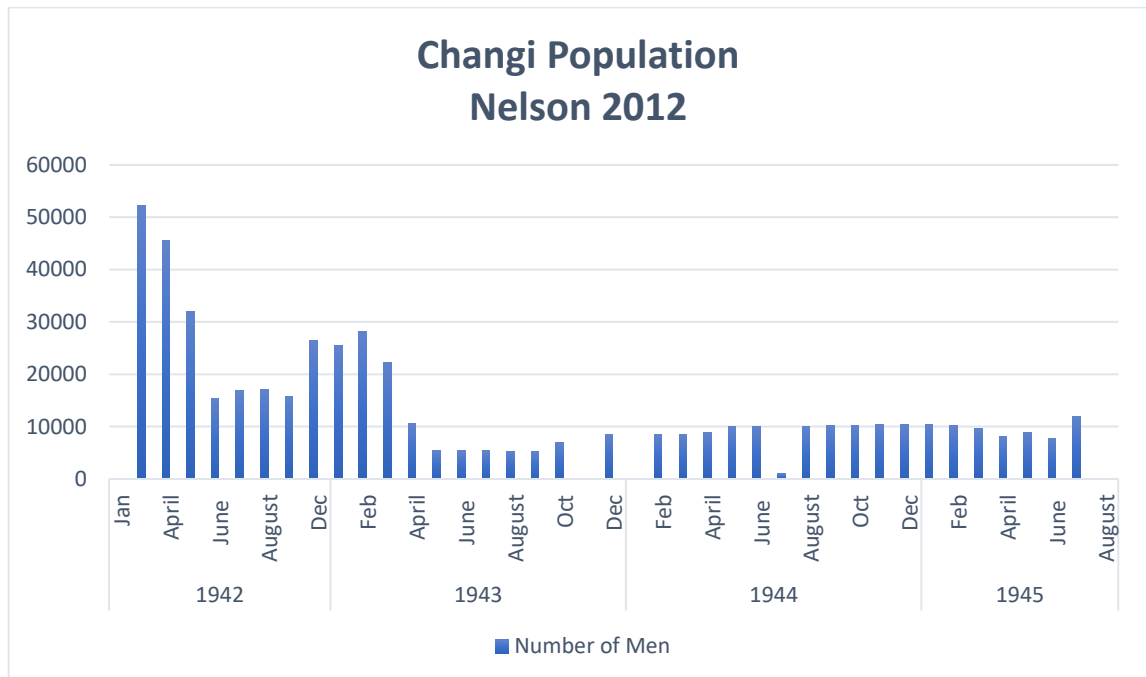


Chart 5 – A graph showing the change in the Changi population over time.

The population figures were extracted from 'The Changi Story' by David Nelson (2012)

There is a clear depreciation of the population over the course of the war and even more so in 1942. The largest numbers of prisoners are found in the first few months of imprisonment with the maximum of 52,200 POWs being initially accommodated on the Changi peninsula. However, the numbers fell away as men were moved out to work camps in Singapore and by mid-June the first troop movements to Thailand began.⁷²⁴ The influx of prisoners in the final few months of 1942 was due to the arrival of POWs captured and interned in Java and Sumatra.⁷²⁵ Their stay in Changi was often only a few weeks before they too were moved to Thailand or overseas. The population fell to its lowest figure of approximately 5,000 by the middle of 1943 before growing again as the survivors returned

⁷²³ Nelson, 2012.

⁷²⁴ Gillies, 2011. p111. Gillies states initially 45,562 but admits the numbers would 'ebb and flow'.

⁷²⁵ Nelson, 2012. p52

from the camps abroad. The British military authorities estimated that by the end of the war 87,000 POWs passed through Changi of which 850 had died.⁷²⁶

This is not to say that the problem of overcrowding was totally relieved by the reduction in numbers. As POWs moved out of the camp the Japanese systematically took back facilities to be used for other military purposes.⁷²⁷ In early September all accommodation overlooking the sea was declared out of bounds for security reasons and the Malaya Command was displaced from Temple Hill. Movements within the camp not only created unnecessary disruption but also reinforced the Japanese authority over the prisoners. Men from different units and nationalities were forced to live together for the first time which brought more problems in discipline and petty thieving. A more flexible approach to the routine of captivity would be required in the latter years of the confinement.⁷²⁸ By 1945, as numbers once again soared as men returned from Thailand and work camps in Singapore, the available real estate had been reduced to the confines of the Changi Jail and the immediate married quarters. Hence when the camera crews arrived to witness the relief of the prisoners, they photographed the overcrowded facilities and the chronically debilitated survivors from Thailand, thereby perpetuating the perception of Changi being overcrowded and a place of death.

But did the initial overcrowding and temporary lack of food cause deaths? A review of the number of burials carried out in the Changi British and Dutch Cemetery, between March 1942 up until Oct 1943 reveals the rate of deaths in Changi over that period. (Farrow

⁷²⁶ Grant, 2015. p174. The death toll presented by the British military sources at post war Chinese commemoration ceremonies stated that 905 POWs and civilian internees combined died in Changi. (Hack & Blackburn 2008. p17).

⁷²⁷ Nelson 2012. p68, p70, p106, p141, p169. Grant, 2015. pp165 -168. Havers, 2003. pp92 – 93.

⁷²⁸ Havers, 2003. pp92 – 95.

2007).

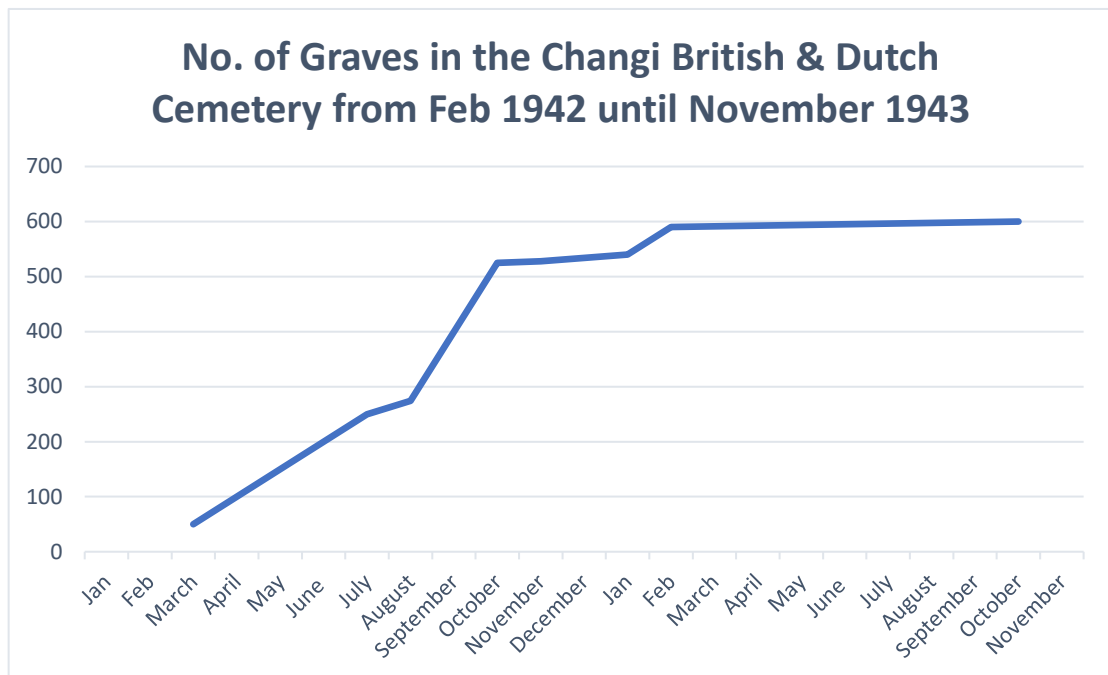


Chart 6 - A graph showing the number of burials undertaken at the British and Dutch Cemetery at Changi POW Camp

Figures extracted from the diary of Sgt J N Farrow

Farrow, the nominated NCO in charge of the site, states in his diary that the busiest time for grave digging was in October 1942 where there were around 20 burials a week.⁷²⁹ He suggests that these were for the men dying of battle wounds rather than disease. Farrow's cemetery was deemed to be full by October 1944 with 'around 600 graves' and lay outside the perimeter of the ever-shrinking camp. He was tasked with designing and building a new cemetery along the Wing Loon Road.⁷³⁰

A review of the deaths of the three Scottish regiments over the course of the war is given at [Appendix 2](#). The figures have been extracted from the Battalion Rolls.

⁷²⁹ Farrow, 2007. p344. Farrow also provides several references of 'impressive' Scottish burials that include pipers playing laments. (Farrow, 2007 p139, p141, p182.)

⁷³⁰ *Ibid.*, p344

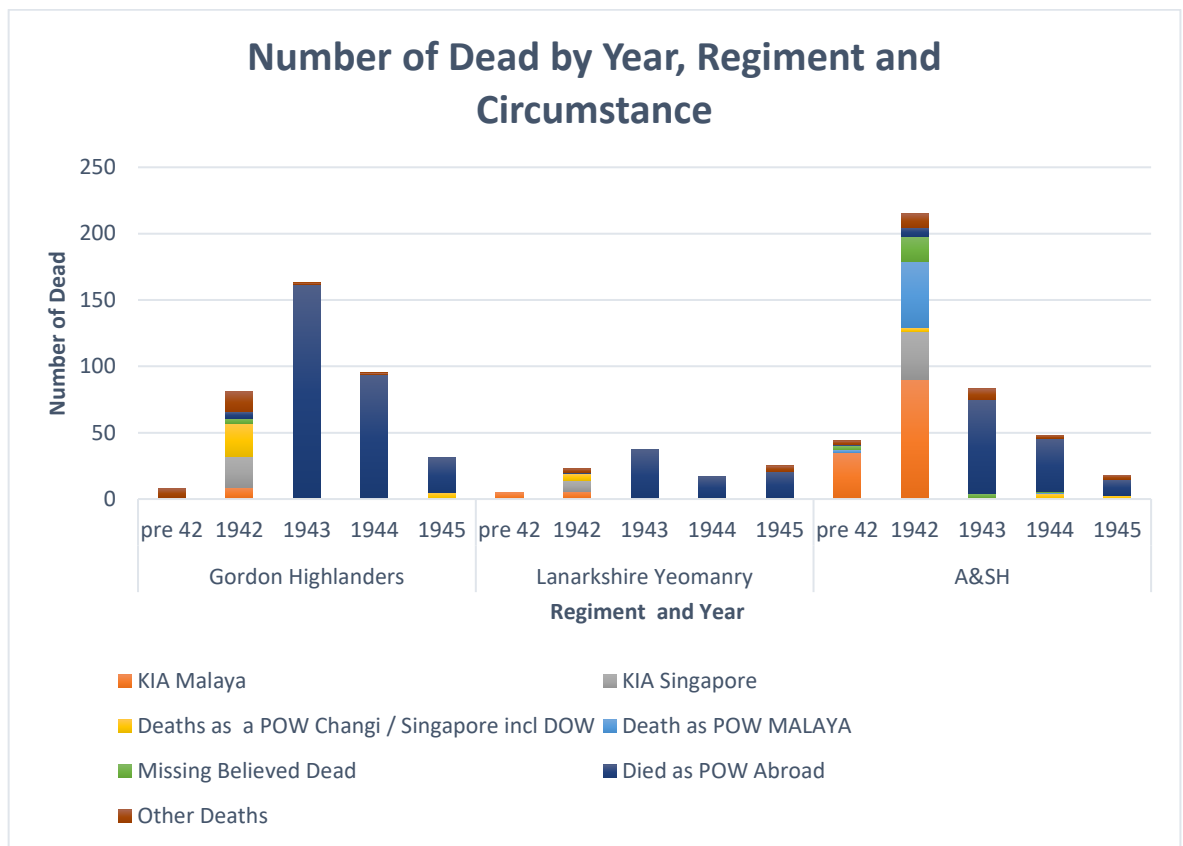


Chart 7- A graph showing the numbers of deaths sustained by the Scottish regiments from the start of their time in Singapore to the end of the war.

The review suggests that most Scots died abroad as POWs, in 1943 and 1944. Deaths in Changi were most prominent in 1942 but these figures also include men dying of wounds in the months immediately after the fighting. This concurs with Farrow's observations. The few deaths in Changi recorded in 1943 to 1945 are indicative of the state of the POWs as they returned from the Thai Burma Railway, as well as the worsening conditions in Singapore experienced towards the end of the war.⁷³¹

A more detailed review of the dates and causes of death in the battalion rolls reveals a list of casualties, other than men dying of wounds, which are indicative of the conditions the Scottish soldiers experienced in the early months of their captivity in Changi in 1942 and is shown at [Appendix 3](#).

⁷³¹ Sturma, 2019. p20.

Of the 32 men from the three Scottish Regiments who died in Changi in 1942, five were listed as ‘Dying of Wounds’, 22 died of illness, four died in accidents and one was executed after attempting to escape. 27 men out of a population of approximately 1,800 Scottish battalion POWs is a death rate of less than 2%. No men died of starvation and only one of Beri-Beri, brought on by vitamin deficiency.

A review of the ‘*Admissions and Discharges*’ book for the Roberts and 1st Malayan General Hospitals identifies 86 Scots who went into care in the first month of 1942. The following ailments were recorded:

Scottish Admissions to the Roberts Barracks Hospital - 22nd Feb to 7th March 1942

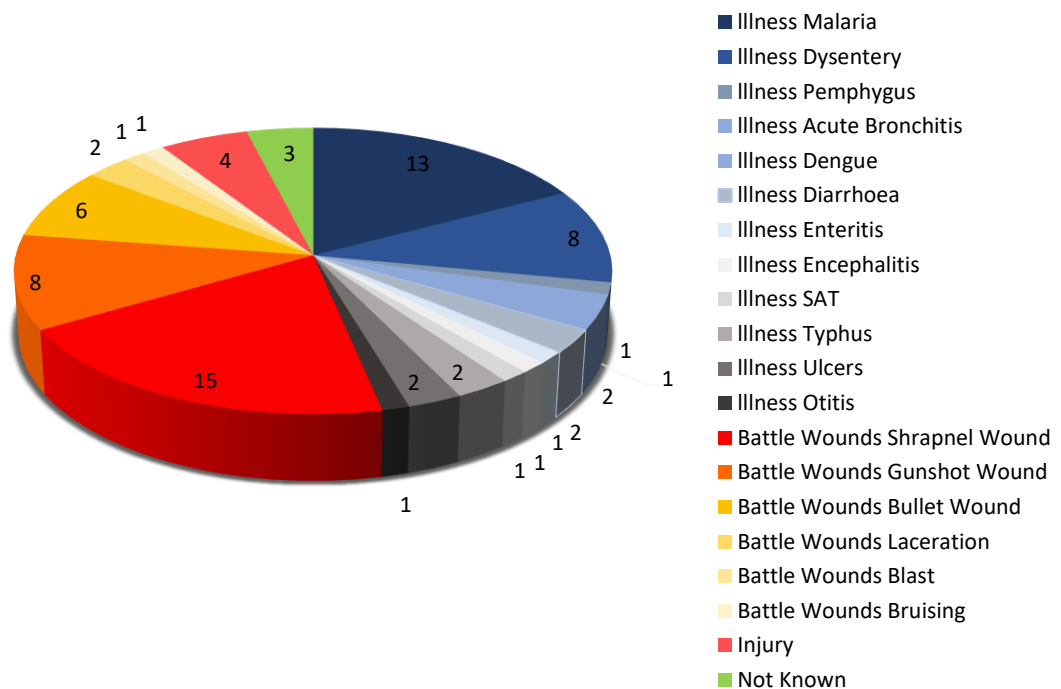


Chart 8 - Scots admitted to the Roberts Barrack's Hospital between 22nd February and 7th March 1942.

Approximately half of those admitted had illnesses and the rest were recovering from battle wounds. Out of the 75 Scots that were admitted to Roberts Hospital, four died, three of wounds and one of illness. Out of the 10 men admitted to 1st Malayan General Hospital,

four had illnesses, six had battle wounds of which three subsequently died. These figures confirm Farrow's observation suggesting that the mortality rate among the Scots in the early months at Changi were inflated by the deaths of men wounded in combat.

The appearance of accidental deaths in the Battalion Muster Books is a reminder that there was always an inherent risk of injury and death when undertaking non-combat duties.

L/Sgt Halifax's death after being stung by a stingray and Gunner Street's death in a road accident resemble the unfortunate deaths of Scots in 1941 before the war. ([See Chapter 4](#)).

Predictably, there are no deaths due to alcohol consumption and no suicides listed.

However, risk of death was increased by having to live and work on the old battlefield.⁷³²

If the case of the Scots is anything to go by, the move to Changi despite involving so many, was conducted with the loss of very few men. The apparent overcrowding and poor diet in the first months of 1942 accounted for the few deaths from dysentery and malaria. Just over half the casualties were those men who had been wounded in battle. Providing the best medical care for battle casualties and sick soldiers is difficult under normal conditions but as prisoners with limited resources, living on the abandoned battlefield, this surge in mortality rates could only be expected.⁷³³ However, it could be reasoned that the circumstances under which the British High Command undertook the move contributed to these minimal losses.

8.7 Conclusion

Recent investigations by Hack & Blackburn (2008), Nelson (2008), Hearder (2009) and latterly, Grant (2015) and Kovner (2020) have successfully challenged the assertion the Changi POW camp was in some way a reflection of 'hell on earth', claiming that such a statement had been the consequence of an association with the repatriation of many of the

⁷³² Lt Derek Stewart of the Gordon Highlanders died of wounds sustained while on a mine clearing party in Johore. Realising he had inadvertently activated the mine he was diffusing; he sat on it and shielded the men around him from the blast. He was taken to Roberts Barracks Hospital where he had both legs amputated and minor operations on his damaged eye and the removal of shrapnel from about his body. He died on 29th August 1942. He received a posthumous Mention in Despatches for his conduct as a POW Pte James Wilson was killed on 15th May 1942 after an unexploded grenade detonated. Pte Arthur Butterfield lost an eye in the same explosion.

⁷³³ Hearder, 2009. pp21 – 27.

Thai Burma Railway survivors. This study of the experience of the Scottish soldier has similarly re-affirmed this new interpretation of life in Changi.

In addition, the evidence presented in this review affirms the importance of the familiarity the Scottish troops had with their surroundings. It is evident that the POWs in Singapore modelled their accommodation on previous barrack life and as such, the resident garrison troops benefitted from prior knowledge of the area and access to more support from outside the camp. Unlike prisoners captured in the European theatre who were transferred to purpose-built Stalags in 1940 or US troops marched across the Philippines in 1942, POWs in Singapore moved into makeshift accommodation, often abandoned military or government facilities no more than a day's march away. The familiar surroundings encouraged the continuation of military doctrines. The work required to convert the battered facilities into sustainable accommodation created jobs, imposed routine and reduced boredom as well as instilled a sense of achievement which in turn translated as a moral victory over their captors. The restoration of pre-war facilities such as sports fields, libraries, theatres, and canteens augmented a busy social life which promoted mental and physical exercise, burnt off extra boisterous energy and frustrations, and established a sense of normality and purpose so vital in tackling the shock and guilt of surrender. There were new factors to consider, such as the initial overcrowding, the gradual reductions of essential supplies including medicines, and the occasional imposition of the enemy guard force.⁷³⁴ Poor diet and tropical illnesses began to take their toll on the general health of the prisoners.⁷³⁵ But in many cases POW ingenuity and adaptability partially overcame such difficulties and the camp commanders believed they could maintain a tolerable existence in the prevailing conditions.

⁷³⁴ Header, 2009. pp22 – 23.

⁷³⁵ *Ibid.*, p28.

Chapter 9 - Scots Beyond Changi

9.1 Introduction

The first few months in Changi were exceptional by any standards. The fact that the Japanese had all but handed the responsibility for the running of the camp to the Allied commanders and that those commanders could still assert discipline on their troops meant that the transition into captivity was completed without any further major losses. The legacy of pre-war garrison life on the island and the persistent links with the local population considerably helped the process of establishing the new facilities and regimes. The prisoners made good use of their contacts beyond the wire, exploiting the time in town whether on official excursions or clandestine sorties at night. This chapter opens with a review of the interactions between the POWs living in Changi and their civilian contacts and explores how these latent relationships helped the POWs establish the Changi Camp.

Excursions out of Changi were to become more permanent and a lot less dangerous as the months progressed. Scottish POWs sent on the work parties into Singapore were not only housed in reasonable accommodation but were given more resources and a free rein to create their own camp regime. These workcamps, again modelled on the pre-war barracks, turned out to be some of the best run facilities in the Far East. The second section of this chapter uses the camp administration documents to show how the camp commanders created a tolerable society from the detritus and spoils of war and how they exploited the benefits of being billeted within the Singapore community.

In contrast to the life in the Singapore workcamps, consideration will also be given to the fate of those Scots who were unable to escape capture in Malaya during the campaign on the mainland. Around 260 A&SHs survived their unsuccessful attempts to evade capture and ended up in Pudu Gaol in Kuala Lumpur. The circumstances of their transition, the environment they were held in, and the breakdown of the command structure condemned many of them to a tragic death. The battalion records of the A&SH provide a unique insight into the disaster that unfolded in Kuala Lumpur and ably demonstrates how the transition to captivity could go tragically wrong. It concludes that in the case of the A&SHs in Pudu it was their training, reputation, and determination not to be captured that ultimately condemned many men to an early demise.

9.2 Beyond the Wire

Although most of the Scottish troops were moved into quarters in Changi between 15th - 18th February 1942, there was a significant proportion who remained unaccounted for. Many the A&SH listed as missing or captured were left in Malaya, either evading the Japanese and government authorities, imprisoned in temporary holding facilities, or settling into more permanent camps set up at Taiping and Kuala Lumpur. In Singapore, a minority of Scottish troops had decided to remain hidden in the jungles of the interior or with amenable locals and old acquaintances.⁷³⁶ Others had followed the example of their commanders, who had been assigned slots in official escape parties, by attempting the hazardous crossing of the Malacca Straits to Java or across the ocean to India, with varying degrees of success.⁷³⁷ A steady trickle of Scots returned to Changi over the course of the first few months after the surrender.

Once within the compound of Changi it was relatively easy to take trips beyond the perimeter. Initially work parties were sent out daily to collect firewood, recover supplies and bury the victims of the Sook Ching massacres along the beaches and quieter lanes.⁷³⁸ Official excursions were arranged to retrieve items from military facilities further afield including the recovery of stationery and office equipment for the BRE noted in Chapter 3. Work parties were also allocated to the task of clearing away the detritus of war including removing mines and burying the war dead.⁷³⁹ Eventually the day trips away were extended to overnight stop overs and then permanent work camps were erected, often within deserted government and military estates. Soon it was not uncommon for the Singaporeans to see lorry loads of POW workers travelling the roads around the island and regular contact was once again renewed.⁷⁴⁰

For those POWs fortunate enough to be assigned onto work parties and rehoused around the island, they found themselves living among a generally ambivalent populace with a relevant number of friends, acquaintances, kinfolk, and partners living in the community.

⁷³⁶ Two Argylls successfully evaded capture and saw out the war fighting for Communist guerrillas in the forests of Malaya. (Stewart, 1947. p117)

⁷³⁷ Stewart, 1947. p116. McEwan & Campbell, 2013. p60. Mitchell, 2012. p52.

⁷³⁸ Grant, 2015. p32. Lee, 2005. pp112 – 113. Japanese Kempeitai carried out the Sook Ching massacres ('Purge through Cleansing') from the 16th February 1942 in which it is estimated up to 18,000 Chinese citizens were rounded up, interrogated, and then executed. (Lee, 2005. pp105 – 116).

⁷³⁹ Nelson, 2012, p12. Coast, 2014. pp28 – 36.

⁷⁴⁰ Lee, 2005. pp134 – 135.

This was particularly true of the pre-war garrison troops who had established a wider network of associates in the population than the newly arrived reinforcements. There were inevitably Singaporean collaborators siding with the Japanese authorities either through fear of death or the promise of reward.⁷⁴¹ A handful of POWs accused of attempting an escape were subsequently executed, however being caught beyond the wire without permission would often only lead to a stint in solitary or a beating.⁷⁴²

A place on one of the official daily work gangs heading into town did have its advantages as POWs were able to recover equipment and clothing for their own use.⁷⁴³ Convivial guards could also be persuaded to stop work for prolonged 'smokos' in which scrounging from abandoned buildings and racketeering with local traders, who often shadowed the parties at a judicious distance, could take place.⁷⁴⁴ POWs collected discarded weapons and ammunition, useful should an armed insurrection be imminent. Radio sets, transistors and signal wire were recovered to build new receivers.⁷⁴⁵ POWs knew of old fuel dumps and the location of wrecked vehicles which could be duly siphoned off and the petrol sold on to local traders.⁷⁴⁶ Abandoned vehicles were dragged off to collection camps before being shipped back to Japan to help the war effort, but not before the engines had been sabotaged and lubricants drained for onward sale. Salvaged stripped-down chassis, minus their engines were used in Changi for transport powered by the efforts of a section of POWs.⁷⁴⁷

Living in the conquered city also had its disadvantages. Having lost the battle, Allied troops, particularly the British senior officers, were blamed by the local population for all that was bad about the Japanese occupation.⁷⁴⁸ Resentment ran high and compounded by the strict regimes being imposed by the new foreign power. There were local Malays happy to help POWs, especially those they had known before the war as garrison troops,

⁷⁴¹ *Ibid.*, p134. pp244 – 249.

⁷⁴² Cooper, 2015. pp298 – 300. MacArthur, 2005. p40.

⁷⁴³ Magarry, 1994. p167.

⁷⁴⁴ Cooper, 2016. pp248-249.

⁷⁴⁵ Magarry, 1994, p205, pp214 – 217.

⁷⁴⁶ Magarry, 1994, p210. Coast 2014, p26. One fuel racket at Adam Park was organised by a Japanese officer. Nicknamed 'Hank the Yank' for his broad American accent and excellent English picked up at university in the U.S.; he not only arranged for the movement of POWs to old fuel dumps, but he also arranged the transport of the recovered fuel and the onward sale to local traders, paying off any interested parties and dividing the proceeds among the POWs. He was later captured and executed by the Japanese authorities. Coast reckons some Australians made 'several thousand' in trading petrol. (Cooper, 2016. p270, Coast 1947 p26)

⁷⁴⁷ Grant, 2015. p67.

⁷⁴⁸ Lee, 2005. p135.

but equally there were those happy to exploit the captives' dependence on the black-market trading, as well as being quick to hand in escaping POWs for reward.⁷⁴⁹

Pte Ian MacKenzie recalls how Cpl Hepburn of the Gordon Highlanders, who had a Chinese girlfriend in town, had persuaded him to abscond through the wire to visit his lover. Reluctantly MacKenzie had agreed, fearful of the punishment they would receive were they to be caught. The two men slipped through the fence and walked the 4 miles to the house of the girl, only to find a Japanese staff car parked on the driveway. Thwarted, the two men headed back to the camp but were caught on route by men of the 'Kempi', the Japanese military police, who held them for questioning. Eventually after spending an uncomfortable and fretful night detained in a tennis court of the Police HQ, they were sentenced to 14 days in solitary.⁷⁵⁰ Termed the 'No Good House', this consisted of a disused toilet at the back of the property, where they were fed a meagre ration of rice and water. Mackenzie recalls the hunger and boredom of this confinement, but both men survived and were duly returned to Changi to recuperate.⁷⁵¹ Mackenzie and Hepburn, like many of their colleagues, had established relationships prior to captivity, which were exploited by the POWs. Having local contacts, as well as a familiarity with the community, allowed men of the garrison battalions to establish trustworthy supply lines and reliable trading links with the Singaporeans. This directly benefitted their colleagues and the POW population overall.⁷⁵²

Not that there was much of a chance of a successful escape beyond the first few weeks of captivity. The fall of Java on 9th March 1942 effectively cut off the escape route to Australia. The sea journey to India was long and treacherous across seas now patrolled by Japanese vessels. The average British or Australian soldier was not readily disguisable as a Malay, Thai or Chinese and the local population was as likely to hand a POW over to the authorities as they would hide and feed them. The only real option was to attempt to join up with Communist guerrillas in Malaya but there were no escape routes set up as there

⁷⁴⁹ Lee, 2005. pp134 – 135. For conflicting accounts of the same escape and life within the local community as an escapee see Dean, 1998. pp43 – 58. Bowden, 2014. pp19 – 42.

⁷⁵⁰ The Kempeitai had several notorious properties around the island from which they operated. This description resembles the properties along the Mount Pleasant Road, adjacent to the Police Depot. Taxi drivers today still refuse to visit some of these properties after dark.

⁷⁵¹ McGowran, 2000. p42.

⁷⁵² Cooper, 2016. pp269 – 273.

were in occupied Europe. For most, it was a matter of staying put and making the most of the difficult situation they found themselves in.⁷⁵³

Shepherd (2000) suggests that only a small percentage of any prison population would attempt an escape, and these would be '*rare people who lived for action and found captivity unendurable*'.⁷⁵⁴ He attests that sooner or later most prisoners would accept their situation and concentrate on making the best of surviving. Shepherd also points out that for the British in Europe, escaping was primarily a class defined activity limited to the regular officers as the soldier was not willing to risk his life just to return to the front line. Officers, especially those brought up in the public-school system, deemed escaping or at least trying to escape, a duty. In fact, in the early years of the war, when very few British prisoners were being killed in escape attempts the whole affair could become a bit of a game that at least kept men busy.⁷⁵⁵ This was not the case, however, in Singapore where not only were many escapes planned on a more opportunist basis by the rank and file, but the chance of being executed was higher.

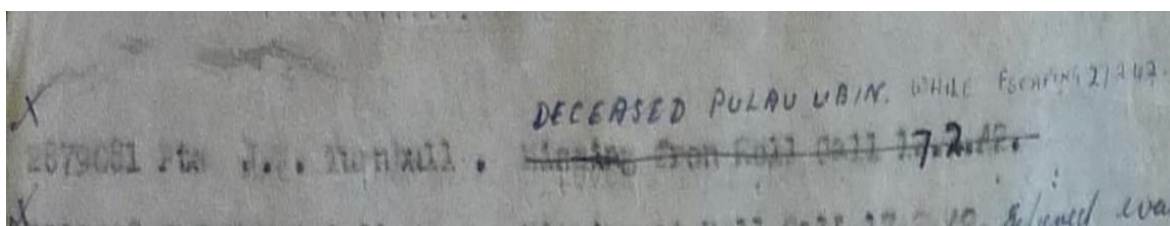


Figure 45 - The entry in the battalion roll for Pte J Turnbull stating the location, date, and the cause of his death.

The Muster Roll entry of Private Turnbull is a stark reminder of the risks and difficulties faced by POWs attempting to escape from Singapore. As early as the first week of captivity men were told of the consequence of being caught outside the wire without due permission. Those detained and believed to be escaping were running the risk of execution or long-term detention in the notorious Outram Road Jail.⁷⁵⁶ Those men who could convince their captors that they were simply trading or visiting friends were likely to spend

⁷⁵³ Coast, 2014. pp15 – 16.

⁷⁵⁴ Shepherd, 2000. p316.

⁷⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, p316.

⁷⁵⁶ Bowden 2014, pp127 – 134. Smith, 1999. p285 - 292. Dean 1998 pp93 - 106. Outram Park was named after the Scot Sir James Outram, the defender of Lucknow, who was educated Marischal College of Aberdeen (Berry, 2015. p136.)

time in solitary, take a beating or at the least face judgement of their own camp leadership by then obligated to enforce the 'no escape' policy.

Despite these risks, Piper Johnston and Private Turnbull made a bid for freedom alongside two NCOs from other regiments in July 1942. They managed to secure a boat that landed them on Pulau Ubin, an island off the coast to the north of the Changi peninsula. Here they attempted to contact communist sympathisers but were instead spotted by local Malay and betrayed to the Japanese. During the ensuing pursuit, the two Scots were captured. They were tied up and taken to a quarry where they were forced to kneel. Turnbull was beheaded, but Johnston made a break for it, and despite being seriously wounded by the sword blow, he made it safely back to Changi. Here he was taken into the hospital under the pretence of having been wounded in a work accident. Entries in the battalion roll shows that Private James Grieve provided blood to the wounded escapee. Later the two remaining fugitives returned to Changi undetected by the guards. They were sent overseas on the next work party to avoid any further investigations.⁷⁵⁷

Men from the garrison battalions slipping through the wire to continue relationships with girlfriends and acquaintances in Singapore, ran the risk of being mistaken for escapees.⁷⁵⁸ Private Andrew Moir of the Gordons was determined to meet up with his girlfriend and on 7th March walked out of Changi without a challenge. They stayed in town until 28th June. In this time, he met up with two other men hiding out in the city, with the aid of another Siamese wife of a signaller. The party then contacted a local Chinese boy who ran a junk between the many islands south of Singapore and they planned their escape. However, the party was discovered as they took a taxi to the harbour and were detained for 14 days of interrogation. The girls were separated from the party and were never heard of again. The soldiers were eventually returned to Changi.⁷⁵⁹

9.3 Work Camps and Adam Park

It was not long after the surrender that the IJA authorities started calling upon POWs to carry out work in the city and away from the Changi peninsula.⁷⁶⁰ Initially this was to

⁷⁵⁷ Mitchell, 2012. p65.

⁷⁵⁸ Such ventures could be fatal. Three men from the 9th Coast Regiment, Royal Artillery were captured in town in civilian clothing. They were tried as spies and shot. (Felton, 2008. p99.)

⁷⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, p63.

⁷⁶⁰ Nelson, 2012. p18.

support efforts to repair the damage caused during the battle, but as the weeks passed manpower was taken to start projects scheduled as part of the long-term development of Singapore and the Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere. The new city was to be renamed 'Syonan-To (Light of the South).'⁷⁶¹

One of the first projects on the agenda was the construction of a suitable memorial to the fallen Japanese soldiers of the Malayan campaign and the fight for Singapore. Individual divisions had already built temporary structures often located on the point of furthest advance or heaviest combat. However General Yamashita had plans for two national memorials to the campaign. The primary dedicatory would be the building of a Shinto shrine, the 'Syonan Jinja', on the shores of MacRitchie Reservoir and surrounded by public gardens landscaped into the existing Singapore Island Country Club Golf Course. The 'Syonan Chureito', a wooden column surmounting a stone staircase, was to be built on the Bukit Batok hill overlooking the Bukit Timah village and the Dairy Farm battlefield. This was dedicated to the fallen and a memorial to the allied dead was incorporated into the site. Ashes of the Japanese fallen were interred in both sites.⁷⁶²



Figure 46 – The Syonan Chureito at Bukit Batok, built by POWS alongside a smaller Christian cross dedicated to the allied fallen.

⁷⁶¹ Lee, 2005. p138.

⁷⁶² *Ibid.*, p132.



Figure 80 - A rare colour postcard of Australian Prisoners working on the Sacred Bridge across the MacRitchie Reservoir at the site of the Syonan Jinja. (Courtesy of Garth Occy)

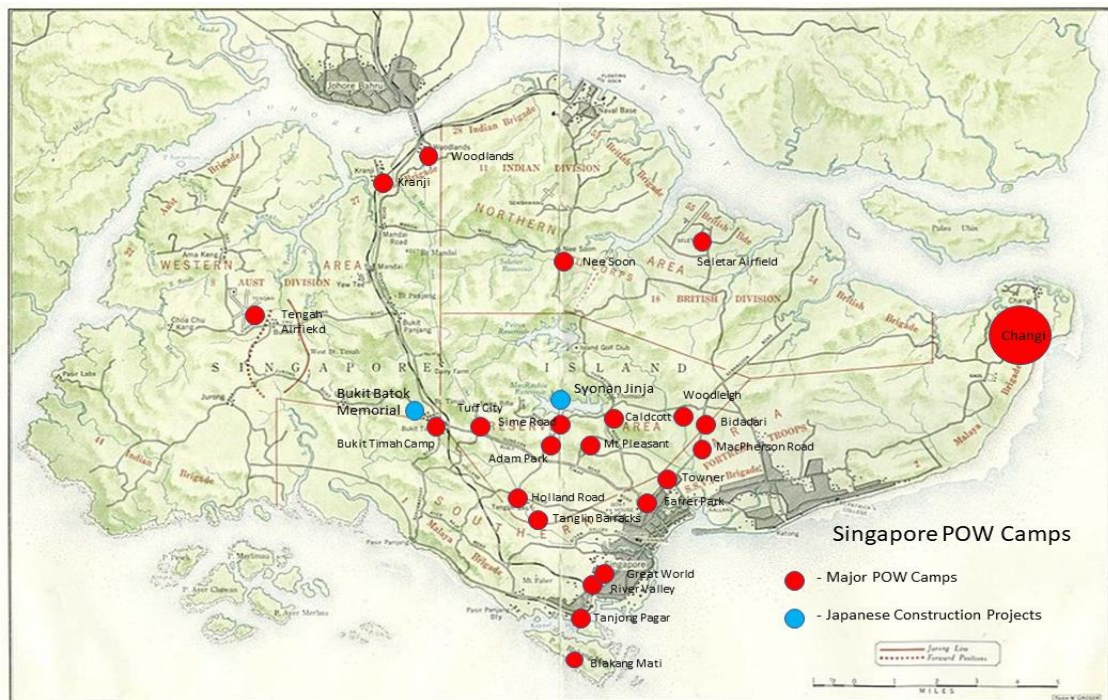
This project became known as the 'Shrine Job' by the POWs. Note the weather worn torso bedecked with tattoos.

The projects needed around 10,000 men to complete the work and the Japanese authorities quickly realised that a suitably skilled workforce was on hand in Changi. As these projects were not directly affecting the Japanese war effort, there was little the camp authorities could do to object to the request, and previous excursions to the dock areas and burial parties had demonstrated the benefits of working away from Changi in securing better accommodation, food, and access to the black-market. It would also relieve the cramped living conditions in Changi and keep the men busy, a vital ploy to relieve boredom and reinstate authority.⁷⁶³

Japanese planners identified several abandoned housing estates and government establishments that had been deserted by their tenants and survived the fighting in the area. This list included the government housing estates at Adam Park, Lornie Road, Watten Estate, Adam Road, Caldecott, and Mount Pleasant and the burnt out attap and wooden

⁷⁶³ Nelson, 2012. pp22 - 23.

huts at the combined operations HQ of the Allied forces in Malaya based at Sime Road. All were to be used to house the migrant POW workforce for the period of up to a year.⁷⁶⁴



Map 12- A map of Singapore showing the location of significant POW workcamps and Japanese construction projects.

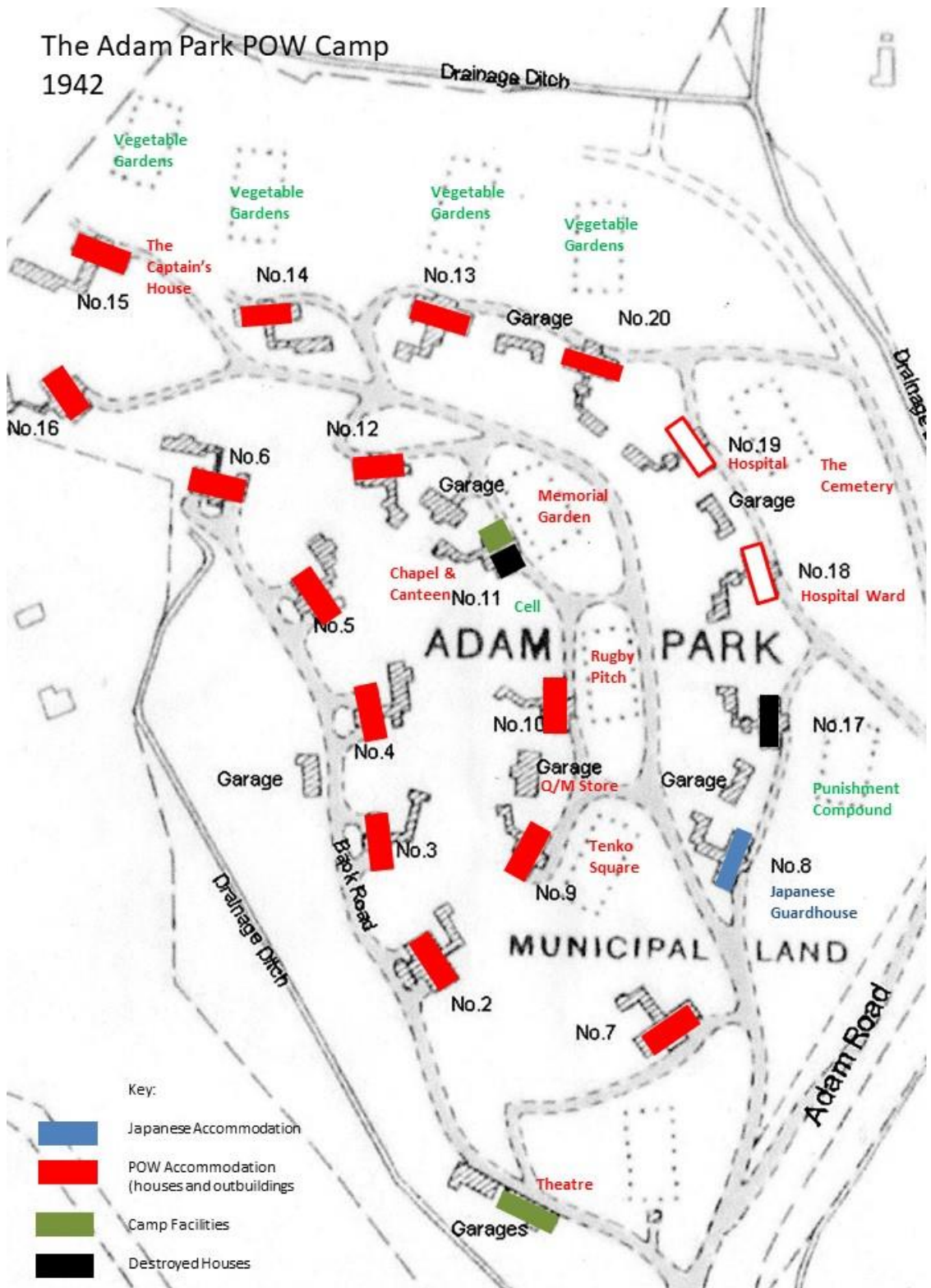
It is unclear from the BRE and Battalion Rolls how many Scots were sent to each camp across Singapore as many entries are simply categorised as ‘WP’ (‘work party’) and were compiled as the BRE records were being assembled. Fortunately, the Gordon’s roll uses the description ‘AP / CHA’ for the entry of 124 POWs representing a party under the command of Major Reggie Lees sent to Adam Park. The Lanarkshire Yeomanry regimental roll lists 15 men in Adam Park and 11 more at Sime Road.

The Adam Park work camp, housing over 3,000 men, was established in the suburbs of Singapore, 800yds north of the Bukit Timah Road, about 15 minutes march to the Singapore Island Country Club and 30 minutes from the site of the new shrine. The POWs were housed in the remains of 19 colonial bungalows, two of which had been damaged during the intense fighting in the area during the last three days of the battle for the island.

⁷⁶⁴ Cooper, 2015. p254 – 256.

The Adam Park annexes included the huts and outbuildings consisting of the RAOC MT Yard on the opposite side of Adam Road, and the houses on the neighbouring Watten and Chasserieu Estates, in which a British contingent, including the Gordons, were to be housed.⁷⁶⁵ Later men would be moved from the Lornie Road married quarters into the camp and transferred in from work parties from Johor. The camp also held 2,000 men of the AIF and, as they were in the majority, the command of the camp was allotted to an Australian officer, Lt Col 'Rolly' Oakes with Capt Fred Stahl as his 2IC.

⁷⁶⁵ Magarry 1994. pp167 – 169.



Map 13 – A map of the Adam Park POW Camp

Except for the Japanese Guardhouse the layout of the camp includes many of the facilities found in a normal barracks. There were approximately 150 men in each house.



Figure 47- A 1946 aerial photograph of the Watten and Chasseriau Estates

These buildings were used as an annex for the Adam Park POW camp (seen on the right of the image) and were used by 1,000 British POWs in 1942 including the Gordon Highlander's detachment. The road on the left was built by the POWs as access to the Shinto Shrine. (Viewed at <http://www.adamparkproject.com/virtual-museum/aerialphotosportfolio.html>)



Figure 48a and b – One of only two of the Chasseriau Estate Houses that remain standing today.

This modern image on the left can be compared to a wartime image to the right. There is evidence of POW occupation on both sites in the archaeological record although it is not known which of these houses were occupied by the Gordon Highlanders. (viewed at <http://www.adamparkproject.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/09/Survey-Report-5-Nov-2010.pdf>)

It is in Oakes' diary that specific reference is made to the arrival of the Gordons at Adam Park on 10th April. Oakes and the 2/26 Battalion AIF had fought alongside the Gordons' in Johor and happy to extol the bonds between the two nations.⁷⁶⁶

⁷⁶⁶ Magarry, 1994. pp97 - 124

'Amongst the British were the survivors of our old friends the Gordons under Major Reggie Lees. They were a good bunch and like all Scotchmen, close to the Australian heart. Each unit was controlled by its own officers and NCO's which made for the greatest amount of harmony.'

This contingent of around 1,000 British POWs also included men from the Leicestershire Regiment, East Surreys and the Royal Artillery, Royal Engineers and two doctors from the Royal Army Medical Corps.⁷⁶⁷

What is notable about the Adam Park Estate is how the layout and running of the camp mimicked the pre-war barracks. With little direction coming from the Japanese guard commander, Oakes and Stahl naturally resorted to recreating garrison accommodation they had experienced in Australia and during their time serving abroad.

The Australian contingent moved to Adam Park on 4th April 1942. Stahl was shown to his billet in the 'Captain's House', the equivalent of the Officers' Mess in a pre-war camp.⁷⁶⁸ Stahl noted that the accommodation was much better than that in the Selarang Barracks in Changi; although slightly overcrowded with all the camp command housed in one building. By the time Stahl arrived the Australians had set about renovating the houses. The sewerage and air conditioning were working, as well as the showers and a kitchen that were attached to the back of the house. Electricity was restored to the property on 9th April and a phone installed, all be it only a direct line to the Japanese Guard house.⁷⁶⁹

Each house allocated as barracks blocks was commanded by a junior officer who was responsible for the upkeep of the building and the welfare of the men. Unusually for barracks, the messing facilities were decentralised as each house not only had servant quarters attached but also kitchens with wood burning ovens. As each household left for work a residue of POWs stayed to make the evening meal and maintain the house.⁷⁷⁰

⁷⁶⁷ The Leicestershires and the East Surreys had taken so many casualties during the fighting in Malaya that they had been combined into the 'British Battalion'.

⁷⁶⁸ Stahl, 1974. p14. Probably located at No.15 Adam Park. As every Allied officer was given the rank of 'Captain' by the Japanese authorities it was logical for the 'camp office' and officer's mess be named in this way

⁷⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, pp14 – 15.

⁷⁷⁰ Cooper, 2016. p226 – 227.

Other facilities were established including a quarter master's store housing the tools assigned to each work party, a theatre built into the remains of a partly destroyed garage, and a hospital, dispensary, dentists, and medical quarters. The camp interpreter, Capt Eric Andrews was also a padre in his civilian life, and he established a chapel in the bombed-out shell of No.11 Adam Park which was located over the camp canteen manned by Chinese shopkeepers.⁷⁷¹

The tennis courts, one for each of the nineteen houses were used as mini rugby pitches, golf courses and parade squares.⁷⁷² One court was used as a holding pen for miscreants caught outside the perimeter and a tool shed was converted into a cell to be used by POWs found guilty of crimes at court martials convened by Oakes and his team.⁷⁷³ The only necessary addition to the layout of the barracks was the Japanese Guard Room at the entrance to the estate. Nominally led by a lieutenant, the day to day running of the camp was left down to a sergeant and a small team of NCOs and privates.⁷⁷⁴ Barbed wire was only added to the perimeter after a few months, and this was primarily to keep the Chinese traders out rather than keep the POWs in.⁷⁷⁵ However in all intent and purpose the Adam Park camp was the closest thing to pre-war barracks that could be expected. But how successful were these new facilities in saving lives?

Among the papers raised in November 1942, as the Adam Park camp was closing on completion of the 'Shrine Job', are the medical reports from the camp hospital.⁷⁷⁶ These documents were recovered and retained in the Australian War Memorial and offer a glimpse into the living conditions in the camp. The hospital was initially run by Major Hugh Rayson who had brought with him on the detachment a team of medical staff. They had set up the hospital at No. 19 Adam Park and commandeered No.18 for use as

⁷⁷¹ *Ibid.*, pp291 – 292.

⁷⁷² *Ibid.*, p288.

⁷⁷³ *Ibid.*, p272.

⁷⁷⁴ Stahl 1974. p14

⁷⁷⁵ At one point the duty of guarding the camp was handed over to the POWs. Should a POW be found outside the wire, or a civilian found in the camp without permission, then both the culprit and the guard would be punished. Notably Stahl and Oakes were particularly diligent in enforcing the 'no escape' policy implemented by the Japanese and reluctantly agreed to by the Allied command under protest. On one occasion Australian POWs returning undetected from an aborted escape attempt were handed over by Oakes to the Japanese authorities as it had jeopardised the wellbeing of the POWs in the camp. These men were later tried and held in Outram Park under horrendous conditions. One man went on to track down Oakes after the war and attempted to kill him. He was persuaded otherwise by the presence of Oakes' children and wife. (Bowden, 2014. pp224-225.)

⁷⁷⁶ White, 1942.

accommodation for the orderlies from the 2/10 Field Ambulance unit, AIF. Later they took over a third house as a ward and positioned medics in each accommodation to deal with minor ailments and administer first aid to the POWs.⁷⁷⁷ In addition, the medical staff carried out a proactive screening regime looking for early signs of amoebic dysentery in stool samples and conducted investigations into the initial effects of vitamin B deficiency on a patient's night vision.⁷⁷⁸ The deficiency could then be treated with a liberal prescription of marmite or yeast extract before more serious ailments could develop.⁷⁷⁹ A strategy of preventative vaccinations and anti-malarial work was undertaken with varying degrees of success. A cholera outbreak in Singapore failed to take hold thanks to a successful inoculation campaign in the work camps.⁷⁸⁰

The report concludes with a summary of the numbers of cases seen by the medical staff at Adam Park in their nine months of internment. 82,657 cases were seen of which 38,374 were admitted to the hospital. The highest number of troops seen in one day was 3,109. The team undertook 190 minor surgical operations, and 872 men were evacuated to Changi for further care. Only eight men died at the camp during this period.⁷⁸¹ These figures suggest that the medical team were catering for more than just the population of the Adam Park site and were seeing men from the other satellite camps in the area. Even so 38,374 admissions over a 9-month period from a workforce of approximately 10,000 men suggests a significant rate of referral. However, it must also be noted that there was a considerable amount of daily negotiation going on between the camp command and the Japanese as to how many 'fit' men should be sent to work. These figures suggest that sick notes were being issued as means of getting a man a justified break from the work or to deliberately delay the progress of the project.⁷⁸²

The presence of the Scots did not go amiss with Capt Eric Andrews, the camp's padre, who was already catering for a reluctant Australian congregation. Now he would have to plan

⁷⁷⁷ Cooper, 2016. p239.

⁷⁷⁸ From the 4th April to 17th November 1942 the laboratory processed 1986 blood samples looking for malaria of which 291 proved positive. The team also processed 250 to 300 stool samples of which only four proved positive for amoebic dysentery. They also carried out tests for Tuberculosis and Gonococci. (Cooper, 2016. p242.)

⁷⁷⁹ The procurement of drugs was financed by a donation from the officer's pay, the black-market and bartering. A regular weekly run to a dispensary in Singapore city was supplemented by visits to the Tiger Beer Factory to harvest yeast and the local Cold Storage store for marmite. (Cooper, 2016. p243.)

⁷⁸⁰ Havers, 2003. p47. Havers states 2,000,000 vitamin B1 tablets were issued to the POW hospitals by the IJA authorities.

⁷⁸¹ Cooper, 2016. p250. White, 1942.

⁷⁸² Cooper, 2016. p245.

for weekly Presbyterian services for the growing flock.⁷⁸³ Andrews was also keeping his own paperwork, filling exercise books with details of the services he held at the St Michael's Chapel.⁷⁸⁴

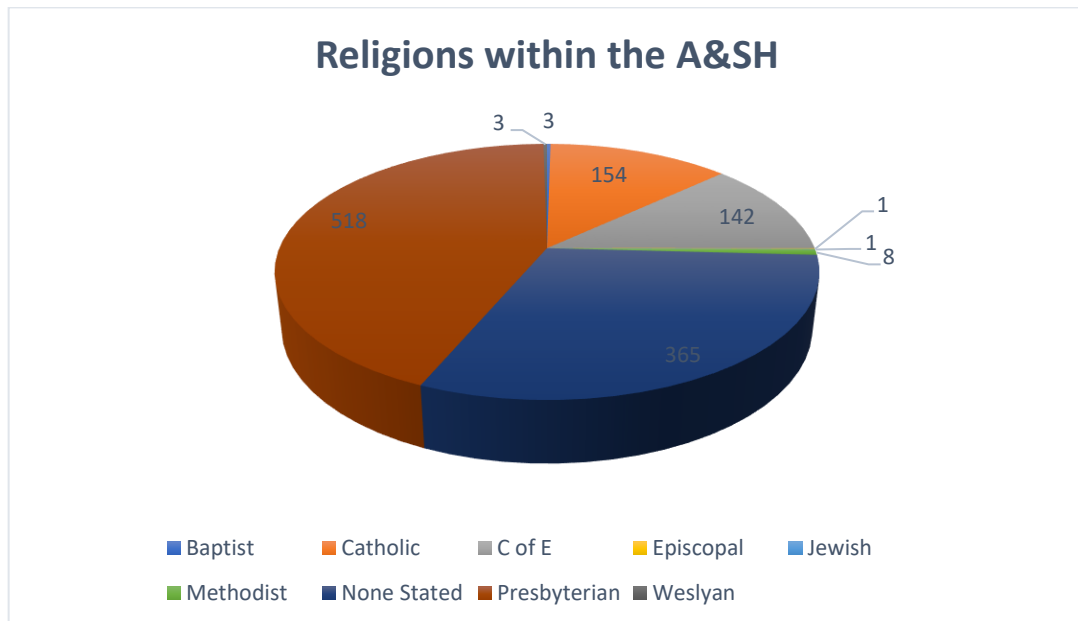


Chart 9 - Graph showing the breakdown of the religious denomination of the A&SH as shown in the Battalion Muster Roll.

The majority are, as would be expected, Presbyterians. The Church of England contingent reflect the number of Englishmen in the unit. However, 365 men have not entered their religion in the roll. The soldier's religion was recorded in the Battalion Roll book but was not passed on to the BRE records. Unfortunately, there are no similar statistics for the Gordons or the Lanarkshire Yeomanry. This diversity of religions had to be catered for in the camp diocese. Padres would ensure services were suitable for all beliefs where possible.

Capt Andrews' duties also extended to overseeing the funerals of the eight POWs who died in the camp. Capt Ian Mitchell, an Irishman from Londonderry, but serving in the Leicestershire Regiment, died overnight of cerebral malaria, and was laid to rest in the small cemetery in the front garden of No19 Adam Park. Notably a letter to his father, written by his friend and fellow POW, Ian Kennedy alludes to the 'Celtic' overtones to the service, reminiscent of the pre-war services at Bidadari, as a piper from the Gordons played 'The Lament' over his grave.⁷⁸⁵

⁷⁸³ Bryan, 1946. p36.

⁷⁸⁴ Andrew's painted murals in the chapel which were rediscovered by archaeologists in 2015 (The Straits Times 19 January 2015).

⁷⁸⁵ Cooper, 2016. p248.

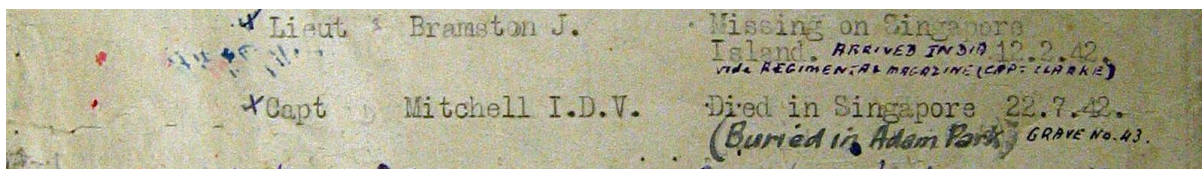


Figure 49 – The entry in the Battalion Roll for the Leicestershire Regiment for Capt Ian Mitchell

This entry states he died in Adam Park on 22/7/1942 and that he was buried in Grave No.43 (National Archives Ref. WO 361/2116). Only 8 POWs died at Adam Park; the other graves are those of men killed in the defence of the estate during the fall of Singapore.

9.4 The ‘Second Battle of Singapore’

The POWs in the workcamps were able to continue their pre-war relationships with their associates and friends in Singapore, most liaison taking place surreptitiously at night, but also during authorised trips into town for rations and medical supplies.⁷⁸⁶ This fraternisation was never more so ably demonstrated than in the bizarre episode, later to be called the ‘Second Battle of Singapore’, in which prisoners could roam freely out of the camps for a week in May 1942.⁷⁸⁷

According to Stahl and Oakes’ report, the camp gates were left unguarded due to some administration blunder as the Japanese guards on duty at the camp were despatched to new assignments in New Guinea, without being properly relieved by the new command. There was only a corporal guarding the camp and he was more than happy to let the Australian administration manage the show in the meantime.⁷⁸⁸

Tentatively the men on camp duty went searching for local dispensaries and visited the Cold Storage store to replenish medical supplies and food. Later day trippers were seen heading to the very same bars and brothels they had frequented before the invasion. Soon the sidewalks and back rooms of the restaurants and clubs along Lavender Street and Bencoolen were teeming with new clientele. As the men had been paid 10 cents a day to work on the Shrine and had a bit of cash carried over from their capture or acquired funds through the black-market, there was plenty of business to be done. Some even made the matinee showings in the local cinema.⁷⁸⁹

⁷⁸⁶ Smith, 1999. p46.

⁷⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, p265.

⁷⁸⁸ Stahl, 1974. p27.

⁷⁸⁹ Cooper, 2016. p265.

Pte Les Atkinson recalls the general scene in town:

*'That morning on Lavender Street everybody was happy in the house of dreams, the Japanese clients, the kind-hearted ladies of the brothel and of course us the recipients of their generosity. All over town POWs had a day to remember. The shopkeepers showered us with food and money; the Chinese gave until it must have hurt, but they gave with a smile and friendly slap on the back. They were all heart.'*⁷⁹⁰

Busloads of POWs headed into town each day to meet up with old acquaintances, girlfriends and work colleagues. Then on the 25th May a truck load of Kempeitai (Japanese Secret Police) arrived at the Adjutant's office at Adam Park demanding to see Oakes and Stahl. Eighty-six men had been rounded up in town, temporarily retained in the 'No Good Houses' and were then held in the tennis court for a week on reduced rations. All the contraband they were found with was returned to them.⁷⁹¹

The events surrounding the 'Second Battle of Singapore' seldom make it into the mainstream narratives of the POW experience in the Far East as it does nothing to enhance the perceived reputations of any of the participants. However, from the perspective of the relationship between the garrison troops and the Singaporeans, the event reinforces the notion that the men had formed strong attachments with the local community, who were happy to help the POWs, share their hospitality and take their money. For one glorious week it was as if the Co-Prosperity sphere was truly living up to its name, the war was done and a brighter future dawned.⁷⁹²

Ultimately Stahl was returned to Changi to help his commanding officer write up the unit history in June 1942. His return was delayed by a bout of dengue fever but after a week in the Adam Park Hospital he was fit enough to help Oakes write up the history of the Adam Park Camp. Stahl concluded:

⁷⁹⁰ Atkinson, 2001. p83.

⁷⁹¹ Cooper, 2016. p266. A few men were intent on making an escape to the mainland to join local guerrilla forces. Keith Wilson considered escaping to the north but states that 'The conditions in the Japanese prison camp being what they were at that time I didn't feel disposed to risk my neck with a group of Chinese communists.'

⁷⁹² *Ibid.*, 2016. p265.

*'At the time we thought that Adam Park had been a pretty tough experience, but in the light of later events I realised we had had a comparative picnic there.'*⁷⁹³

9.5 The A&SH in Pudu Gaol

In contrast to the low mortality of Scots in the Singapore camps, a review of the Muster Roll (WO 361/2110) suggests that 39 men of the A&SH regiment were buried in the Cheras Road Civil cemetery in Kuala Lumpur and all in 1942.⁷⁹⁴ This accounts for the vast majority (39 out of 47) of the Argylls listed as dying in captivity in that year. The Muster Roll entry also gives a description of the cause and location of death.⁷⁹⁵

The amount and the nature of the deaths of Scots in comparison to those in Changi and work camps such as Adam Park suggests that the POWs in Kuala Lumpur lived in much worse conditions than their colleagues back in Singapore.⁷⁹⁶ However, there is no obvious explanation within the casualty rolls as to why so many A&SH died in Pudu.

Pudu Gaol, in the heart of Kuala Lumpur, was a civil prison built in 1895.⁷⁹⁷ The main entrance was located at the northwest end of the compound and was overlooked by a two-storey building with the administration office on the ground floor and six cells and two small storerooms on the top floor. Next door were the prison's kitchens. A women's prison annex sat in the north corner and consisted of a walled courtyard, 60yds square, with a central cell block. It was surrounded by an open space twenty yards wide between the building and the wall. This area was to be used as the exercise yard, wet-kitchen and latrines.

⁷⁹³ Stahl, 1942. pp24-25.

⁷⁹⁴ WO/361/2110. Moffatt & McCormick state 37 died (Moffat & McCormick,2003. p279.)

⁷⁹⁵ Also see WO/361/2199

⁷⁹⁶ Nelson, 2012. pp53-54.

⁷⁹⁷ <https://www.cofePOWorg.uk/armed-forces-stories-list/prisoner-of-war-camp-pudu-jail-kuala-lumpur> viewed 21/01/2021



Figure 50 – A photo of Pudu Gaol before its demolition in 2011.

The image shows the distinctive 'St Andrew's cross' layout of the gaol. The A&SH occupied the central blocks after the final reallocation of accommodation. (http://POWlarkin.net.au/wp-content/uploads/2011/06/pudu_gaol_kc) viewed on 26/01/2021.

The male prisoners' accommodation consisted of six blocks, each of three stories, laid out in the form of an elongated cross of St Andrews. The prison hospital was a separate block tucked between the space between the central accommodation blocks and the NE wall. Along the southeast wall stood an accommodation block for the prison staff. Cloisters to the west side of the prison became the site of the POW Chapel and notably there were two fountains in the grounds providing washing facilities for the POWs and a suitable breeding ground for mosquitos. The camp cemetery was initially dug within the confines of the walled courtyard of the Women's Block but later it was moved into the main courtyard. The dead were moved to the Cheras Road Civil Cemetery on the south side of Kuala Lumpur after the war.⁷⁹⁸

Evidence for the deaths of the A&SH can be found in Russell Braddon's semi – biographical account of his time as a POW entitled '*The Naked Island*' in 1953. Braddon was a gunner in the 2/15 Field Regiment in the AIF and had been captured after the action at Muar and transferred to Kuala Lumpur, arriving at the Pudu Gaol in late January to find the Scots dying at his feet. Braddon's opening paragraph to his first chapter, entitled 'The Fourteenth Step', describes a time in Pudu where, starving, weakened, and suffering from dysentery he makes his way to the latrines and passes an Argyll soldier sitting at the foot of the steps of the accommodation block. His vivid portrayal of the death of a young POW is worth quoting in full as it captures the squalid conditions they were living in:

⁷⁹⁸ [https://www.cwgc.org/visit-us/find-cemeteries-memorials/cemetery-details/94504/KUALA%20LUMPUR%20\(CHERAS%20ROAD\)%20CIVIL%20CEMETERY/](https://www.cwgc.org/visit-us/find-cemeteries-memorials/cemetery-details/94504/KUALA%20LUMPUR%20(CHERAS%20ROAD)%20CIVIL%20CEMETERY/) viewed 07/09/2021.

And at my feet, also on the staircase, lying doubled up over three or four steps, sprawled a half-naked soldier, an Argyll, I recognized from his cap which, last of his possessions, he wore even at night. I had passed him on the way down to the latrines. Then, he had writhed on the stairs with the gripping pains of dysentery; and, having lost all control of his bowels, his legs were fouled, and his pride outraged.

"Anything I can do, Jock?" I had asked him.

"Och, man, leave me alone!" he had exclaimed.

I regretted my intrusion. That was the trouble nowadays; one was never alone, not even on a prison staircase in the early hours of the morning....

.... I had walked to the stairs; climbed them slowly; passed the young Argyll (without speaking) and then stopped exhausted at the fourteenth step. I looked at the sprawled figure again. Even in the gloom I could see fair hair under the black cap with its check colours: sturdy legs: one hand clenched tightly over the back edge of the step on which my feet rested: head on one side and a clean-cut jaw.

A Scot of the best type. I hoped no one would come down the stairs and see either of us at that moment. I decided then that, since I too was incapable of moving, I could now decently address him.

"How are you doing, Jock?" I asked.

He didn't answer. He didn't seem resentful of the intrusion, however, so I persisted, with a feeble attempt at humour:

"Toss you for who carries who up the rest of the stairs," I said and again he didn't answer. I knew then what had happened; 'knew without looking.

The Argyll was dead.

Within a week of arriving in the gaol, the first man in our seven hundred had died not of wounds, not in battle, but from exhaustion and privation.⁷⁹⁹

This is a harrowing account of one man's passing and the passage is full of imagery that, for Braddon, distinguished the Scot from the Australian. He notes his ubiquitous Glengarry, his sturdy jawline and fair hair by which Braddon categorises him as a 'Scot of the best kind'.

⁷⁹⁹ Braddon, 1955. p8. This was most likely Pte Corr who died on 18th February 1942 soon after the news of the fall of Singapore had been received.

Braddon claims that there were hundreds of Argylls and Leicestershire Regiment men, who had survived weeks of jungle evasion before being captured, now residing in the jail, and dying from their ordeal. He also submits that the reason for the high morbidity rate was down in some part to the upbringing of the British soldier:

*Nor is anyone from the United Kingdom as hardened to heat as the Australian. Finally, we Australians had all had the benefit of a lifetime of rich food and sunshine and exercise, which the average Pommy most decidedly had not.*⁸⁰⁰

In contrast, Captain J D L Boyle, OC 'D' Coy, A&SH, who was also held in Pudu after his capture at the Slim River battle, writing an appendix in Lt Col Stewart's history of the battalion in 1947, suggests a more stoic resilience.⁸⁰¹ He writes that the battalion had by the time of Slim River established a formidable notoriety and this had increased since entering captivity. He claims that the fervent regimental loyalty and a 'clannishness' prevailed in any POW camp. This, he suggested, was due to:

*The strenuousness of their early training and their racial independence seemed to make the Jocks more suited to live this hard life than others.*⁸⁰²

Could Braddon's assertions be true? Was being a Scot likely to decrease your chance of survival or would Boyle's sense of 'clannishness' ensure the endurance of the Scots in Pudu? A review of the nationalities, regiments, and dates of interment of the 89 men listed as buried in the Cheras cemetery in 1942, taken from the battalion documents and cross referenced with the CWGC records, confirms Braddon's observation, and contradicts Boyle's statement.

*There are no Australians buried in the cemetery.*⁸⁰³ *The largest death toll is among the A&SH (39 burials) however the next highest toll is for the 137th Field Artillery Regiment (31 Burials). Other infantry units, such as the other Royal Artillery Regiments, Federated Malay States Volunteer Force (FMSVF), Leicestershires, East Surreys, Cambridgeshires and the Royal Norfolks, had just a handful of losses each. Braddon's observations were correct, however the reason for such high*

⁸⁰⁰ Braddon, 1955. p139. A similar argument is made by Hearder, 2009. p153

⁸⁰¹ Later Boyle was to meet up with Major Reggie Lees recently despatched from Adam Park under the command of the Colonel Phillip Toosey at the POW Work Camp at Tamarkan, which soon established a reputation as being one of the best run camps in Thailand. Braddon was also in the same camp (Summers, 2005. p131 – 132).

⁸⁰² Stewart, 1947. p145.

⁸⁰³ Braddon does mention one Australian dying during his time in Pudu Gaol although his burial is not recorded at Cheras. (Braddon, 1955. p139.) WO 361 2199 list the names of seven Australians who died in 'LPR'. WO 222 1388 – 'Lists of Deaths in Kuala Lumpur' gives the names of six Australians who are now buried in Taiping Cemetery.

death rates among the 'Pommies' was not down to their nationality. Table 19- The number of burials in the Cheras Road Cemetery from Jan 1942 to Feb 1943 by regiment.

Month	A&SH	Royal Artillery 137 th	Royal Artillery (Other)	FMSVF.	RAMC	Cambs	Norfolks	Loyals	Leics	Royal Eng	Royal Signals	Total
1942												
Jan	1		1 [5 th]	3								5
Feb	3	5			1							9
Mar	9	6	1 [80 th]			3	1	1				21
Apr	11	9					1		1			22
May	3	3						1				7
June	4	1										5
July	4	4	1 135 th]						1	1	1[155 th]	12
Aug	2	3										5
Sep	1											1
Oct	1											1
Nov												0
Dec												0
Jan												0
Feb								1				1
Total	39	31	3	3	1	3	2	3	2	1	1	89
Pop	264	209	22	25	15	43	33	80	78	21	26	
%	15	15	14	12	7	7	6	4	3	5	5	

This breakdown of the prison population was taken from WO361/2199.

The first POWs to reach Pudu were primarily the British troops from the 11th Indian Division that had been so badly defeated at Slim River, including men from the A&SH and the 137th Field Regiment, Royal Artillery. Many had been cut off from their units after the Japanese tanks broke through on 7th January and had spent the next ten days or more in the

jungle and rubber plantations trying to catch up with the retreating British forces. These men came into the prison tired, half starved, in rags and with poor morale. The abandonment of friends and colleagues during the evasion nurtured an air of resentment among the surviving Argylls and a growing disrespect for authority.⁸⁰⁴

Under these conditions, administrative difficulties were soon encountered. The command of the rebellious A&SHs fell to the less than competent Major Gairdner who, with discipline slipping, found it hard to establish control and raise moral among a group of men whose sense of trust and loyalty to their officers had been sorely tested. Moffatt and McCormick suggest Gairdner was a 'pre-war' officer more used to '*an afternoon nap and a few chota-pegs, he was unprepared for war and lacked authority and energy.*'⁸⁰⁵

It was not until early in February, when Australian and British contingents from other formations arrived from battles fought around Muar and Alor Star, that discipline was restored. Lt Col Deakin of the 5/2 Punjabis took over command as senior ranking officer. His immediate action was to set up an administration function with links to the Japanese camp commander who would have the authority to improve the conditions in the jail. The first A&SH's to arrive in Pudu had been corralled into the tiny Women's Block'. By the time Deakin took over command of the POWs, the inner compound was housing over 500 men and his initial task was to negotiate for access to the spacious accommodation in the main buildings.⁸⁰⁶

The medical facilities were in a dire state as well. The original party had only one medical officer and he had immediately cordoned off a small room to act as the hospital within the Women's compound. Two more medics arrived in subsequent parties but with more than 80% of the arrivals needing medical treatment for disease and battle wounds, the hospital soon overflowed into the main living area. Those patients suffering from dysentery had to bed down with the remaining fit men and thereby helped spread the disease. The exercise

⁸⁰⁴ Moffatt & McCormick, 2003. p280. COFEPOW website <https://www.cofePOW.org.uk/armed-forces-stories-list/prisoner-of-war-camp-pudu-jail-kuala-lumpur> viewed 02/09/2019

⁸⁰⁵ Moffatt & McCormick, 2003. p280.

⁸⁰⁶ COFEPOW website <https://www.cofePOW.org.uk/armed-forces-stories-list/prisoner-of-war-camp-pudu-jail-kuala-lumpur> viewed 02/09/2019

yard soon became the ‘*twenty feet of maggot ridden mud*’ mentioned in Braddon’s opening paragraph.⁸⁰⁷ It was estimated that out of the 500 men in the jail, 150 were ill.⁸⁰⁸

Deakin’s protestations for a separate hospital area and more accommodation space bore dividends as the Japanese commander allocated rooms in the administration block of the prison. Then, by 18th February, the officers and the Australians were moved into the ‘Prison Hospital’ block. Later the sick men were moved into a wing of the main prison giving them some isolation and respite before plans were put into place to take over all the main buildings. Each nationality was given its own wing and the large Scottish contingent was housed in the cells in the central span. Eventually by 16th April, all the POWs were rehoused with three men to a cell. Officers shared with one other colleague. In July, the final cadre of POWs arrived consisting of men held in Taiping, wounded and ill soldiers and a contingent of Chinese merchant seamen who were later described as dissidents.⁸⁰⁹ The population rose to 1,121.⁸¹⁰

This was to be the last influx of POWs who were by then fighting a daily battle to supplement their meagre food rations. Work parties provided a relief from the confinement and a chance to pilfer and barter for food in the town. As conditions improved the death rate fell. By October 1942, the rumour spread that the camp was to close. A few days later the sick and the Australians were returned to Changi and a party of 401 prisoners sent directly to Thailand, including 150 A&SH under the command of Capt Boyle.⁸¹¹ 96 men were sent south to appear in a propaganda film for the Japanese.⁸¹²

The conditions and circumstances under which the POWs found themselves in the Pudu Gaol were in complete contrast to those experienced in Changi. But could these dire conditions be reflected in the data found in the battalion records?

⁸⁰⁷ Braddon, 1955. p8.

⁸⁰⁸ COFEPOW Website <https://www.cofePOW.org.uk/armed-forces-stories-list/prisoner-of-war-camp-pudu-jail-kuala-lumpur> viewed 02/09/2019

⁸⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, p1.

⁸¹⁰ WO 361 2199. The records suggest that 1207 men spent time at Pudu however the records note a slow trickle of men being sent to Changi with a party of 109 officers and men being sent to Singapore on 17/7/1942.

⁸¹¹ Moffatt & McCormick, 2003. pp 287 - 289.

⁸¹² <https://www.cofePOW.org.uk/armed-forces-stories-list/prisoner-of-war-camp-pudu-jail-kuala-lumpur> viewed 02/09/2019 p1.

A study of the A&SH roll entries reveals the most common cause of death to be the notable combination of 'Enteritis' with other complications (23 cases) followed by 'Malaria and Anaemia' (10 cases). The 137th RA also have another 14 deaths attributed to 'Malaria', list no deaths through 'Enteritis' but do have 13 cases of 'Dysentery' (See [Appendix 4](#)).⁸¹³

Enteritis or 'Crohn's Disease' is a chronic inflammatory ailment of the gut primarily effecting the small and large intestines, but which can occur anywhere in the digestive system.⁸¹⁴ The main symptoms are diarrhoea, vomiting, fever, and weight loss, and are similar to those of dysentery. A patient can also suffer from reddish tender lumps over the skin, and inflammation of the joints, spine, eyes, and liver. Doctors also comment on the melancholy that sets in with the disease. Patients become quickly depressed and morose.⁸¹⁵ Modern medical treatment for Enteritis includes taking medications to alleviate the inflammation, antibiotics, and surgery, none of which were available or feasible in the hospital at Pudu.

⁸¹³ WO/361/2095.

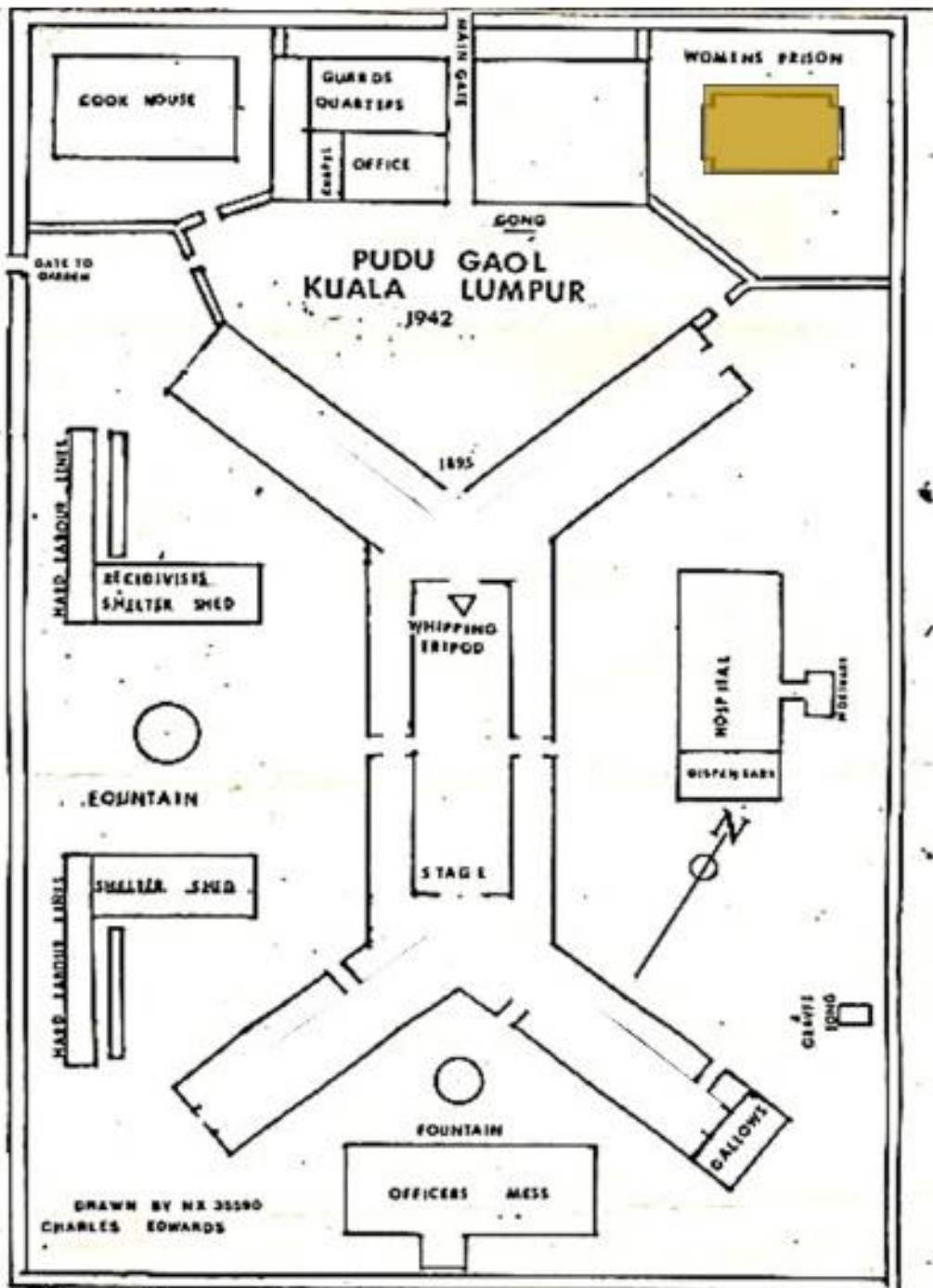
⁸¹⁴ Teenagers or those in their early twenties are particularly prone to the disease. It is a lingering, recurrent condition which tends to flare up sporadically. Initially, Crohn's disease causes small, dispersed depressions or erosions called aphthous ulcers in the inner surface of the bowel. Over time these can form into deeper and larger ulcers, causing a tightening of the bowel which leads to obstruction. Extreme ulcers can pierce the bowel wall, leading to infection in the abdominal cavity (peritonitis) and in adjacent organs.

⁸¹⁵ Havers, 2003. p47.

Movement of POWs through Pudu Gaol – Initial Arrival
22nd January 1942 to 26th January 1942

Pop. Rises to 126

Wounded in Action and those weak and sick after evasion are dying

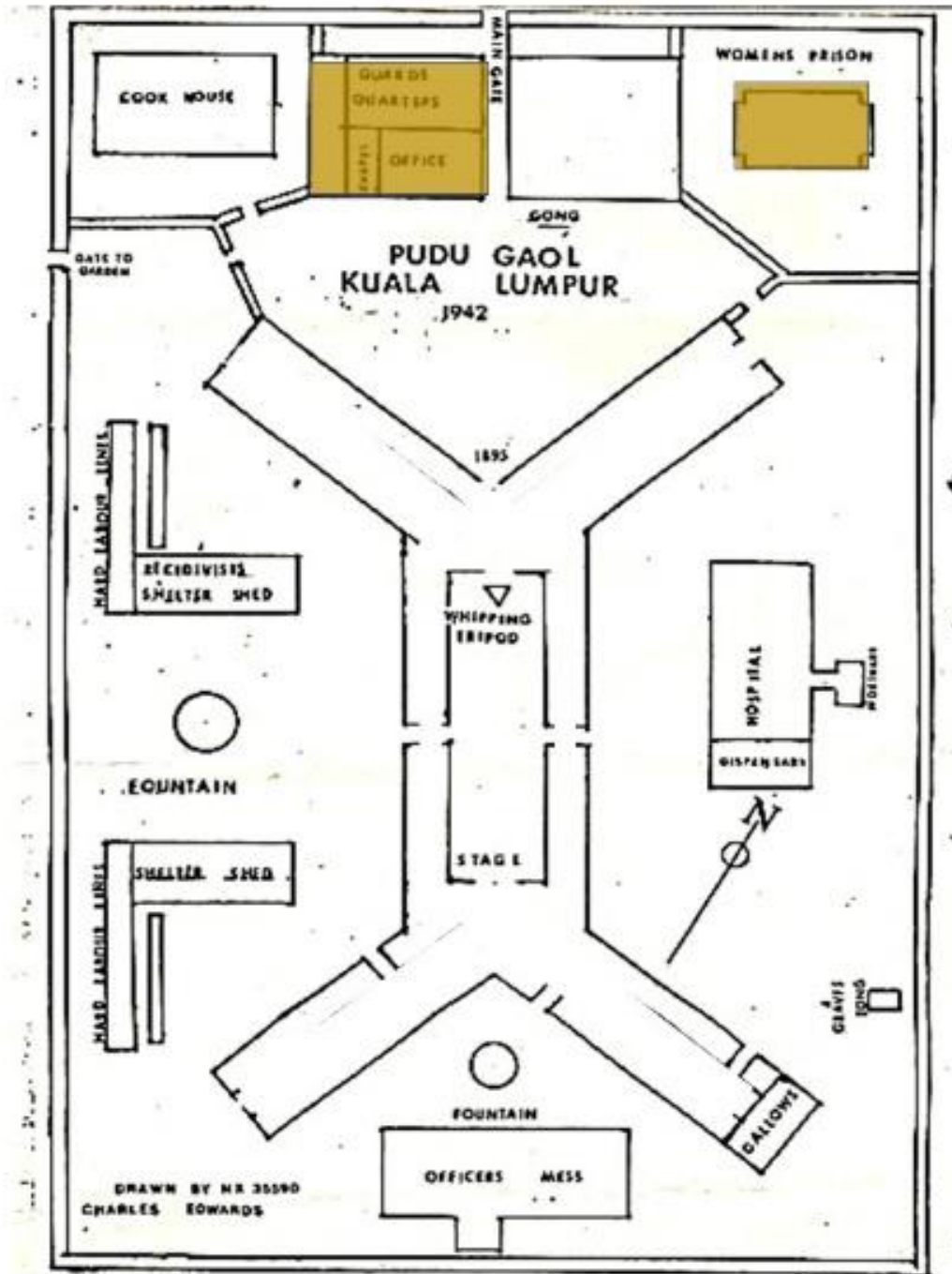


All POW's held in 'Women's Block'

Movement of POWs through Pudu Gaol – Stage 1
26th Jan 1942 – 18th February

Pop rises to 446

Many A&SH are dying of 'enteritis, starvation and neglect'



POWs held in Admin Block 2nd Floor

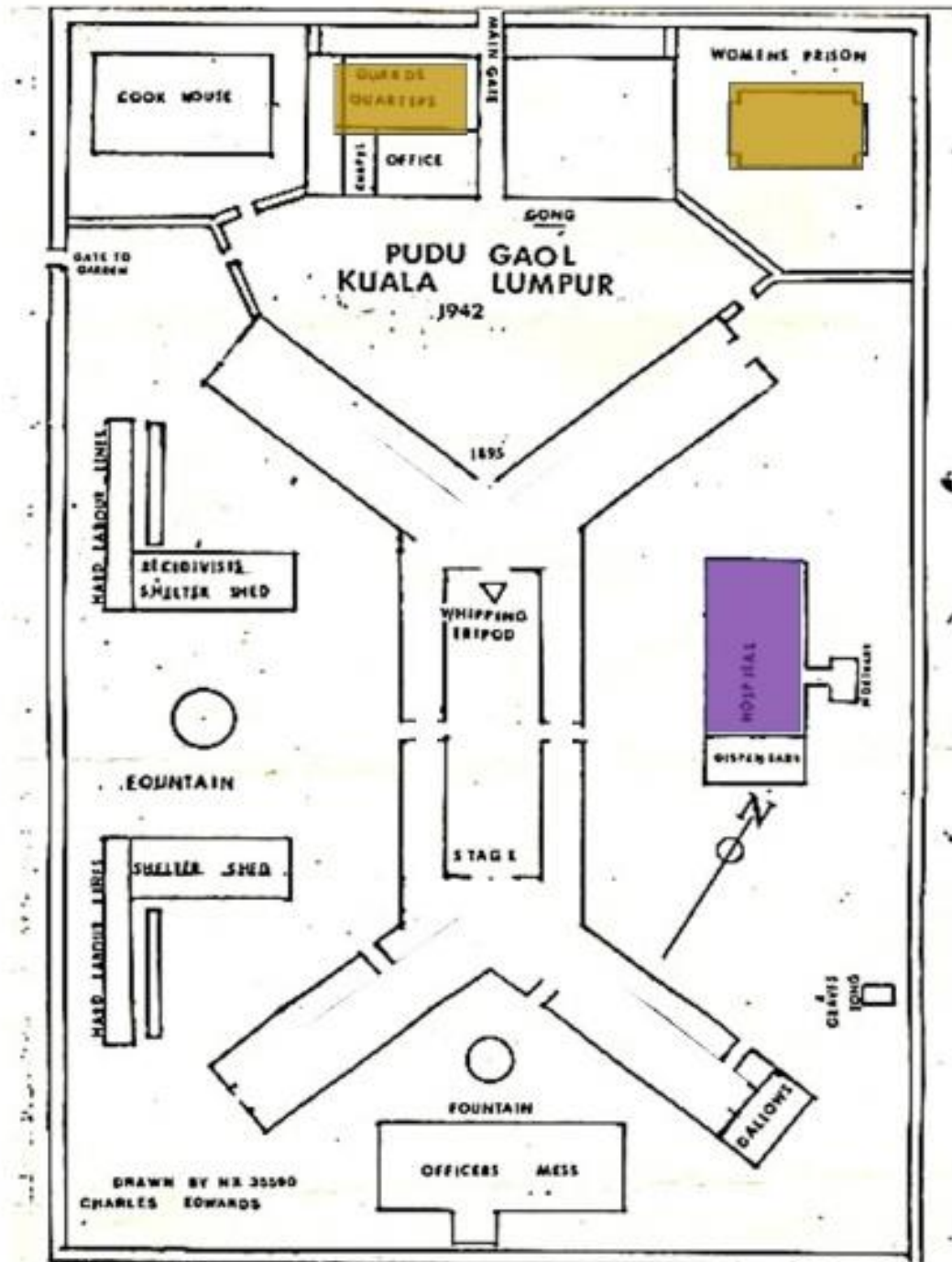


POWs held in 'Women's Block'

Movement of POWs through Pudu Gaol – Stage 2
18th February 1942 to 26th March 1942

Pop. Rises to 550

Many A&SH are dying of 'enteritis, starvation and neglect'



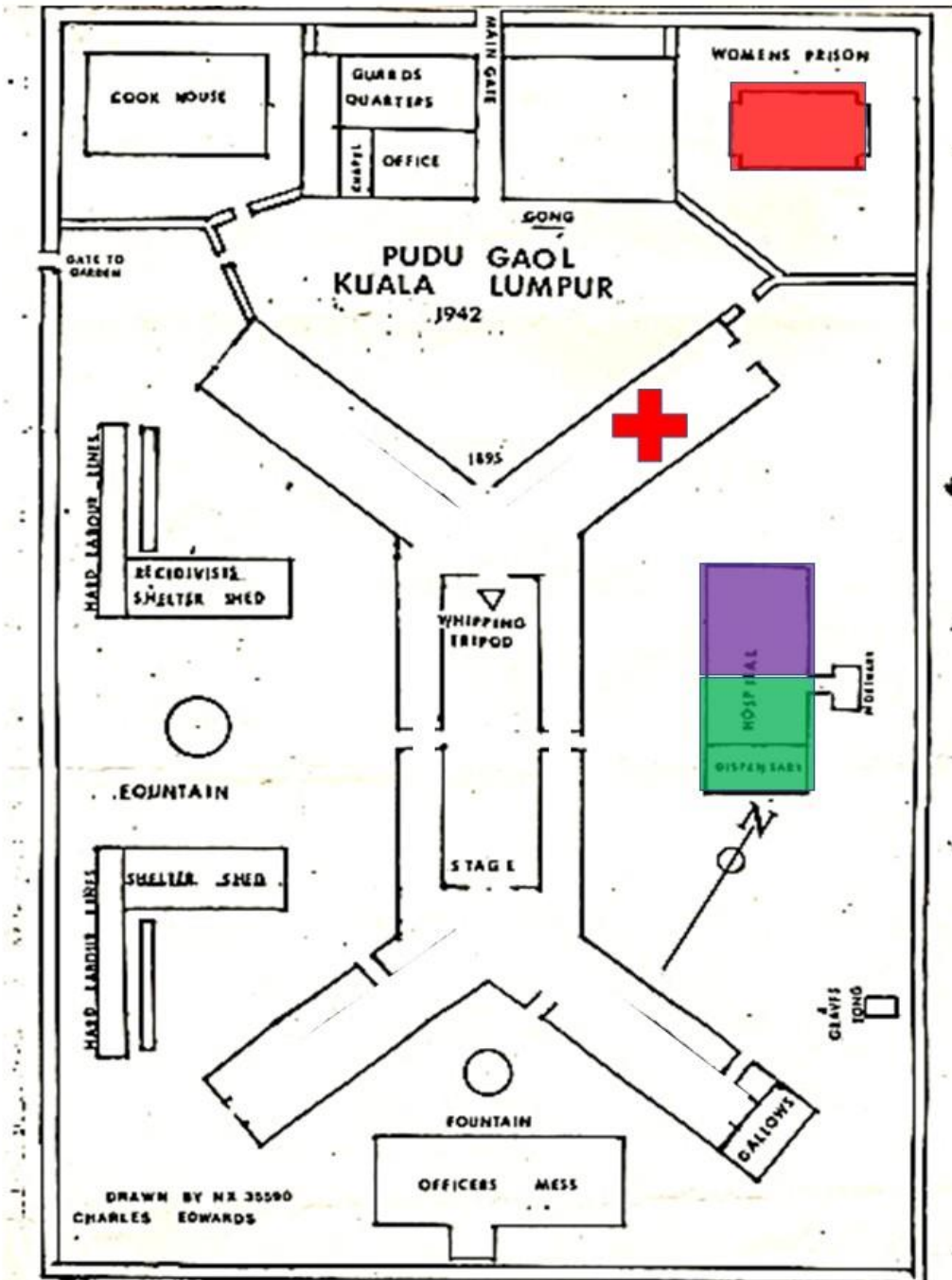
Officers housed in Prison Hospital



OR's held in 'Women's Block' and Admin Block

Movement of POWs through Pudu Gaol – Stage 3
26th March 1942 – 16th April 1942

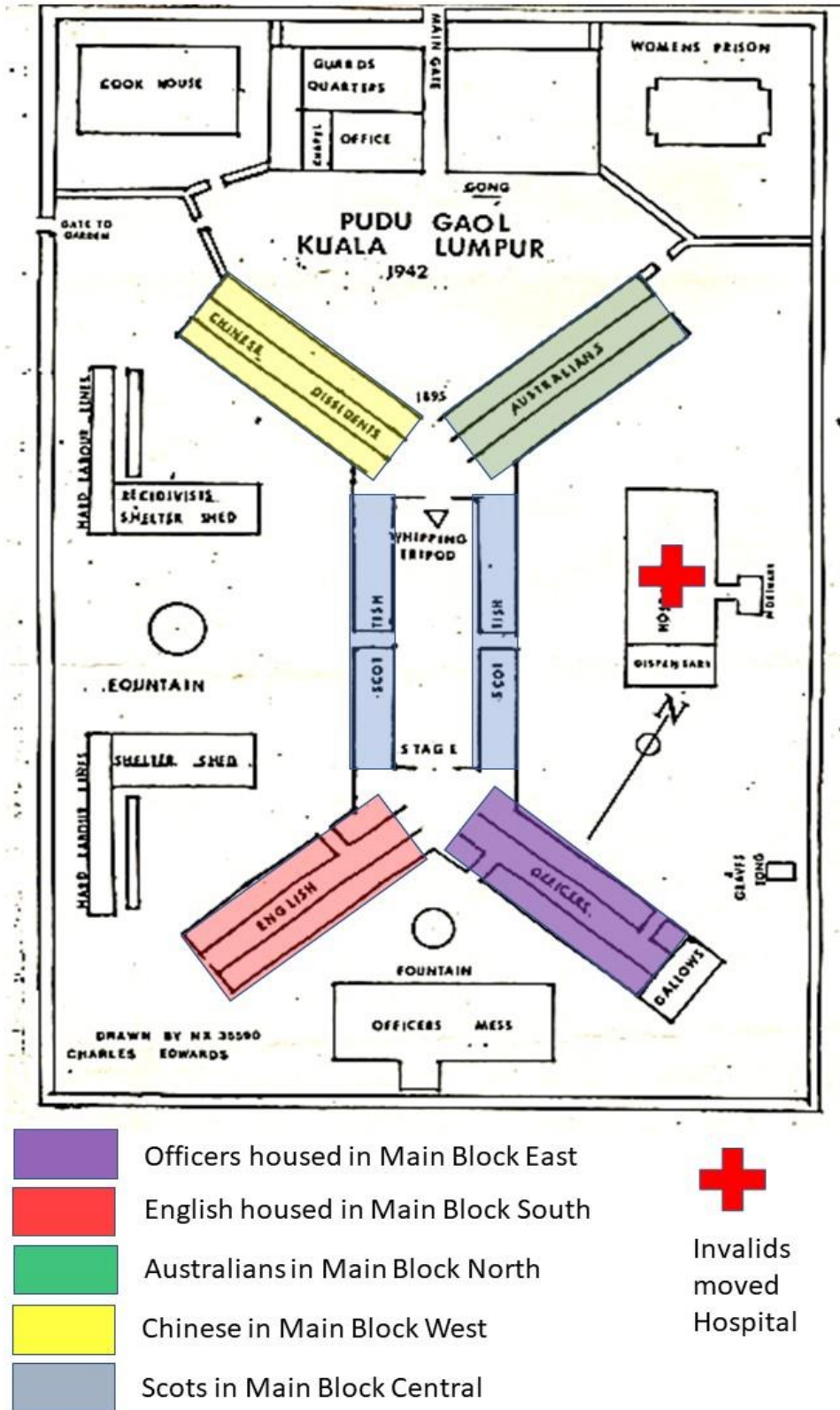
It is at this stage when malaria breaks out in the 'British' contingent



-  Officers housed in Hospital Block
-  British held in 'Women's Block'
-  Australians held in Hospital Block
-  Invalids moved to Main Block

Movement of POWs through Pudu Gaol – Stage 4
16th April 1942 to October 1942

Death rate falls



Map 14 a, b, c, d, and e – A plan that shows the various stages of occupation of the Pudu Gaol by allied POWs

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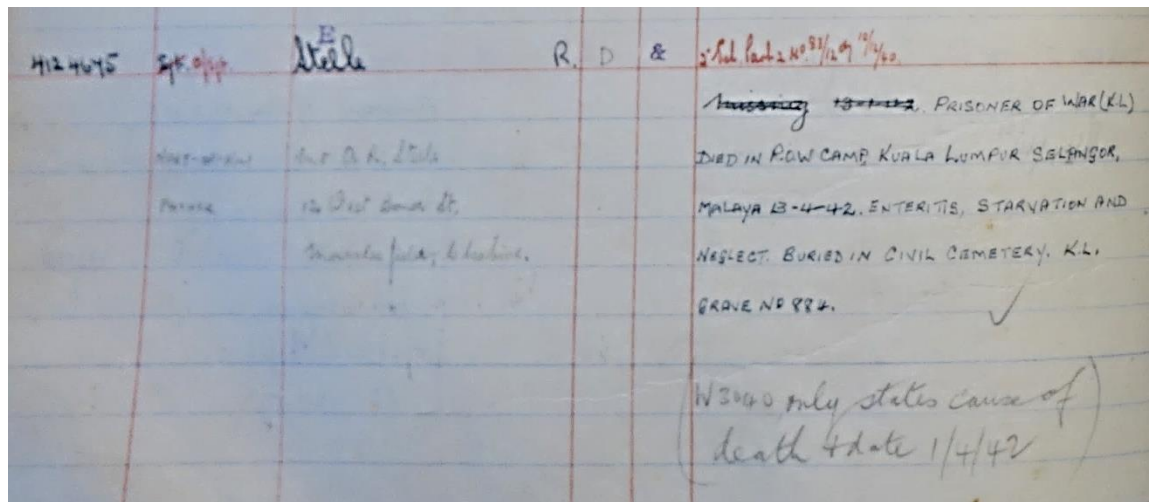


Figure 51 – The entry in the A&SH Roll book for CSgt Ronald Steele detailing his death in Pudu gaol from ‘Enteritis Starvation and Neglect’.

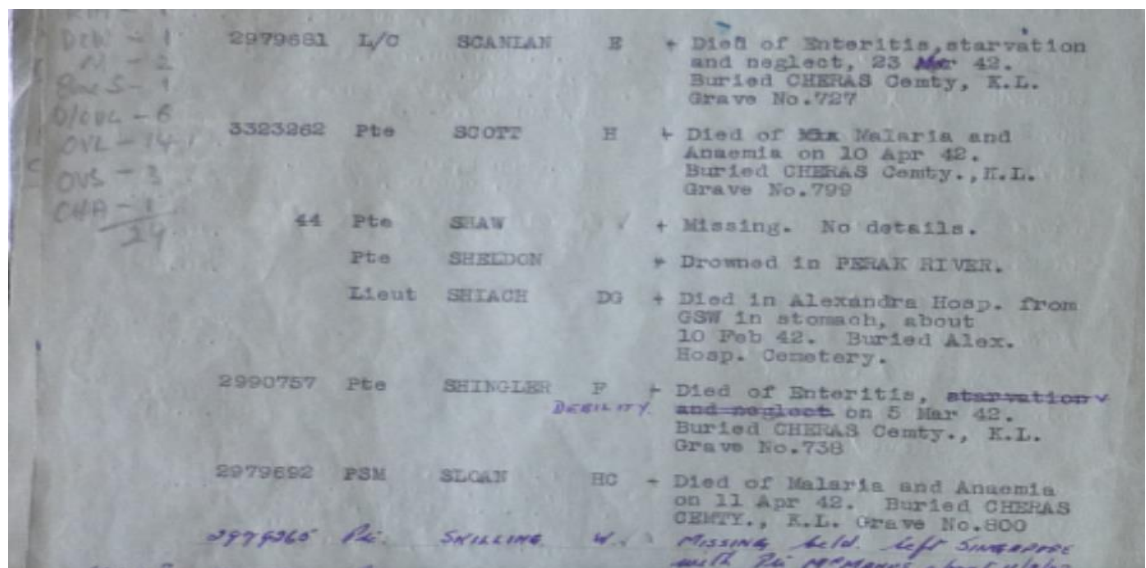


Figure 52- The entry in the A&SH BRE Roll for L/S Scanlan, Pte Scott, Pte Shingler and PSM Sloan in Pudu Gaol

Note Shingler’s entry has been changed from ‘starvation and neglect’ to ‘Debility’ inferring that the record keeper was keen to disassociate Shingler’s cause of death from Scanlan’s.

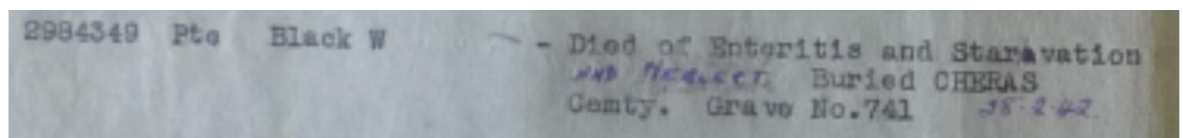


Figure 53 - Pte W Black's entry in the A&SH BRE Roll has been updated to include the word 'neglect' and a date of death

This addition infers that the bookkeeper was keen to register Black’s death under this specific diagnosis.

Table 20 - A breakdown of the causes of death by unit at Pudu Gaol.

Cause of Death	A&SH (Description taken from the Regt Roll)	137 th RA (Description taken from the Pudu Roll WO222 / 1388))	Totals
Dysentery		13	13
Died of Enteritis and Starvation and Neglect (ESN)	17		17
Died of Enteritis and Starvation	2		2
Died of Enteritis and Heat Exhaustion	1		1
Died of Enteritis and Debility	2		2
Enteritis, Starvation and Beri Beri	1		1
'Palajias' debility	2		2
Died of Malaria and Anaemia	7		7
Diphtheria		3	3
Malaria	3	14	17
Anaemia		1	1
Died of Cardiac Failure secondary to Acute Follicular Tonsillitis	1		1
Epileptiform Fit	1		1
Inanition, Dysentery Bacillary	1		1
Heart Failure after Beri-Beri	1		1
Total	39	31	70

*Other vitamin deficiency diseases which in themselves are not fatal but would contribute to the weakening of an individual.⁸¹⁷

⁸¹⁷ <http://POWlarkin.net.au/2012/02/15/story-of-2-pows/> viewed 02/09/2019.

Uniquely for the A&SH battalion records, 17 of the 22 entries of 'Enteritis' are accompanied by the emotive phrase 'Starvation and Neglect'. This medical term is more commonly associated with cases of child abuse, deliberate fasting or involving mentally disturbed people. 'Starvation' is relatively easy to diagnose with the visual features being known from contemporary famines and can be considered a cause of various ailments and diseases that ultimately lead to death. The term 'Neglect' cannot be considered as a medical diagnosis but a statement as to the cause of the starvation in which food is denied to or refused by the POW.⁸¹⁸

It is unusual to find in the BRE records that the originator of the entry has used a generic term that encapsulates the cause of death beyond the diagnosis of 'Enteritis'. It is noticeable that this phrase is only used with reference to those A&SH POWs that died in Pudu in the BRE records, reflecting on the exceptional conditions experienced in this camp and the belief of the author that these deaths were due to extraordinary circumstances worthy of a unique classification.

The sense of 'self-neglect' is also reflected in the memoirs of the inmates of the jail who watched on as men, often noted as the younger ones, simply gave up the will to live. Moffatt & McCormick (2005) relate the reminiscences of Jockie Bell who recalls the fate of Pte Peter Corr, a pigeon-chested youth from Glasgow who had previously shown great courage in battle:

*"Peter was one of the first of our lads to die in Pudu Jail. Some boys just laid down and died. They said the Japs were savages and they'd kill us all anyway. They wouldn't eat rice and they died, and this wee man was one of them."*⁸¹⁹

A second entry identifies another young casualty.

⁸¹⁸ Madea, 2014. p495. In legal terms, it is the underlying cause of starvation (i.e., 'the deliberate withholding of food or neglect') and not the diagnosis of 'starvation', that would be investigated.

⁸¹⁹ Moffatt & McCormick, 2003. p280.

*'They also buried a boy called Gibson who was 17. The Japanese used to sit him under the shade and called him the 'baby soldier'. He died all overcome with emotion and depression.'*⁸²⁰

These statements suggest that in both these cases the 'starvation' is self-inflicted, and any 'neglect' is more a rejection of help. Bell also infers that there was a group of men prepared to give in to the circumstances. This sense of despair is replicated in Braddon's description of the Argyll who dies at his feet.⁸²¹

A review of the chronology of the deaths in Pudu, in tandem with the development of the camp, is shown at [Appendix 4](#) and reveals the extent and circumstances of the loss of the 'will to live'.

A more detailed study of the data on the 23 A&SHs who succumbed to 'Enteritis' with further complications, suggests that the victims were socially connected through the company they served in and by draft (See [Appendix 5](#)).

The study shows that all but one man had either fought in 'B' or 'D' Companies or arrived in 'W' draft on 02/10/1940 from the UK or the earlier Rear Party ('&') out of India arriving in Singapore on 28/09/1939. This suggests that these men had spent time together in basic training and on the long journey to the Far East in each other's company, served together in Singapore for a period of years, had fought together at Slim River and attempted the evasion together. The victims were all privates and NCO's. They were, with three exceptions, between 20 and 30 years old with an average age of 26. According to the next of kin details there were 18 Scots, 10 Englishmen with the remainder having no details listed. 65% were unmarried. This was a population that was well known to each other, of similar demographics and had shared common experiences over the past two to three years.

When listed by date of deaths, significant grouping can be seen, each initially separated by around 14 days. The first grouping of three deaths (18th – 22nd February 1942) are all men from D Company. The second grouping of men who died of conditions other than 'starvation and neglect' (4th – 8th May) have no obvious social links by unit or draft. The third grouping (23rd – 29th May) have no unit connection but all came out to Singapore

⁸²⁰ *Ibid.*, p281.

⁸²¹ Judging by the timing of the event Braddon most likely witnessed the death of Pte Corr.

with the Rear Party (&). The fourth group (13th to 22nd April) have all come from either The Rear Party or Draft 'W'. After this, there occurs several singular deaths separated by between 7 to 14 days and all the men can be linked by either draft or company with the previous deaths. It is worth noting that Madea (2014) states the average man can survive without food and drink for over 8–21 days which corresponds to the intervals between the groups of deaths. A man can live up to between 53 and 73 days without food alone suggesting the victims were refusing liquids as well.⁸²² The cases of 'Dysentery' for the 137th RA Fd Regt fell away after May whereas the 'Enteritis, Starvation and Neglect' cases among the A&SH persist, suggesting they were not related to the same cause. The 137th gunners appeared to start getting enough food and water whereas the A&SH continued to die of starvation and dehydration despite being placed on similar rations and having access to a viable water supply.

Other factors that may have had some influence on the morale of the men also tally with the pattern of deaths caused by 'Enteritis, Starvation and Neglect'. Pte Corr's demise occurs in the evening after news of the fall of Singapore is announced to the POWs at the morning Tenko.⁸²³ Groupings No's. 3 and 4 occur during the outbreak of Malaria that caused most of the remaining A&SH fatalities which ran from 26th March to the end of May 1942. Individual deaths become more prevalent after the POWs were moved into the less crowded accommodation as the Japanese give access to the rest of the prison from 16th April. These may be unfortunate coincidences however it does suggest that communal interaction and prevailing circumstance may have affected the psyche of the individual before the deaths.

There are many theories as to why POWs may choose to die, mostly drawn from the study of post war suicide rates.⁸²⁴ However, Thomas Joiner's notion of the interpersonal and psychological origins of suicide resonate with the Pudu Gaol deaths. Joiner suggests the two primary contributors to suicidal intentions are the POW's perception that he is a burden on his comrades, and a sense of '*thwarted belongingness*', which is furthered by loneliness. It is difficult to comprehend how a POW at Pudu could feel lonely in such overcrowded surroundings, but the perception of loneliness is also linked with numerous negative emotional and social conditions. This includes anxiety and anger, pessimism, fear

⁸²² Madea, 2014. p500.

⁸²³ Braddon, 1955. p118.

⁸²⁴ Robson et al., 2008. p93.

of negative judgement by his peers, low self-esteem, and shyness, as well as low levels of social support.⁸²⁵ It is these emotions which are ably portrayed in Braddon's encounter with the dying Argyll.

Macleod (2010) suggests that the severity of prevalent illnesses such as malaria, enteritis and vitamin deficiency may cause some men to become morose and irritable. Symptoms of starvation include apathy and fatigue, weight loss, pigmentation, cachexia and hypothermia, extreme lethargy, mental retardation, and loss of self-respect. As starvation develops the patient may show signs of hunger oedema, reduced resistance to infections, general diarrhoea, tuberculosis and other intercurrent infections.⁸²⁶

Prisoners who subsequently lost hope tended not to survive the illness.⁸²⁷ Macleod quotes Dr Rowley Richards, an Australian doctor who went to the Thai Burma railway after spending time at Adam Park. Richards also recognised the fact that some men succumbed to '*a positive will to die*', and that, ironically, a man recovering from serious illness and regaining a degree of consciousness would then be fit enough to decide to give up the struggle. Richards states that "*Once a man lost the will to live, drugs and treatment were useless*", so doctors resorted to a course of psychotherapy, often sitting with the patient, and talking through their feelings, actively encouraging the soldier to think positively and even inventing false news items to raise the morale of the patient. Richards concludes with a touch of irony that the last resort was to order the man not to die and threatening him with courts martial if he did.⁸²⁸

Alternatively, it is possible that the depression was not purely a symptom of the illness, but also because the psychological impact of surrendering damaged the soldier to an extent that any downturn in fortune such as a serious illness would prove fatal. Shepherd (2000) states that the POW goes through three stages of mental stress during the act of surrendering which may overcome an individual. As highlighted in Chapter 7, the first is a complex state of feeling guilt, shame, and dishonour immediately after being captured and completing the ritual process of surrendering their arms and ammunition, effectively

⁸²⁵ Van Orden et al., 2010. pp12 – 15.

⁸²⁶ Madea, 2014. p496.

⁸²⁷ Urquhart reckoned he could tell whether a man was going to live or die by simply looking at the eyes. '*Their gaze was lost before it reached the eyes and no amount of positive attitude and care from Dr Mathieson [A RAMC doctor from Paisley] could change their destiny*' (Urquhart, 2010. p170.)

⁸²⁸ Macleod, 2010. p494.

rendering them impotent and emasculated. This is particularly acute when captured after an emphatic military disaster and the soldier is given time to mull over the implications that the defeat may have on their nation, their colleagues and loved ones back at home. In the Scottish case 'home' could to some extent be considered as Singapore. This sense of disbelief and shock is palpable in the accounts of the campaign. There are many stories of soldiers breaking down in tears soon after surrender, both from the relief of surviving the final battles and the shame of surrendering.⁸²⁹

Shepherd goes on to state that the final phases of transition into captivity, the move to the camps and the early days of internment, involved establishing a new society in an unfamiliar environment completely different from the surroundings they were used to at home. The more alien the situation, the harder the acclimatisation and the greater the impact on the soldier's morale. However, if a stable society with the promise of long-term safety, a secure accommodation and a reasonable chance of survival could be created in good time, then men could rediscover their focus and plan for the future, which in turn increased optimism and countered depression.⁸³⁰ Newman (1944) sums this up in his article on POW mentality:

*'Now he [The POW] begins to shave, to undress when going to bed, to talk intelligently, to plan and to organise his life. He grasps at the small things which give him pleasure and builds his life around them and he gathers together what little personal belongings remain to him. The possibility of a reason or object for living gradually emerges and forms itself from an all-developing fog of shattered values.'*⁸³¹

This fragile rehabilitation is undermined by the lack of privacy in overcrowded accommodation, any prevailing atmosphere of inevitability and fatalism and the uncertainty of the length of internment. The experience of the A&SH in Changi, Adam Park and Pudu Gaol ably illustrate the extremes of each stage and account for the subsequent contrast in death rates.

There is no statistical evidence to state that the loss of so many men of the A&SH in Pudu was in part caused by a communal collapse of morale, beyond the fact that each death was given the same unusual description in the roll. However, eyewitnesses state that these

⁸²⁹ Farrell, 2015. p437. Tsuji, 2007. p202.

⁸³⁰ Shepherd, 2000. p314.

⁸³¹ Newman, 1944. pp8 - 11.

deaths were hastened by the soldier losing the 'will to live'. It is possible that the news of the fall of Singapore contributed to the chronic depression and eventual death of Pte Corr which in turn triggered a series of copycat deaths. The data does suggest that those men dying of 'Enteritis, Starvation and Neglect' did know each other, if not having served in the same company, then by travelling to Singapore in the same draft. In this case, it could be argued that being an A&SH was not conducive to survival.

The concentration of malaria cases is associated with a distinct phase of occupation between 26th March and 16th April 1942. The outbreak begins around the same date as the Australians and officers were moved to the Hospital Block accommodation, and the sick moved to a temporary home in one of the main blocks, leaving only the British in the 'Women's Block' and thereby causing the deaths in the largest units, the 137th RA and the A&SH.

There are two main types of Malaria; Benign Tertian (BT) which affected the main proportion of the POWS and Malignant Malaria (MT), also known as cerebral malaria, which is more severe and often fatal. Those laid low with MT may only be expected to live for a few days after being bitten by the malaria carrying mosquitos. Doctors would use quinine and plasmoquine to treat the patient, but this was often in short supply in the camps.⁸³² Larger camps such as Changi and Adam Park had facilities to allow for the screening and early diagnosis of malaria. Anti-malarial campaigns in Changi were often undertaken to reduce the breeding grounds of the Anopheles mosquitos, by oiling sources of standing water to kill larvae, improving drainage for swamped areas and the diligent use of netting should any be available.⁸³³ POWs were given rewards for the presentation of dead insects at the hospital reception.⁸³⁴ However there was no such campaign carried out at Pudu whose small medical team had very little equipment or drugs at hand, no command authority and limited access to the breeding grounds beyond the compound.⁸³⁵

Therefore, the high casualty rate suffered by the men of the A&SH and the 137th RA Fd Regt was probably down to their proximity to a malaria carrying swarm located in the environs of the women's accommodation block. The move of the Australians and officers

⁸³² Parkes & Gill, 2015. p114.

⁸³³ Grant, 2015. pp268 -271.

⁸³⁴ Havers, 2003. p46.

⁸³⁵ Parkes & Gill, 2015. p114.

was fortuitous in mitigating the chance of these men being exposed to the disease. The poor state of health of the POWs, the lack of quinine and an ineffective anti-malarial campaign compounded the death toll.

The analysis of the battalion rolls verifies Braddon's observation that the Scots and 'Pommes' suffered more deaths than the Australians. But this is clearly not down to their nationality or absence of the '*benefit of a lifetime of rich food and sunshine and exercise*', but the misfortune of being in the vicinity of the malaria carrying mosquitos during the rainy season and having experienced a more traumatic process of imprisonment than the Australians.

It could be concluded that the poor command structure and the lack of an effective administration system in the first few weeks of captivity meant that little was done to improve the welfare of the POWs. This not only reduced discipline but also brought on a distinct drop in morale, notably among the Slim River survivors. The news of the fall of Singapore and the feeling of neglect among the younger prisoners turned into a fatal melancholy that brought on the death of a disproportionate number of Scottish soldiers. Once one man had decided to end his own life, the others who knew him followed suit. Survivors talk of many men losing hope, and it could be that several more of these deaths can be attributed to the loss of the will to live, compounded by enteritis rather than a deliberate policy of starvation or intentional abandonment by the Japanese camp authorities.⁸³⁶

With weak leadership and failing morale, the deaths continued. It is notable that after the arrival of Capt Ian Primrose, who took over the command of the detachment after arriving from the Taiping Jail and was spoken about very highly by his colleagues along the Thai Burma Railway, only one more entry states the cause of death to be 'Enteritis, Starvation and Neglect'.⁸³⁷ This may be down to a new person filling in the entries to the rolls, that morale had improved, the susceptible had died, or the self-inflicted deaths had stopped with the introduction of a new camp regime.

⁸³⁶ *Ibid.*, p280.

⁸³⁷ Moffatt & McCormick, 2003. pp157-158, p282, pp290-291, pp303-304.

9.6 Scottishness Abroad

Remarkably with so few Scottish soldiers among the captured POWs their presence is regularly commented upon by the memoirists and observers. Russell Braddon is a typical commentator and as previously observed in his encounter with the dying Pte Corr during his stay at Pudu, the Scottish soldier, even in the harshest of conditions, could be identified among the throng. Braddon comments on Corr's chequered Glengarry bonnet, his apparent Scottish complexion, his jaw structure, fair hair, and his broad Scottish accent.⁸³⁸ He could even discern a naked Scotsman from the Englishmen under a shower by his tattoos:

Pommies were quickly distinguishable because of their passion for tattoos. Arms blazed with pink and blue females of most lecherous allure. The complete crucifixion scene across a broad Highland back was just as common as hair on an Australian chest'.⁸³⁹

Harrison's observation on the death of the two Argylls soon after their capture in the jungle and their arrival at Pudu also reveals the camaraderie among the Scots despite their low morale and growing death rates.

And if there were no bagpipes to lament their passing, at least their last days were spent surrounded by their fellow Argylls and the air was thick with the broad burr of their own incomprehensible tongue. Jock from Dornoch Firth, who was with them, told us, "They had many friends at the end and the wee lads were no unhappy."⁸⁴⁰

There seems to be little doubt that the Scots had a high reputation for their fighting spirit among the Japanese and they were often singled out by their guards in many other camps along the Thai Burma Railway. Stewart recalls several occasions where an Argyll was chosen from a crowd by a Japanese overseer. Regimental Sergeant Major Munnoch was called forward by a Japanese Officer who asked if he was an Argyll and then promptly showed him a map on which was marked all the battles the Argylls had taken part in. He proudly announced after the briefing that 'Argyll Scotsmen number one fighters!'.⁸⁴¹

⁸³⁸ Looks could be deceptive. Weary Dunlop observed that when his Java Party passed through Changi one of the limited batches of new clothing, they were issued with from stores were 20 unwanted Glengarry bonnets. (Dunlop, 1990. p146.)

⁸³⁹ Braddon, 1955. p139.

⁸⁴⁰ Harrison, 1966. p1619-1621.

⁸⁴¹ Stewart, 1947. p118.



*Figure 54 - RSM Munnoch pictured on exercise in April 1941 by Life Magazine
(viewed at <https://www.instagram.com/p/CB5h2yapglN/> on 29/07/2020*

Cpl Robertson, working with his colleagues on the docks in Java, was approached by a Japanese officer recently arrived from Singapore. He had recognised the Scottish bonnets and had inquired as to whether the men were Argylls. Reluctantly the Scots admitted their nationality fearing some form of punishment was about to be inflicted. Instead, they were given chocolate and cigarettes for their performance on the battlefield.⁸⁴²

The benefits of being Scottish were often noted by the Scottish authors. Ernest Gordon comments on several occasions on how he searched for or was approached by fellow Scots

⁸⁴² *Ibid.*, p118.

throughout his time in captivity. He states that it was essential to have a ‘mucker’, at least one good friend who would look after you when you were struck down by a debilitating disease. Two men could also share a load on a long march, splitting the burden of shared utensils, rations, and blankets between them. In extreme circumstances a ‘mucker’ would give up his own food for his partner and risk going through the wire to recover vital drugs and vitamins.⁸⁴³ Usually this would be a fellow Scot, a friend from back home or a regimental colleague. Capt Bardwell noted in his debrief report that the A&SH would pay particular attention to the arrival of new work parties arriving at the camps and search out fellow Argylls, ensuring they could welcome him with a cup of ‘chai’ and some food from the cookhouse before bringing him to their shared accommodation.⁸⁴⁴

Gordon recalls less familiar relationships, such as singing carols in Latin with a fellow alumnus of St Andrews University, of meeting and assisting a boy scout from back home in Gourrock and being called for by a young dying soldier simply because he knew he was an Argyll.⁸⁴⁵ Gordon also meets Dennis Moore of the Royal Corps of Signals and a friend back in Greenock, having been referred to Gordon by a mutual acquaintance in the Argylls he had met in a previous camp. Notably Gordon was saved from the ‘Death House’ during one heavy bout of malaria and nursed back from the brink of death by a fellow A&SH who was one of the ‘Geordies’, Cpl Miller, who had been seconded to the Military Police before the outbreak of the fighting, still considered himself an Argyll and therefore offered his help.⁸⁴⁶ Gordon’s experience reflects the ‘clannishness’ noted by Boyle. When arriving in a new camp, men would look for fellow Scots and those suitably adorned with bonnets, Glengarries and possibly kilts would have been easy to identify.⁸⁴⁷ Those men who had lost their headgear went as far as to fashion an alternative from whatever they could find and replace missing regimental badges with ‘collar dogs’ (lapel badges) or took to wearing a patch of tartan in a conspicuous location on the remains of their uniform.⁸⁴⁸

⁸⁴³ Gordon, 2002. p99.

⁸⁴⁴ Bardwell, 1945. Miscellaneous Papers p2

⁸⁴⁵ Gordon, 2002. p159, p166, p121.

⁸⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, pp89-90.

⁸⁴⁷ Alistair Urquhart recalls that when he first went up onto the Thai Burma railway, he had nothing but a ragged uniform, mess tin, photographs from home and his Glengarry (Urquhart, 2010. p121).

⁸⁴⁸ Miscellaneous Papers – Letter to Adjutant 8 ITC from Sgt Thomas dated 16/10/1945



Figure 55 - A Gordon Highlander's kilt

This kilt was made into a blanket and reputedly used on the Thai Burma Railway (courtesy of the Changi Museum) (viewed at <http://www.changimuseum.sg/archives-search/product-kilt.html> on 06/07/2021).

On arriving at Port Dickson later in the war, Gordon met Sgt H McKay. The sergeant had managed to return to the stores where many of the Argylls had deposited their kit before heading off into combat along the Slim River. McKay had rifled his way through the much-looted warehouse and spotted a kilt which he identified as belonging to Gordon by its cut and an embroidered silk patch typical of those issued in India to officers during the First World War. He retained the kilt with the intention of returning it to Gordon should he see him again.⁸⁴⁹ This narrative not only reinforces the strong understanding and bond between men of the same regiment but also the belief that they would meet up once again

⁸⁴⁹ Gordon, 2002. p166.

most likely along the railway. McKay may well have consulted with CQMS Aitken and the roll book to confirm Gordon's last known location and state of health.

Bagpipes, the quintessence of Scottish society, also play a prominent role in the culture of the POW camps.⁸⁵⁰ Piper Stuart of the A&SH recovered his pipes from the Officers mess at Tyersall before joining the convoy heading to Changi.⁸⁵¹ Whereas regimental drums were hidden beside the mess silver in various lock ups around Singapore before capture, sets of pipes, being more portable and less obvious, were taken into captivity and became an established part of camp routine, often being played at funerals, concerts and formal parades.⁸⁵² Despite the extra burden of maintenance and weight, pipes were taken on work parties in Singapore and further afield to Thailand. As previously noted, pipers from the Gordon Highlanders' detachment were played at the funerals at Adam Park and many a concert party were concluded with the appearance of the lone piper or the accompaniment to a variety of Scottish songs and ballads.⁸⁵³ Capt Boyle noted that the Christmas and New Year celebrations at Tamarkan Camp in 1942 were celebrated in a true Scottish manner.⁸⁵⁴

' a set of pipes was suddenly produced and led by Pte Brown W (Pioneer Platoon) a chain marched all the way around the camp and eventually into the Japanese quarters, They, although rather worried by the pipe music, took the incident in good heart. The procession then went to the guard room where much to the amusement of the Korean guards an eightsome reel was danced. On Hogmanay, the Thai whiskey flowed freely, the 100 Argylls alone accounted for eighty bottles. Lights out was supposed to be 10pm but singing went on until midnight and Auld Lang Syne.....However I think regardless of

⁸⁵⁰ Notably the A&SH were the last unit in Johor and all commentators state that they are piped off the northern end of the Causeway on 31st January 1942.

⁸⁵¹ Moffatt, 2003. p274. Maintaining the instruments in the tropical heat did have its problems. Piper Eric Moss of the Argylls explains that the pipe bag needed to be regularly treated with syrup; Lyons Golden Syrup being the best. Pipes left out in the heat of the day needed to be wrapped in wet towels to prevent the bags from drying out and cracking. The wooden chanters and drones were also susceptible to the heat variations and had to be oiled and kept in the shade while in storage.

⁸⁵² Farrow, 2007. p126, p139, p201. The A&SH mess silver was looted by the Japanese and was found after the war on a remote island around 60 miles from Singapore. ('22nd Regimental Letter' in *Misc Papers* 1945 p7)

⁸⁵³ Gordon, 2002. p61. Gordon sang the Scottish student songs 'As through the Street' and 'A Lum Hat Wantin a Croon' at one concert.

⁸⁵⁴ Regional, and national accents became a bit of a problem at the concert parties 'Barely half the camp could understand the Pommie performers, and nobody could understand the uncoo' Scotties but themselves. To watch a Scots comedian in action was a strange experience with one third of the audience in convulsions while the others sat in blank-faced mystification'. (Harrison 1966 Kindle Locations 1461-1463).

*the Japs' strictest regulations the troops always had something to drink on Hogmanay.*⁸⁵⁵

It is this network of fellow Scots and regimental colleagues, perpetuated by familiar sounds, accents, narratives and customs, that bound the FEPOWs in their captivity. It maintained the vital 'buddy – buddy' system essential for immediate personal support and assistance, as well as creating a social bond among the wider prison camp community. Despite making up only around 3% of the total POW population in Singapore, the men from the Scottish regiments could and would inevitably meet up with a fellow Scot in any camp in the region. The process of creating work parties from within the regimental cadre back in Changi greatly enhanced this group support mechanism thereby assuring discipline, an abundance of 'muckers', and the regimental loyalty that would be perpetuated in the work camps beyond Singapore.

Considering this apparent indissoluble camaraderie, the fact that there was a singular failure of the Scottish solidarity in Pudu Jail is disturbing. It would seem even the finest, well trained, and professional soldiers, when pushed to the limits of endurance and facing an indeterminable length of hellish imprisonment, risk losing the ability to enforce regulation and command, which would eventually sap a man's will to live. A combination of poor morale, starvation and an acute sense of neglect will ultimately lead to a contagious mental depression as deadly as any infectious tropical disease.

9.7 Conclusion - The Scottish POW Experience in 1942

While Chapter 8 has corroborated more recent studies that suggest Changi was a relatively good camp to be in, this chapter has provided an insight into other camps beyond the peninsula by which to qualify this statement. The unique fact that the Scots held in Singapore were interned within their pre-war community had a major effect on their ability to recuperate in the Singapore camps. The garrison units were acclimatised to the conditions, familiar with the accommodation and local area, and had established social

⁸⁵⁵ Boyle, 1945. Misc Papers. The celebrations were somewhat tainted by the three Scots assaulting a Korean guard. The following day the Japanese ordered for the three men to be handed over. The Argylls and Gordons in the camp volunteered to share the communal camp punishment among the Scottish contingent as it was they who had organised the party but this was rejected. Finally, three men volunteered to take the punishment and were ordered to stand in front of the guardroom for 12 hours.

networks in the city that could be exploited for the benefit of the camp and their colleagues. There was ready access into the community, either through illegal excursions beyond the wire or on officially sanctioned trips. Local knowledge and established relationships repeatedly assured successful sorties.

The experience of the Gordon Highlanders at Adam Park corroborates this notion. Capt Fred Stahl's statement on his role as adjutant in the camp and the medical statistics from Hugh Rayson's hospital report exemplifies how well the facilities could be run. Death certificates and medical records suggest that the survival rate was better than Changi, although it must be noted that extremely sick men were returned to Roberts Hospital to convalesce in their care. Yet even then the death rates were never more than 2% of the POW population. Pay was better, the workload bearable and the access to rations, canteen food and the thriving black market reduced the threat of vitamin deficiency diseases. Hygiene teams, sanitised kitchen areas, revised cooking practices and early identification of tropical ailments minimised the impact of malaria, dysentery, and skin diseases. Life, according to many observers, was tolerable and had they remained in Singapore under similar conditions, with the benefit of local knowledge, established trading regimes, seasons of growing crops and the ability to enhance their facilities, then the internment on the island may have been an endurable existence.

It was with these aspirations in mind that the work parties set out to the Tanjong Pagar railhead for onward deployment to Thailand and Burma, or to the docks to board transports bound for Japan and Formosa. Although they strived to replicate all they had achieved in the creation of Changi and the workcamps in Singapore, the weather conditions, geography, prevailing social deprivation, and the Japanese intransigence ensured they would never aspire to similar standards of living until the survivors returned to the relative 'heaven' of Changi many months later.

Yet where the transition to captivity had been complicated by lengthy evasions and poor leadership, there was a real chance of the complete breakdown of military discipline and a subsequent increase in deaths. The Pudu Gaol case study demonstrates that a lack of command and control, poor facilities, poor morale, and an absence of hope, compounded by sheer bad luck, would ultimately lead to soaring death tolls among prisoners. However, the statistical analysis of the BRE records suggests that Braddon's assertion that the death rates among the Scots was caused by some form an inherent racial or social inadequacy

was clearly unfounded. Scots were dying not because they were born and raised in Scotland but that they were men of a Scottish regiment, and in particular the A&SH.

This study attests that the A&SH's jungle training instilled a self-belief that drove men into a tiring evasion through the jungles and plantations whereas other untrained units gave themselves up at the first reasonable opportunity. Ultimately, the surviving A&SH entered captivity in Pudu Gaol sick and exhausted, thereby increasing their susceptibility to disease and reducing their fortitude to a point where men simply gave up the will to live.

By the end of 1942, Scottish soldiers were rehoused along the length of the Thai Burma Railway and into camps scattered throughout the Co-Prosperity Sphere where they set about building facilities replicating those they had left in Singapore. They had varying degrees of success and often their task was made more difficult by extraneous circumstances beyond their control. Yet for every bad camp there would be good ones. It must be remembered that whereas one third of the men died on the 'Death Railway', two thirds survived which was, considering the circumstances, an extraordinary feat.⁸⁵⁶ Undoubtedly their experience of camp life in Singapore in 1942 helped the POWs make the most of the deplorable conditions 'up country' and helped save lives.

⁸⁵⁶ Kovner, 2020. pp209 – 211.

Chapter 10 - Conclusion

This final chapter will draw together the key aspects studied in this thesis, consider the limitations of the analysis, and suggest areas for future research. It will also highlight where the work has cast new light onto old assumptions and revealed forgotten narratives, as well as making broader statements as to the campaign and imprisonment of FEPOWs beyond Singapore. It will conclude with a tribute to the men of the BRE and the battalion adjutants who set about creating an administration function that not only unknowingly went on to inform future historians, but also, ultimately, saved lives.

The aims of this thesis were twofold. Firstly, to put the BRE data to the test and use it to review the transition of the Scot from garrison soldier to captive in Singapore, in 1942. Secondly, to determine what it was to be a 'Scottish' soldier and how this affected a man's chance of survival in combat and in captivity.

The three Scottish units fighting in Malaya provided insightful and contrasting narratives on their training, combat, and imprisonment. The records found in the National Archives in Kew included the documentation on all three of the Scottish units and both the A&SH and the Gordon Highlanders had recovered their Battalion Muster Rolls to their regimental museums.⁸⁵⁷ It was also fortuitous that the A&SH and the Gordons were particularly favoured by the Singapore press during their pre-war role as garrison troops, no doubt helped by their martial reputations, unique dress and traditions, and enthusiastic commanding officers and press office staff who were keen to ingratiate the regiments with the Singaporean public. The research was also blessed by the interactions the regiments had with other well documented units, including the garrison battalions, units of the British 18th Division and Australian forces, all of which provided intriguing comparative and contrasting narratives to that of their Scottish colleagues.⁸⁵⁸ With such prolific and relevant primary sources, it was relatively straightforward to extract the records, build the databases and draw out suitable themes for further investigation.

Whether being Scottish effected the soldiers' chance of survival was perhaps, on reconsideration, a simplistic research question. It soon became clear that being Scottish

⁸⁵⁷ Unfortunately, the Gordon Highlanders Museum were unable to provide a full copy of Sgt Pallant's Roll for the purpose of this thesis due to COVID and staffing restrictions although a sample of the records and answers to specific questions were received.

⁸⁵⁸ The Indian Army records remain an enigma and a potential field for future research.

was an assumption drawn from the fact that the soldier fought in a Scottish regiment no matter what his nationality by birth. The average Australian, Indian, Japanese, or English commentator looked no further beyond the regimental paraphernalia to determine whether the man was a Scot or not. Likewise, providing the soldier bore the same cap badge or flash of tartan then he was a 'pal' to many fellow Scots no matter whether he spoke with a Geordie, Glaswegian, or Cockney accent. However, the question of nationality did provide a useful basis for the research into regimental identity and the appropriation of martial heritage.

10.1 The Limitations and Potential of the Primary Sources

Warren (2007), in his history of the Malaya Campaign, was incorrect when he stated:

*'Anyone now writing an account of a Second World War Campaign, and seeking to reconstruct events from the bottom upwards, now benefits from access to as complete a set of records as is ever to be available.'*⁸⁵⁹

In the intervening years increasingly more material on the fall of Singapore has been recovered. The rediscovery of the BRE records held in the National Archives at Kew in 2011 was a significant find. Not only were the files full of invaluable information, but they were also discovered at a time when researchers and historians were looking for alternative source material, since the veterans, who had long been the focus of study in the preceding years, were dying.

The development of new digital technologies and the investment in on-line services has placed more material into the public domain.⁸⁶⁰ Digitised material can not only be viewed from the comfort of the researcher's office but can also be easily manipulated and processed to run comparative and analytical studies. Simple databases can provide relevant information for a myriad of new lines of enquiry. Likewise, memoirs, letters and paperwork held by the next of kin of FEPOW veterans is regularly being scanned and added to open websites, blog sites and social networking services.⁸⁶¹ Charities, volunteer organisations and individual researchers are currently cataloguing, centralising, and disseminating much of the FEPOW material held in museums and libraries, faster than the

⁸⁵⁹ Warren, 2007. pxii.

⁸⁶⁰ A good example of this is the scanning of the Liberation Questionnaires by the COFEPOW organisation and the digitisation of the Syonan Shinbun newspaper by the National Library of Singapore.

⁸⁶¹ Ho, 2007. pp64 – 79.

institutions can digitise their own collections.⁸⁶² It would be a brave commentator to predict when all the material will be available to all the researchers around the world.

But quantity does not necessarily equate to quality. Much of the material was created retrospectively and under difficult circumstances. Every author had an ulterior incentive for creating the account which influences the narrative. The initial accuracy of the BRE records compiled in Changi depended entirely on the professionalism and aptitude of the nominated battalion representative, some of whom felt the job to be unnecessary and onerous. Handwriting and typing errors undermine the accuracy of the document, as does bad editing and updating. Poor facilities, lack of stationery and the constant perceived fear of being punished by the Japanese authorities all undermined the efficiency of the record keeping in the POW camps.

Then there are the errors induced through the transcription of the information into the new datasets. Many of the original records are in freehand, alterations in thick pencil or smudged ink and spelling, especially of Malay place names, is less than perfect. Fortunately, the transcription of the BRE records is helped by using standardised phrases and common codes. Army clerks tended to use set formats for entries and standard abbreviations that can be anticipated if the handwriting is less than perfect. Finally, the modern historian cannot be expected to get every entry typed up correctly or every data extraction accurately recorded. Mistakes do happen. Therefore, it is necessary to look for trends in data that point the way towards specific scenarios rather than depend on a single, obscure, and possibly erroneous entry.

Using the BRE data alone imposed its own limitations and rarely did one entry provide a definitive account. Data trends were only indicative of a broader narrative and had to be substantiated using other sources such as memoirs and battalion histories which in turn could be compared with photographs, maps, and archaeological site surveys. Certain BRE entries were verified or rebuked by eyewitness statements and newspaper reports.

What is most notable in the analysis of the paperwork is that the records tended to provide details about the mundane aspects of soldiering; the miles travelled in transport, the cost of living as a garrison soldier, the days of monotonous training and pointless drill, the fighting

⁸⁶² Blackburn, 2013. pp434 – 454.

and revelry in town and the inglorious deaths in accidents and the tragic suicides. Such material rarely makes it into the popular histories of the war or even into the official accounts. This information is however the glue that binds together the more glamorous narratives and provides context and substance to the grander eulogies on the subject.

10.2 The Garrison Years

This research primarily shed new light on the missing year of FEPOW history; 1942. Previous accounts of the campaign and imprisonment have tended to skip through or overlook the months spent in captivity in Singapore before the prisoners were sent onto the Thai Burma Railroad.⁸⁶³ However, it soon became clear in writing this thesis that this was not the only pertinent history that had been omitted. The turbulent pre-war lives of the garrison soldiers and the impact this had on their readiness for battle and imprisonment, had been generally ignored by scholars who had tended to focus on grander military strategy and global politics during the run up to the campaign.

This study has uncovered the lives of the garrison troops before the war. In doing so it has revealed an insular subset of Singaporean society, governed by its own regulations, confined to its own unique environment, struggling to integrate with the wider population it had been sent there to serve: a typical 'Total Institution'⁸⁶⁴. Garrison duty, especially over many years, provides its own social problems. Boredom, isolation, and homesickness takes its toll on the morale of garrison troops and their motivation to fight.

The review of the military records and newspaper articles reveal a litany of experiences and interactions ranging from mass pipe bands to mass brawls as the Scottish soldier attempted to integrate into Singapore society. At times, this process was choreographed by the battalion commanders and their adjutants, who controlled press coverage, encouraged public ceremonial appearances, and revelled in the revival of 'Scottishness' in the local social calendar. In other cases, the adjutants lost control of the reportage and the Scottish soldier became renown for all the wrong reasons. Preserving the hard-won reputation of a highly efficient fighting force was a tricky task in the face of the sporadic violence of the

⁸⁶³ See Table 1

⁸⁶⁴ Goffman, 1996. p16.

tanked up, over sexed, under worked, off duty soldier instigating running battles down in the bars and brothels of downtown Singapore.

This thesis argues that the A&SH and the Gordons were in perhaps the best position of all the garrison troops to ingratiate themselves into the society around them and establish a relationship with the Singaporeans that was worth fighting for. Simply being, at the outbreak of the war, among the longest serving battalions in the city had given the Gordons time to establish these links. Having a multitude of their wives and children in the country also fostered a sense of community. The A&SH were quick off the mark to challenge for the title of the most Scottish regiment in town, if not in the tattoos and highland games then by enhancing their reputation as the best fighting troops in the region.

Yet in contradiction to the popular narrative and local perception, not all was well within the garrison. The study of the battalion diaries, the newspaper articles and the unit rolls reveal arguments over training regimes and grander defence strategies that led to rivalries between commands and battalions that threatened to break up the good will. This study also acknowledges that the garrison troops were fully aware of the growing threat to their families in the United Kingdom and the demise of their colleagues in France in 1940 and the impact this had on their morale and attitudes towards surrendering should not be underestimated. Some garrison soldiers in Singapore felt a degree of guilt about not being able to contribute to the defence of their homeland and fight with their colleagues against the Germans. Ultimately such divisions and insecurities would undermine the very fabric of the regiment and its 'will to fight'.

Despite all the internal misgivings, the Scots in Singapore in 1942 were perceived by the public as some of the best of the troops in theatre. Yet, no matter how successful one considers the social assimilation programme to have been, it resulted in a certain relationship between the Scot and the Singaporean, the soldier and the civilian, and ultimately, between the prisoner and the citizen of *Syonan To*, and this would play a vital role in defining the nature of the POW community.

10.3 Warfare and the Transition to Captivity

What is evident from the review of the battalion war diaries is that each Scottish battalion fought the battles in accordance to their training and in compliance with the strategy laid

down by Malaya Command. The Lanarkshire Yeomanry performed well despite their late arrival into the theatre and the antiquity of their guns, and the Gordons ably defended their coastal positions, before moving up into Malaya to act as a rear guard, as practiced in their pre-war exercises. The A&SH, debatably the most enigmatic and widely discussed unit in Malaya Command, were effectively trained in a form of 'Jungle Warfare' as prescribed by their own commanders and which complimented their strategic role as mobile reinforcements. In brief, the Scots went into battle burdened down by all the equipment they had been nominally scaled to carry and adequately trained in accordance with the strategic role their high command had envisaged for them.

The failure was due to the adopted strategy being fundamentally flawed. Fighting for time instead of land meant that the allied commanders were happy to hold a series of fixed positions for a few days and then fall back to the next 'stop line'. But always fighting on the defensive and facing one retreat after another took its toll on the army's morale and the soldiers in Malaya were ultimately sapped of their fighting spirit. As a result, Stewart's A&SH in Singapore were far from being the aggressive 'Jungle Beasts' promoted in his post war accounts and letters. The last stand in Singapore at the Dairy Farm was notable for their passive resistance, unable as they were to launch their much lauded 'Tiger Patrols' due to inexperience, demotivation, and fatigue. Undoubtedly, their jungle knowledge helped in the close quarters combat, the tactical patrolling and their retreat through the plantations and secondary forestation. For the most part though, they were deployed as a conventional motorised infantry unit only taking to the jungle for short spells and never patrolling too far away from the road. They were certainly not fighting in the style of the self-sufficient, long-range Chindits deployed in Burma in the later stages of the war, who are commonly cited as true jungle fighters.⁸⁶⁵

However, Lt Col Stewart was very keen to create a perception of regimental triumph even in the throes of the greatest British defeat. Everything from the pre-war newspaper reports, the post war battalion histories and the commissioned artwork has a sense of regimental veneration about it. Some of the adulation was well deserved, but the post combat reporting exaggerated the few successful actions and individual acts of bravery at the expense of recalling the mundanity and ignominy of the retreat. By way of contrast, the Gordons had done what had been asked of them all be it resulting in only four days of

⁸⁶⁵ Moreman, 2005, pp77 - 78,

combat and yet their performance was considered 'adequate' in subsequent analysis.⁸⁶⁶ In fact it could be argued that out of the three Scottish units it was the Lanarkshire Yeomanry who deserved the most accolades having survived more days under fire and who had literally fought to the last round as instructed, firing off their final shells in defence of the shrinking pocket before destroying their guns.⁸⁶⁷ However, the Yeomanry, without an established martial reputation to defend in the face of defeat, chose not to produce a regimental history or wartime account of their experiences and thereby their exploits remained little known even in their home county.⁸⁶⁸

At what point had the Scots lost the will to fight? This work argues that Stewart accepted defeat as he organized the retreat across the Causeway. It was clear to him that the operation was his best and last chance to write the A&SH into the history books in what was inevitably to be their worst ever defeat. This closing spectacle became a symbol of final defiance for the British who watched from the shoreline, however although a perfectly executed retreat, it was as much a futile effort as the whole campaign had been. The A&SH and Gordons then faced two exceptional weeks of uncertainty as the Japanese prepared for the invasion. The Singapore that they had grown to know and love over the previous years was being destroyed around them and their families had been evacuated on a hazardous voyage to safety. The Scots watched on as first the Royal Navy and then the Royal Air Force, the very assets they had been sent there to protect, escaped to Java. Soon there was simply nothing left to fight for.

10.4 The Imprisonment

The experience of FEPOWs in Singapore and Hong Kong is unique in the annals of the British Army. Never had so many allied troops surrendered to the Japanese, been held on the battlefield they had just fought across and imprisoned in the country they had once called their home.

Few in the British High command in Singapore in February 1942 had quite comprehended the enormity of the situation they now faced, and the Japanese were of little help as they had no plans for the incarceration of so many prisoners. There were no guidelines and few agreed terms. The British commanders could only look towards the experience of earlier

⁸⁶⁶ Seabridge, 1942. p3.

⁸⁶⁷ McEwan & Thompson, 2013. pp58 – 60.

⁸⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, pviii.

surrenders in Europe for guidance. Fortunately, the FEPOWs, left to their own devices, kept their discipline, and made the best of it and what resulted was a year of relative normality.

This 'normality' of Changi has been slowly expunged from the historic narrative and distorted by the descriptions of starvation, disease, and brutality in other camps. Yet the first year of incarceration of the vast majority of FEPOWs in Singapore is exceptional for its ordinariness. The ingenuity and guile of the prisoners, the guidance and discipline instilled by the leaders and the camaraderie between inmates, all went toward creating a sustainable and stable society; this was a remarkable achievement and certainly worthy of greater acknowledgement and research.⁸⁶⁹ It could have so easily gone tragically wrong as the Pudu Gaol case study demonstrates and a lack of some or all these traits could condemn the prisoner to a miserable end.

It was the adjutants, the logisticians, the caterers, the padres, the doctors and all the other 'B Echelon 'johnnies' that were to make these camps a success. An army of volunteers and regulars, taken from a cross section of society, made for a diverse and appropriately skilled work force. There was now no need for the fearless killer, so desired by the recruitment officers and training teams; the war, for them, was over. Now the skilled worker, the craftsman, the diligent labourer, the tradesman, and the man managers were required to take over. Some prisoners failed to make the transition and were left feeling inadequate, bored, or neglected. They faded away. Others responded with gusto and survived the incarceration through sheer hard work, dedication, and commitment. They became the 'heroes' of Changi and rightly, if not belatedly, commemorated in recent accounts.⁸⁷⁰

Captain David Nelson is the epitome of such a character. Self-assuming and wholly practical, Nelson through dedication hard work and a no-nonsense approach, pulled together a team of like-minded individuals determined to carry out the most mundane, but necessary of tasks to the best of their ability in the most difficult of circumstances. There is nothing in his published diary that suggests Nelson carried out the work with one eye on posterity.⁸⁷¹ His focus was primarily on the well-being of the men and ensuring the job of running the camp was carried out as smoothly as possible. In a world of few resources, the

⁸⁶⁹ Havers, 2003. pp3 – 6.

⁸⁷⁰ Nelson, 2012. pviii, p193. Grant, 2015. pp27 - 28. Havers, 2003. p7.

⁸⁷¹ Nelson's only mentions the value of the records as an important research document in his postscript (Nelson, 2012. p93).

little that was left had to be carefully managed. This necessitated knowing the number and location of every man under the responsibility of the camp command. The consequences of this simple administrative function included the accurate distribution of mail, the unbiased provision of rations and the impartial allocation of work duties. Perhaps more importantly, each individual soldier knew that they would not be forgotten should they perish in the camp or disappear on a work party up country. Ultimately this simple undertaking saved lives. POWs in camps where authority of command and the accompanying administration functions were not in place, suffered terribly.⁸⁷² Effective bookkeeping was a necessity in a well-run facility.

The records these men created tell of a quite different narrative of internment in 1942 to that we are accustomed to finding in the popular histories published in the following years. After a few months of cramped conditions and reduced rations, the logistics of imprisonment were established, and life became much more tolerable. Certainly, there were more deaths than in the peacetime environment, but that was to be expected given the cramped facilities, lack of medicine and the prolonged distress of the battle casualties. The greater threat was from boredom and indiscipline of both of which were identified and tackled with vigour by the camp authorities experienced to garrison life. Work was part of the answer. Routine and pay gave men a structure and worth. Minimal wages fended off extreme hunger and work parties sent to sites beyond Changi provided opportunity for trade.

Incidents such as the 'Second Battle of Singapore' and the prolific black marketing demonstrate an ongoing relationship between the prisoners and the Singaporeans founded in the pre-war liaisons between soldier and civilian. A few of the Scots had wives still in captivity, others had spouses and girlfriends within the local society. Many more men had friends and associates within the community which they could call upon to create mutually beneficial contacts and networks. Unlike in European prison camps where the prisoners were very often surrounded by the enemy, the allied troops in Singapore were able to integrate with at best, friendly communities, able and willing to help the prisoner or, more commonly, a community with assumed ambivalence towards their plight. The Japanese overseers, as a rule, kept clear of the camps and for every guard who showed hostility

⁸⁷² The camps with the highest morbidity rates along the Thai Burma Railway were those occupied by the local civilian workers (romusha) who, without the benefit of military camp discipline, died in their thousands. (Blackburn & Hack, 2008. p11, p17).

towards the prisoners there were others who demonstrated a 'laissez faire' attitude and a few who actively helped with the welfare of the POWs. It is this narrative of 1942 which is frequently lost in the retelling.

10.5 Scottishness

Scottish regalia appears with great regularity in this thesis. For example, the wearing of the Glengarry, as the regimental diaries suggest, had been a tetchy subject throughout the A&SH tour in the Far East. The battalion pre-war history makes various comments on the availability of the headdress and the resulting replacement with the Tam o' Shanter bonnet, much to the annoyance and regret of Lt Col Stewart and his adjutant staff. Stewart insisted on keeping his Glengarry and wore it in combat so he could be easily recognised by his men. The figure of Stewart depicted in the 'Sans Peur' painting shows him bathed in a ray of tropical early morning sunlight, adorned by the Glengarry, portraying the noble figure of a Scottish soldier standing tall in the moment of crisis.

In stark comparison, Braddon's account of the death of Private Corr on the steps of the Women's Block at Pudu Gaol is punctuated with his appreciation of what it was to be a Scot. Braddon recalls:

*'I could see fair hair under the black cap with its check colours.'*⁸⁷³

Miraculously throughout Corr's stint in combat, his escape into the jungle, his capture and up to the time of his death, he had retained and wore, with some sense of pride and necessity, his Glengarry bonnet. To Braddon this cap was the most visible sign of Corr's nationality and set him apart from other POWs in the camp. In peacetime we find the Glengarry lapping up against the washed-up body of a suicide, being used as a mark of recognition in the fighting along Lavender Street or adorning the lover's head in carefree photo shots taken in happier days. To wear the Glengarry was, to the outsider, to be Scottish.

The early years of garrison duties were in part progressed through the exploitation of the Scottish stereotypes. Pipes and drums, bonnets and kilts, spats and sporrans were displayed at every public opportunity. Scottish ceremonies and traditions were encouraged with

⁸⁷³ Braddon, 1955. p7.

beatings of the retreat, high profile guards of honour and military tattoos being steeped in tartan. The uniform and tradition meant men from England serving in the ranks of Scottish regiments were indistinguishable from their Scottish colleagues until they spoke. Even then, the Geordie accent was as incomprehensible to an Australian or Indian observer as was Glaswegian or Doric. If the public were reassured by the military presence of 'Devils in Skirts' among the ranks of the defenders of Singapore, then the soldiers were just as happy to maintain the persona. Fighting, hard drinking and womanising, all apart of masculine virtues of an elite warrior class, helped set the Scots apart from their military counterparts and were tolerated by the regimental authorities as a legitimate way of establishing unit 'Esprit de corps'.

Combat becomes a great leveller of national prejudices. There is little evidence that the Japanese treated the Scots differently to any other Allied unit in battle. Certainly, the nature of warfare undertaken by the A&SH was unique among the Malayan Command. This fast moving, hard fighting mobile reserve became a dependable mainstay of allied resistance. So much so that it condemned the unit to a prolonged commitment to the frontline and therefore more casualties. However, the defeat at Slim River effectively negated the efficacy of the unit and the 'Jungle Beasts' were rendered ineffectual.

It must be remembered that by the beginning of the campaign for Singapore the A&SH, the Gordons and to a lesser extent the Lanarkshire Yeomanry were seen by their commanders to be among the most experienced and battle-hardened troops in the army. Yet it transpired that even the Scots by this point had been reduced to an impotent force. If the evidence of the demise of the fighting ability of the Scots in Singapore is indicative of the general state of the army, then it can be concluded that by the time of the invasion on 9th February 1942, the fall of Singapore was a forgone conclusion.

The Australian author Russell Braddon controversially suggests that being a Scot or a 'Pommie' would undoubtedly condemn the man to an early death in captivity. Certainly, the analysis of the death toll in Pudu, which Braddon witnessed at first hand, would bear him out. But the data analysis has shown that the death of the A&SHs in the jail were not down to some form of Scottish inadequacy, as men from Lancashire died in similar numbers, but caused by a localised outbreak of malaria and a psychological collapse of morale brought on by fatigue, sickness, and circumstance.

This thesis contends that being an Argyll, and not a Scot, played a significant role in the deaths in Pudu. A soldier being brought up with a sense of unit pride, unstinting self-confidence, elite training, and a belief in their ultimate victory had further to fall when confronted with surrender to men who they believed to be sub-human.

Once in captivity there were rare occasions of preferential treatment for the 'Jocks', but generally they would be beaten, starved, drowned, and executed in the same manner as many of their other British, Australian, and Indian comrades. Often survival was determined more by luck than nationality in that a man could simply find himself in the wrong place at the wrong time. However, and more importantly being a 'Jock' among 'Jocks', would foster a friendship and bond that would help a man face the day-to-day struggle of living through such misfortunes.

With all that said, Braddon's comment that a 'Scot' could be spotted in the shower by the tattoos on his back cuts to the very essence of what being a Scottish soldier was all about. It was more than just a label, it was something very permanent, very enduring and in most part very distinctive.⁸⁷⁴ Being in a Scottish Regiment, mattered.

10.6 A Final Tribute

It is doubtful Captain David Nelson ever expected the BRE records to be mulled over some 80 years after the event by researchers and historians across the world. However, the task of remembrance and memorialisation has been made considerably easier by the work of Nelson and his team. The same can be said of all those other adjutants and clerks, such as Pallant and Aitken, who at times risked everything for the compilation and preservation of such records. Every signature, hand-written note, sketch map and correction are a personal reminder of their work and sacrifice. Historians all, in every sense.

⁸⁷⁴ There were incidents where men were recognised by their colleagues purely by their tattoos (Moffatt & McCormick, 2003. p161, p173.)



Figure 56 – The tattoos of Pte Tom Wardrope, A&SH.

The accompanying caption reads: 'Emaciated prisoners sitting on the steps of an ambulance in Singapore following their release from captivity in Sumatra. Holding the newspaper is Sergeant Jack King RM, formerly of HMS PRINCE OF WALES, while standing next to him, with the distinctive chest tattoo, is Private Tom Wardrope of 2nd Battalion, Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders.' (Imperial War Museum, HU 69972)

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Casualties by Draft 8.8.39 to 15.2.42	&	£	N	U	W	@	#			Symbols as per Roll	
Effectives as % of draft	24.8	25.0	8.7	6.7	10.1	5.0	25.0	8.2	3.0	0.0	17.3
Total Number of Draft Deployed for Action	453	24	21	28	62	172	6	56	64	1	887
	&	£	N	U	W	@	#				
Casualties											
Natural Deaths	4	1	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	7
Killed in Action	31	1	2	2	3	13	0	4	2	0	58
Died of Wounds	8	0	0	0	2	1	0	0	1	0	12
Missing Believed Dead	15	2	0	0	1	4	0	0	1	0	23
Missing	37	1	2	5	10	25	0	7	15	0	102
Died in Jungle	21	0	0	1	1	11	0	1	2	0	37
Wounded	No Entry	No Entry	No Entry	No Entry	No Entry	No Entry	No Entry	No Entry	No Entry	No Entry	0
Total Battle Casualties	112	4	4	8	17	54	0	12	21	0	232
Casualties as a % of draft	18.6	12.5	17.4	26.7	24.6	29.8	0.0	19.7	31.8	0.0	21.6
Casualties as % of those deployed for battle	24.7	16.7	19.0	28.6	27.4	31.4 ⁸⁷⁵	0.0	21.4	32.8	0.0	26.2

⁸⁷⁵ It could be argued that the slight increase in casualties among the newer recruits is indicative of lack of training. However, it could also be argued the increase is due to fact that the more experienced soldiers knew how to take care on themselves in combat.

	£	N	U	W	@	#					
Died in POW Camps											0
(1) Malaya	18	2	2	0	3	9	0	6	3		43
(2) Siam	31	1	2	1	11	15	1	7	7	0	76
(3) Java	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
(4) Singapore Island	2	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	4
(5) Burma	1	1	0	0	0	1	0	1	2	0	6
Total	53	5	4	1	14	26	1	14	12	0	130
Casualties as a % of draft	8.8	15.6	17.4	3.3	20.3	14.4	12.5	23.0	18.2	0.0	12.1
No of draft going into captivity	341	20	17	20	45	118	6	44	43	1	655
Casualties as a % of those in captivity	15.5	25.0	23.5	5.0	31.1	22.0	16.7	31.8	27.9	0.0	19.8

	&	£	N	U	W	@	#				
Total Casualties	318	18	11	11	38	90	3	31	35	0	555
Casualties as a % of draft	52.8	56.3	47.8	36.7	55.1	49.7	37.5	50.8	53.0	0.0	
Grand Totals	602	32	23	30	69	181	8	61	66	1	1073

Appendix 2 – Deaths Recorded for the Scottish Regiments in the Far East

Regiment	Year	Total	KIA Malaya	KIA Singapore	Deaths as a POW Changi / Singapore incl DOW	Death as POW MALAYA	Missing Believed Dead	Died as POW Abroad	Other Deaths
Gordon Highlanders	pre 42	8	1	0	0	0	0	0	7
	1942	81	9	23	25	0	4	5	15
	1943	163	0	0	1	0	0	161	1
	1944	95	0	0	0	0	0	94	1
	1945	31	0	0	5	0	0	26	0
Sub Total		378	10	23	31	0	4	286	24
Lanarkshire Yeomanry	pre 42	5	5	0	0	0	0	0	0
	1942	23	6	8	5	0	0	1	3
	1943	37	0	0	0	0	0	37	0
	1944	17	0	0	1	0	0	16	0
	1945	25	0	0	1	0	0	20	4
Sub Total		107	11	8	7	0	0	74	7
A&SH	pre 42	43	33	1	0	2	3	1	3
	1942	207	88	34	3	50	18	7	10
	1943	82	0	0	2	0	2	70	8
	1944	50	0	0	4	1	1	39	2
	1945	18	0	0	3	0	0	12	3
Sub Total		400	121	35	12	53	24	129	26
Totals		885	142	66	50	53	28	489	57

Appendix 3 – List of Men in Scottish Regiments who Died in Changi POW Camp in 1942

Date of Death	Regt	Service Number	Rank	Surname	Fate	
Description of death as per the Regimental Rolls and the CWGC database. Note that some dates of death differ between sources. (Lanarkshire Yeomanry comments extracted from McEwan & Thomson 2015) This list does not include those men who died of wounds.						
13/02/1942	Gordon Highlanders	2870033	Pte	Watt	Died of Illness	
Died in Changi POW Camp 24.10.42 Diphtheria Buried Changi Military Cemetery Grave No D.F. 5						
14/02/1942	Gordon Highlanders	2876466	Pte	Forbes	Died of Illness	
Reported from 2 Ech on 18.3.42 that this man died on 16.3.42 Cause of death not known Communal grave Civil Sin Hosp Singapore Died of Malaria on 14/2/42 at No.1 MGH. Buried Communal Grave						
10/03/1942	Gordon Highlanders	2876526	Pte	Mathers	Died of Illness	
Died at Changi POW Camp 10.3.42 Encephalitis Buried Changi Military Cemetery Grave AB 29						

Date of Death	Regt	Service Number	Rank	Surname	Fate	
09/04/1942	A&SH	3322878	Pte	Rutter	Died of Illness	
Died of Dysentery Bacillary 9.4.42 Buried CHANGI Military Cemetery Grave No.A.C.13						
12/04/1942	Gordon Highlanders	2879129	Pte	Bisset	Died of Illness	
Died Changi POW Camp 12.4.42 Dysentery Bacillary Grave No A.D.8 Changi Military Cemetery						
23/04/1942	Gordon Highlanders	2876253	Pte	Robertson	Died of Illness	
Died in Changi POW Camp 23.4.42 Dysentery Bacillary Buried Changi Military Cemetery Grave No. A E 7						
09/05/1942	Lanarkshire Yeomanry	880103	Gunner	Street	Accidental Death	
Killed in a motor accident on 9th May 1942 while on a work party. His truck was hit by a civilian car being driven by a Japanese. He was thrown from the truck and cracked open his skull. He was taken to Roberts Hospital but died soon after. ⁸⁷⁶						

⁸⁷⁶ McEwan & Thomson 2015 p140

Date of Death	Regt	Service Number	Rank	Surname	Fate	
15/05/1942	Gordon Highlanders	2876392	Pte	Wilson	Died in Accident	
Killed by explosion of Japanese grenade 15.5.42 (accidental) Buried in Bukit Timah Road S'Pore 8th Milestone MR 756158 Near Ford Works						
27/05/1942	Gordon Highlanders	2875549	Pte	Kennedy	Died of Illness	
Died in Changi POW Camp 27.5.42 Dysentery Clinical. Buried Changi Military Cemetery Grave No B.C.1						
01/06/1942	Gordon Highlanders	2888242	PLC	Devine	Died of Illness	
Died Changi POW Camp 20.5.42 Dysentery Bacillary and Malaria U T Grave No. B.B.4 Changi Military Cemetery						
01/06/1942	Lanarkshire Yeomanry	977210	Bdr	Sinclair	Died of Illness	
Contracted dysentery while at Changi and was transferred to Roberts Hospital. He died on 1st June ⁸⁷⁷						

⁸⁷⁷ *Ibid.* p132

Date of Death	Regt	Service Number	Rank	Surname	Fate	
01/07/1942	Gordon Highlanders	2875543	Pte	Ratray	Died of Illness	
Died in Changi POW Camp 13.7.42 Diphtheria Buried Changi Military Cemetery Grave No B.F.6						
03/07/1942	Gordon Highlanders	2883879	Pte	Friel	Died of Illness	
Died in Changi POW Camp 3.7.42 Dysentery Bacillary Grave No B E 12 Changi Military Cemetery						
05/07/1942	Gordon Highlanders	2876635	A/Cpl	Fraser	Died of Illness	
Died in Changi POW Camp 5.7.42 Colis Cystitis Grave No. B.L.15 Changi Military Cemetery						
12/07/1942	Gordon Highlanders	2879081	Pte	Turnbull	Died Escaping	
Missing from Roll Call 17.2.42 (Scored Through) Deceased Pulau Ubin while escaping 27.2.42						
14/07/1942	Lanarkshire Yeomanry	950242	Gunner	Hoskins	Died of Illness	

Date of Death	Regt	Service Number	Rank	Surname	Fate	
Died of Dysentery on 14.7.42 in Changi. ⁸⁷⁸						
31/07/1942	Gordon Highlanders	2876793	Pte	Napier	Died of Illness	
Died Changi POW Camp 12.8.42 Ulcers Scrotal Buried Changi Military Cemetery Grave No. C.A 6						
20/08/1942	Lanarkshire Yeomanry	318264	L/Sgt	Halifax	Accidental Death	
Stung by a stingray while working down at Changi beach. The wound became infected and he contracted blood poisoning. He died 20 th August 1942 ⁸⁷⁹						
29/08/1942	Gordon Highlanders	189551	Lt	Stuart	Died in Accident	
Killed during land mine clearing on POW work party						
06/09/1942	Gordon Highlanders	2879190	Pte	McKean	Died of Illness	

⁸⁷⁸ *Ibid.* p76

⁸⁷⁹ *Ibid.* p68

Date of Death	Regt	Service Number	Rank	Surname	Fate	
Died Changi POW Camp 6.10.42 Diphtheria Buried Changi Military Cemetery Grave D.E.4						
10/09/1942	Gordon Highlanders	2876625	Pte	Gallacher	Died of Illness	
Died in Changi POW Camp 10.9.42 Dysentery Grave No. C E 2 Changi Military Cemetery						
21/09/1942	Gordon Highlanders	2884060	Pte	Robertson	Died of Illness	
Died in Changi POW Camp 21.9.42 Cardiac Beri-Beri Buried Changi Military Cemetery Grave 16 C.A.9						
10/10/1942	Gordon Highlanders	2876496	Pte	McIntosh	Died of Illness	
Died at Changi POW Camp Dysentery 10.10.42 Buried Changi Military Cemetery Grave No D.B.7						
07/11/1942	Gordon Highlanders	2876810	Pte	Menzies	Died of Illness	
Died at Changi POW Camp Malaria MT Cerebral Buried Changi Military Cemetery Grave No. D A 9						

Date of Death	Regt	Service Number	Rank	Surname	Fate	
10/11/1942	Gordon Highlanders	2879466	Pte	Summers	Died of Illness	
Died Changi POW Camp 10.11.42 Dysentery Bacillary Buried Changi Military Cemetery Grave No D.F.10						
13/12/1942	A&SH	2978776	Pte	Fletcher	Died of Illness	
Died of Encephalitis Acute on 13 Dec 42 Buried Military Cemetery CHANGI Grave No. FA 2						
18/12/1942	A&SH	2979990	Pte Dmr	Ramsay	Died of Illness	
Died of Abscess on Buttock 18 Dec 1942 Buried CHANGI Military Cemetery Grave No. F.A.1						

Appendix 4 – Chronology of A&SH and 137th RA Deaths in Pudu Jail in 1942

Chronology Date (Deaths as per CWGC)	Date of Death as per A&SH Btn Roll (Green agrees with CWGC date)	Event / Name (A&SH - Green ,137th RA - Blue) Extracts compile from Braddon, 1946 and https://www.cofePOW.org.uk/armed-forces-stories- list/prisoner-of-war-camp-pudu-jail-kuala-lumpur viewed 21/01/2021	Notes from A&SH Roll Book
06/01/1942		Battle of Slim River	
22/01/1942		13 Officers and 43 other ranks of British and Australian POWs were transferred to the Pudu Criminal Jail, Kuala Lumpur on 22nd January 1942. POWs housed in the Woman's Block	
25/01/1942		2/19 AIF survivors arrive at Pudu incl Russell Braddon	
26/01/1942		Fresh batches of POWs arrived daily and by 26th January the number had reached 126. The small area of the female block was packed. The Guard Commander now allowed the top floor of the Administrative Block to be used	
09/02/1942		On 9th February the numbers were 446: By the beginning of February, dysentery was present in epidemic proportions. No medicines were available. Out of approx 500 POWs, 140 were very sick.	
14/02/1942		SEABRIDGE	Dysentery
15/02/1942		SPENCER	Dysentery
17/02/1942		STUBBS	Dysentery
18/02/1942		On 18th February the prisoners learnt that Singapore had capitulated. On that day there were 550 POWs including 6 Officers jammed in the small area already described.	
18/02/1942	18/02/1942	CORR	Died of Enteritis, Starvation & Neglect on 18 Feb 42 at KL Buried CHERAS Cemty Grave 749
21/02/1942		CULPIN	Dysentery
22/02/1942	22/02/1942	McKERNON	Died of Enteritis, Starvation & Neglect in KL 22 Feb 42 Buried CHERAS Cemty No.747
24/02/1942		CROOK	Dysentery
22/02/1942	22/02/1942	BLACK	Died of Enteritis and Starvation & Neglect Buried CHERAS Cemty Grave No.741 28/2/42

Chronology Date (Deaths as per CWGC)	Date of Death as per A&SH Btn Roll (Green agrees with CWGC date)	Event / Name (A&SH - Green ,137th RA - Blue) Extracts compile from Braddon, 1946 and https://www.cofePOW.org.uk/armed-forces-stories- list/prisoner-of-war-camp-pudu-jail-kuala-lumpur viewed 21/01/2021	Notes from A&SH Roll Book
01/03/1942		DULSON	Dysentery
04/03/1942	04/03/1942	PHILLIPS	Died of Enteritis and Debility on 4 Mar 42 Buried CHERAS Cemty KL Grave No. 739
05/03/1942	05/03/1942	SHINGLER	Died of Enteritis 'starvation and neglect' (scored out) Debilitation 5 Mar 42 Buried CHERAS Cemty K L Grave No.738
08/03/1942	08/03/1942	GWYNNE	Died of Enteritis and Debility on 8 Mar 42 Buried CHERAS cemty KL Grave No.732
09/03/1942		RUSSELL	Malaria
01/03/1942	23/03/1942	SCANLAN	Died of Enteritis Starvation and Neglect 23 Mar 42 Buried CHERAS Cemty KL Grave No.727
01/03/1942	29/03/1942	MOWAT	Died of Enteritis, Starvation and Neglect on 29 Mar 42 Buried CHERAS Cemty KL Grave No.757
25/03/1942	25/03/1942	GIBSON N M	Died of Enteritis Heat Exhaustion 25 Mar 42. Buried Australian Cemty., KL Grave No.763
26/03/1942		PEARSON	Malaria
26 th March		More and more POWs dribbled in and on March 26th the roll call was 724. Deaths were now mounting. The sick parades had reached alarming proportions. The authorities were now demanding working parties. All these factors were used as arguments to obtain more and better accommodation. It had the desired effect. 300 Australians could share with the Officers at the prison hospital and 60 invalids were sent to occupy cells in the main prison building	
27/03/1942		RADLEY	Malaria
29/03/1942		LINGARD	Malaria
31/03/1942	31/03/1942	MacINNES	Died of Malaria at KL Buried at CHERAS Cemty Grave No.792 31/03/42
31/03/1942		BAKER	Malaria
May-42		Change of Japanese Command to Navy personnel	Conditions improve
03/04/1942	03/04/1942	McMILLAN	Died of Malaria 3 Apr 42 Buried CHERAS Cemty KL Grave No.127

Chronology Date (Deaths as per CWGC)	Date of Death as per A&SH Btn Roll (Green agrees with CWGC date)	Event / Name (A&SH - Green ,137th RA - Blue) Extracts compile from Braddon, 1946 and https://www.cofePOW.org.uk/armed-forces-stories- list/prisoner-of-war-camp-pudu-jail-kuala-lumpur viewed 21/01/2021	Notes from A&SH Roll Book
03/04/1942		McMILLAN J	Died of Malaria 3 Apr 42 Buried CHERAS Cemty KL Grave No.129
06/04/1942		COHEN	Anaemia
08/04/1942		STONE	Malaria
09/04/1942		HOYE	Malaria
09/04/1942	09/04/1942	RALSTON	Died of malaria and Anaemia 9 Apr 42 Buried CHERAS CEMTY KL Grave No. 797
10/04/1942	10/04/1942	SCOTT	Died of Malaria and Anaemia on 10 Apr 42 Buried CHERAS Cemty KL Grave 799
01/05/1942	11/04/1942	SLOAN	Died of Malaria and Anaemia on 11 Apr 42. Buried CHERAS Cemty KL Grave 800
13/04/1942		CANNELL	Malaria
13/04/1942		GRAYSON	Dysentery
11/04/1942		DAVENPORT	Died of Malaria and Aneamia 10th April 42 Buried Cheras Grave No. 798
01/04/1942	13/04/1942	STEELE	Died of Enteritis Starvation and Neglect on 13 Apr 42 Buried CHERAS Cemty K.L. Grave No.884
14/04/1942	14/04/1942	ELLIOTT	Died of Enteritis, Starvation and Neglect on 14 Apr 42 Buried CHERAS Cemty KL Grave No.885
01/03/1942	15/04/1942	GROOM	Died on Enteritis Starvation and Neglect on 15 Apr 42. Buried CHERAS Cemty KL Grave No. 886
16/04/1942		COOPER	Malaria
16/04/1942		MURPHY	Malaria
16 th April		On April 16th, owing to the congestion and the verminous condition of the cells in the administrative block, three wings of the main prison were made available - this was a marked improvement. Two officers or three men shared a cell. There was more room for exercise and latrines. Washing facilities were still unsatisfactory.	

Chronology Date (Deaths as per CWGC)	Date of Death as per A&SH Btn Roll (Green agrees with CWGC date)	Event / Name (A&SH - Green ,137th RA - Blue) Extracts compile from Braddon, 1946 and https://www.cofePOW.org.uk/armed-forces-stories- list/prisoner-of-war-camp-pudu-jail-kuala-lumpur viewed 21/01/2021	Notes from A&SH Roll Book
16/04/1942	16/04/1942	HADDON	Died in PUDU Hosp., KL on 16 Apr 42 of Enteritis Starvation and Neglect Buried CHERAS Cemty Grave No 888
21/04/1942	21/04/1942	THOMSON	Died of Malaria and Anaemia 21 Apr 42 Buried CHERAS Cemty KL Grave 900
22/04/1942	22/04/1942	GIBSON J M	Died of Enteritis, Starvation and Neglect on 22 Apr 42. Buried in CHERAS Cemty Grave No.901
30/04/1942		BARRITT	Malaria
06/05/1942		BONNEY	Dysentery
07/05/1942		MILLER	Dysentery
14/05/1942		HURSTFIELD	Dysentery
14/05/1942	14/05/1942	HAYES	Died in PUDU Hosp., KL from Enteritis Starvation and Neglect on 14 May 42 Buried CHERAS Cemty Grave No 141
23/05/1942	23/05/1942	ALLAN	Died of malaria and anaemia in KL Gaol Buried at CHEPAS Cemty Grave No. 999 23 May 42
01/06/1942	01/06/1942	SMITH	Died of Enteritis Starvation and Neglect on 1 Jun42 Buried CHERAS Cemty K.L. Grave No.908
08/06/1942	08/06/1942	COOPER	Died of Enteritis, Starvation & Neglect on 8 Jun 42 at KL Buried CHERAS Cemty Grave 1002
15/06/1942	15/06/1942	HUNTER	Died of Enteritis, Starvation and Neglect on 15 Jun 42. Buried CHERAS Cemty KL Grave No.1003
23/06/1942	23/06/1942	TRAIL	Died of Cardiac failure following EPILTIFORM Fit, 23rd June 42 Buried CHERAS Cemty Grave No.1004
16/03/1942	23/06/1942	EWEN	Died of Enteritis, Starvation and Neglect on 23 Jun 42. Buried CHERAS Cemty KL Grave No.1005
24/06/1942		WRIGHT	Dysentery
01/07/1942		JOHNSON	
01/04/1942	In July	Walker (Leics)	Died of Malaria
01/04/1942	05/07/1942	ROSS	Died of Enteritis, Starvation & Neglect 5/7/42 42 Buried CHERAS cemty Grave No.1006

Chronology Date (Deaths as per CWGC)	Date of Death as per A&SH Btn Roll (Green agrees with CWGC date)	Event / Name (A&SH - Green ,137th RA - Blue) Extracts compile from Braddon, 1946 and https://www.cofePOWorg.uk/armed-forces-stories- list/prisoner-of-war-camp-pudu-jail-kuala-lumpur viewed 21/01/2021	Notes from A&SH Roll Book
07/07/1942		CLARK	
		On 8th July 323 POWs arrived from Taiping, 200 miles north of Kuala Lumpur.	
09/07/1942		OXLEY	
09/07/1942	09/07/1942	ORR	Died of Cardiac Failure secondary to Acute Follicular Tosititis on 9 Jul 42 Buried CHERAS Cemty Grave No. 1011
		On 16th July Taiping was closed. 16 sick, 22 civilians and 36 Chinese sailors were sent to Pudu	
19/07/1942	19/07/1942	STEVENSON	Died in POW Camp Kuala Lumpur Selangor Malaya 19.2.42 Enteritis Starvation and Neglect Buried in Civil Cemetery KL Grave No 1014
21/07/1942	21/07/1942	DAY	Died 21.7.42 Cardiac Failure Following Beri - Beri Buried in Civil Cemetery KL Grave No1015
28/07/1942	28/07/1942	CHRISTIE	Died POW Camp Kuala Lumpur Selangor Malaya 28.7.42 Enteritis Starvation and Neglect Buried in Civil Cemetery KL Grave No 1018
28/07/1942	28/07/1942	Squires (Leics)	Dysentery
01/08/1942	01/08/1942	WAKENSHAW	Died in camp Kuala Lumpur, Selangor Malaya, 1.6.42 Enteritis, Starvation and neglect Buried in Civil Cemetery KL Grave 1020
07/08/1942	07/08/1942	HOLMES	Died in POW Camp Kuala Lumpur Selangor Malaya 7.8.42 Inanition, Dysentery Bacillary. Buried in Civil Cemetery KL Grave No1021
16/08/1942		BOWLES	
26/08/1942		PRESTON	
28/08/1942		SHENTON	

Chronology Date (Deaths as per CWGC)	Date of Death as per A&SH Btn Roll (Green agrees with CWGC date)	Event / Name (A&SH - Green , 137th RA - Blue) Extracts compile from Braddon, 1946 and https://www.cofePOW.org.uk/armed-forces-stories- list/prisoner-of-war-camp-pudu-jail-kuala-lumpur viewed 21/01/2021	Notes from A&SH Roll Book
13/09/1942		STEWART	Died in K.L. Gaol 13 Sep 42 Buried CHERAS Cemty Grave No.161 Heart Failure following Beri Beri
28 th September		28th September, they announced that 300 Australians and 140 invalids were to leave for Singapore	Towards the end of September rumour was strong that the camp was to close. The authorities at first denied the rumour
13/10/1942	29/09/1942	McGHEE	Died in KL 29 Sep 42 of Palajias debility Buried CHERAS Cemty KL Grave No. 762
2 nd October		This party left on the 2nd October.	
13 th October		On the 13th another party of 160 sick moved to Singapore	
14 th October		14th October 1942, when 400 (including 150 A&SH under Capt Boyle [mom p288) more or less fit men were sent to Thailand	96 moved south by easy stages to take part in a Japanese movie record of the Malaya

N.B. Information on the A&SH is taken off the Battalion Roll. The information for the 137th comes from a casualty list held in Kew under file number WO/222/1388

Appendix 5 – A&SH who died of Enteritis, Starvation and Neglect in Pudu Jail by Company and Draft

Date of Death (as per Btn Roll)	Date of Deaths (as per CWGC)	Name	Age at Death	NOK Address	Coy	Draft	Notes from A&SH Roll Book
18/02/1942	18/02/1942	CORR	27	No Details (Glasgow)	D	W / 02/10/1940	Died of Enteritis, Starvation & Neglect on 18 Feb 42 at KL Buried CHERAS Cemty Grave 749
22/02/1942	22/02/1942	McKERNON	27	Ayrshire	D	W / 02/10/1940	Died of Enteritis, Starvation & Neglect in KL 22 Feb 42 Buried CHERAS Cemty No.747
22/02/1942	22/02/1942	BLACK	28	Helensburgh	D	£ / 20/01/1940	Died of Enteritis and Starvation & Neglect Buried CHERAS Cemty Grave No.741 28/2/42
04/03/1942	04/03/1942	PHILLIPS	28	Kent	D	U / 01/10/1940	Died of Enteritis and Debility on 4 Mar 42 Buried CHERAS Cemty KL Grave No. 739
05/03/1942	05/03/1942	SHINGLER	20	Birmingham	A	# / 16/05/1941	Died of Enteritis 'starvation and neglect' (scored out) and Debilitation 5 Mar 42 Buried CHERAS Cemty K L Grave No.738
08/03/1942	08/03/1942	GWYNNE	28	No Details	HQ	& / 28/09/1939	Died of Enteritis and Debility on 8 Mar 42 Buried CHERAS cemty KL Grave No.732
23/03/1942	01/03/1942	SCANLAN	30	Lancashire	D	& / 28/09/1939	Died of Enteritis Starvation and Neglect 23 Mar 42 Buried CHERAS Cemty KL Grave No.727
25/03/1942	25/03/1942	GIBSON N M	18	Edinburgh	HQ	& / 28/09/1939	Died of Enteritis Heat Exhaustion 25 Mar 42. Buried Australian Cemty., KL Grave No.763
29/03/1942	01/03/1942	MOWAT	29	Glasgow	A	& / 28/09/1939	Died of Enteritis, Starvation and Neglect on 29 Mar 42 Buried CHERAS Cemty KL Grave No.757
13/04/1942	01/04/1942	STEELE	30	Macclesfield	D	& / 28/09/1939	Died of Enteritis Starvation and Neglect on 13 Apr 42 Buried CHERAS Cemty K.L. Grave No.884

Date of Death (as per Btn Roll)	Date of Deaths (as per CWGC)	Name	Age at Death	NOK Address	Coy	Draft	Notes from A&SH Roll Book
14/04/1942	14/04/1942	ELLIOTT	24	Co.Durham	A	W / 02/10/1940	Died of Enteritis, Starvation and Neglect on 14 Apr 42 Buried CHERAS Cemty KL Grave No.885
15/04/1942	01/03/1942	GROOM	36	Yorkshire	B	& / 28/09/1939	Died on Enteritis Starvation and Neglect on 15 Apr 42. Buried CHERAS Cemty KL Grave No. 886
16/04/1942	16/04/1942	HADDON	26	None Given	B	W / 02/10/1940	Died in PUDU Hosp., KL on 16 Apr 42 of Enteritis Starvation and Neglect Buried CHERAS Cemty Grave No 888
22/04/1942	22/04/1942	GIBSON J M	28	No Details	HQ	& / 28/09/1939	Died of Enteritis, Starvation and Neglect on 22 Apr 42. Buried in CHERAS Cemty Grave No.901
14/05/1942	14/05/1942	HAYES	27	Alnwick	B	W / 02/10/1940	Died in PUDU Hosp., KL from Enteritis Starvation and Neglect on 14 May 42 Buried CHERAS Cemty Grave No 141
01/06/1942	01/06/1942	SMITH	25	None Given	B	& / 28/09/1939	Died of Enteritis Starvation and Neglect on 1 Jun 42 Buried CHERAS Cemty K.L. Grave No.908
08/06/1942	08/06/1942	COOPER	24	None Given	A	& / 28/09/1939	Died of Enteritis, Starvation & Neglect on 8 Jun 42 at KL Buried CHERAS Cemty Grave 1002
15/06/1942	15/06/1942	HUNTER	26	Edinburgh	B	& / 28/09/1939	Died of Enteritis, Starvation and Neglect on 15 Jun 42. Buried CHERAS Cemty KL Grave No.1003
23/06/1942	16/03/1942	EWEN	23	None	A	W / 02/10/1940	Died of Enteritis, Starvation and Neglect on 23 Jun 42. Buried CHERAS Cemty KL Grave No.1005
05/07/1942	01/04/1942	ROSS	24	Oban, Argyllshire	B	& / 28/09/1939	Died of Enteritis, Starvation & Neglect 5/7/42 Buried CHERAS cemty Grave No.1006

Date of Death (as per Btn Roll)	Date of Deaths (as per CWGC)	Name	Age at Death	NOK Address	Coy	Draft	Notes from A&SH Roll Book
19/07/1942	19/07/1942	STEVENSON	26	Cowie Stirling	B	# / 16/05/1941	Died in POW Camp Kuala Lumpur Selangor Malaya 19.2.42 Enteritis Starvation and Neglect Buried in Civil Cemetery KL Grave No 1014
28/07/1942	28/07/1942	CHRISTIE	28	Perthshire	B	# / 16/05/1941	Died POW Camp Kuala Lumpur Selangor Malaya 28.7.42 Enteritis Starvation and Neglect Buried in Civil cemetery KL Grave No 1018
01/08/1942	01/08/1942	WAKENSHAW	27	Northumberland	B	W / 02/10/1940	Died in camp Kuala Lumpur, Selangor Malaya, 1.6.42 Enteritis, Starvation and neglect Buried in Civil Cemetery KL Grave 1020

Analysis suggests that those A&SH who were declared as dying of ‘Enteritis, Starvation and Neglect’ came from either ‘B’ or ‘D’ Coy and either ‘W / 02/10/1940’ draft or ‘& 28/09/1939’ draft. The average age of the casualty was 26.4 years old.

