

**2nd BATTALION, EAST SURREY REGIMENT**

**1942**

Appendix

***Main Diary Malayan Campaign - December 1941 to February 1942***

Feb 1st Lt. Cave, E. Surreys and Lt. Bond, E. Surreys to N.R.C. for a rest. Lts. Stewart and Shearlaw of F.M.S.V.F. joined the Battalion as interpreters. Lt. Peel-Yates (E. Surreys) appointed L.O. between 15 Brigade and 11th Division.

**BIDDADARI CAMP**

Feb 4th 53rd Brigade of the 18th (British) Division took over 15th Brigade area - 6th Royal Norfolks took over the Battalion sector. 15th Brigade returned to Biddadari Camp for yet another attempt to reorganise, re-equip and rest.

Feb 5th - 8th Battalion at rest and re-equipping. At one hour's notice to move from 2100 hrs to 0600 hrs daily. Brig. Coates took over the 15th Brigade, who are now in Command Reserve.

Feb 6th Lt. Sharland to hospital.

Feb 8th Lt. Bobe (E. Surreys) joined the battalion from Staff.

**RACECOURSE (SINGAPORE)**

Feb 9th Lt. Hart and Capt. Thomas appointed L.Os. to 15th Brigade for 3/16th Punjabs and 4/9th Jats.

Lt. Edmonson (E. Surreys) appointed L.O. between 15th Brigade and Command.

Singapore shelled and bombed daily. Our camp shelled once.

Enemy landed on North West side of the island during the night 8th/9th. Battalion placed at one hour's notice to move from 1200 hrs.

1700: C.O. went to the Racecourse to meet the Brigade Commander.

1900: The Battalion moved by M.T. to the Racecourse with orders to wait there for orders. Owing to terribly congested state of the roads and, as usual, lack of all traffic control, the Battalion did not arrive until 2000 hrs.

Feb 9th 0100: The Battalion commenced to march westwards to 11 1/2 MS on  
-10th Jurong Road, arriving there at about 0400 hrs, passing H.Q. 44th Brigade on the way.

Feb 10th The Battalion took up a position with "B" Company right forward Company, with orders to get in touch with the Australians. "C" Company on their left, joining up with a Company of a Battalion of 44th Brigade, who were astride the road. Battalion H.Q., and "D" Company in reserve, were north of the brickworks at the 11th MS, and "A" Company was astride the road running north from the 11th MS watching the right flank of the Battalion.

1000: "B" company reported that the Australians on their right had withdrawn, and the 3/16th were ordered to prolong the front on the right of "B" Company towards the Tengan Road.

About the same time enemy opened mortar-fire on the forward Companies and the Indian Battalion on the road withdrew South of The Works, thus both flanks of the Brigade were left "in the air". One platoon of "D"

see App 11  
map of  
Jurong Road

Company was sent up to secure the road on "C" Company's left. The remainder of "D" Company took up a position on high ground just West of Battalion H.Q.

1300: The Brigade Commander sent word that the Battalion was not to get heavily engaged, but was to withdraw to 8 1/2 MS if in danger of being cut off.

Enemy at that time were attacking "C" Company, and had worked well round behind their left flank. Major Harvey went to Brigade H.Q., being heavily sniped at on the way, and explained the situation and brought back orders for withdrawal to 8 1/2-9th MS

1345: Orders were issued for the Battalion to withdraw astride the road, covered by "A" Company. The 3/16th withdrew at the same time. Capt. Andrews, at that time, could not be found and did not receive the order. (See appendix).

"A" Company were pressed just before they came away, but the withdrawal was not followed up. Nor did aircraft bomb, though there were several in the sky.

1630: The Battalion halted at the 9th MS whilst the C.O. and Lieutenant-Colonel Robinson of the 3/16th Punjabs carried out a reconnaissance. When the Battalion arrived at the 9th MS the following Officers were missing:-

Captain Andrews (E. Surreys),

2/Lts. Chippington, Newland and Roper (all E. Surreys).

Lts. Cross and Humphreys had been wounded, and Lt Bobe killed. (These officers were from the E. Surreys).

The Brigade took up a position as follows :-

2nd/4th/9th Jats (Lt. Col. Cummings) right forward Battalion, 2nd/3rd/16th Punjabs on their left with Jurong Road inclusive, (9th MS). The 22nd Australian Brigade was to come in on the left of the road, but this position was held temporarily by some Australian A.S.C. (Major Saggars). The British Battalion was in reserve at about the 8 3/4 MS.

Information was received from Brigade that there would be a big counter-attack the next morning with the 12th Indian infantry Brigade astride the Tengan Road. The 22nd Brigade A. I. F inclusive the Jurong Road, the 15th Brigade in the centre with no road. The time of attack was to be 0530 hrs 11th February. The Battalion was to be in Brigade Reserve. The right forward Battalion 2/4/9 Jats. The left forward Battalion 2/3/16th Punjab Regt.

2200: The Battalion remained in deployed positions - one platoon of "B" Company (Lt Joaquin) was put on a hill north of the road to watch the flank of Brigade H.Q. A composite Battalion of the 22nd Brigade A.I.F. came up about 2200 hrs and took over from Major Saggars on the left of the road. A.I.F, A.S.C. withdrew to rest about half a mile.

C.O. sent all transport, except the water cart, M.O's 30 cwt etc. back to "B" Echelon, as positions round Bukit Timan did not seem too secure.

Much mortar, "tommy gun" and "fire-cracker" shooting all night.

#### **HOLLAND ROAD JUNCTION, ULU PANDAN TO HILL 125**

Feb 11th

About 0100 hrs one subaltern officer and 60 O.Rs of Australians arrived from the Composite Battalion, 22nd Brigade and said that, as a result of a mortar bombardment, their Battalion had withdrawn.

see App 14  
Capt.  
Andrews  
report

As this left "C" Company, who were on the south of the road and some 300 yards to the east, and the left flank of the 3/16th Punjab Regiment and, in fact, of the whole brigade, completely exposed, the C.O. decided to concentrate the Battalion south of the road.

Brigade, on the C.O. reporting the situation, cancelled the counter-attack. 3/16th were withdrawn to a position on our right, north of the road.

0530: Every effort to get the order cancelling the counter-attack to the 2/9th Jats failed. As far as is known not a single officer or man of this Battalion was ever seen again.

Major Saggars and his party of some 200 A.S.C. (A.I.F.) drivers were in position on some high ground just south of the village south of the Battalion, and one Company of the 5/1st Punjabs (44 Brigade), who had got out of touch with their Brigade, were behind the 3/16th.

A short time afterwards a party of the 22nd Brigade (A.I.F.), who had also become separated from their Brigade, joined the Battalion and were put in position watching the low ground on the left of "C" Company.

0730: The enemy started to mortar the position, and their infantry started to attack. These attacks were mostly on the left of "C" company and, on one occasion, a counter-attack by some details of H.Q. and some Australians, led by R.S.M. Meredith, had to be put in to restore the situation.

By this time the force was being attacked from the west, southwest and south.

0800: As the situation was becoming critical and it looked as if the Battalion would be cut off if it remained, the C.O. sent Major Harvey to Brigade Headquarters for orders. Brigade H.Q. had by then been shelled out of its position. The Brigade Commander decided that the best plan would be to withdraw down the road to Bukit Timan and, if necessary, to try and find his way through there. However, shortly after Major Harvey returned with these orders, all Brigade H.Q. arrived at Battalion H.Q. and said that they had been attacked from the direction of Bukit Timan and had to retire, leaving the Brigade Major (Major Gauvaine) wounded.

Capt. Thomas (Leicesters) and Lt. Edmonson (E. Surreys), both of whom were attached to Brigade Headquarters, became missing about this time. The 3/16th began to arrive from the N.N.W.

0930: The Brigade Commander then decided to withdraw across country to the Reformatory School on Reformatory Road as soon as the 3/16th were all back..

The Force moved off in three columns. British Battalion and Brigade H.Q. on the right, 3/16th and elements of the 6/1st and 7th/8th Punjab Reg't on the left, left, the Australians in the centre. Major Wallis, who knew the country, led in a south easterly direction on a compass bearing.

The country consisted of small hills, partly open and partly covered with scrub or rubber. The Brigade was fired on by mortars and L.M.G's from both flanks and from the rear, and also machine-gunned from the air, and was lucky not to have far more casualties than it did.

The Brigade was badly split up owing to various parties making for isolated patches of cover. Contact was made with the C.O. and one Company of a Battalion of Sherwood Foresters of 18th Division, who were making a counter-attack in the direction of Bukit Timan. Just short of Reformatory Road, the Brigade came under L.M.G. fire from the front, which caused further dispersion, and the party left with Battalion H.Q. only consisting of: The Brigade Commander, Battalion H.Q., some 80 men of "C", "B" and "A"

Companies, 48 O.Rs and two I.O.Rs of 3/16th and a few Australians. This party then moved east to the railway, and down the railway to Holland Road, where they found the H.Q. of 22nd Brigade A.I.F. near its junction with the Ulo Paundan Road.

The following officers were missing after the withdrawal:-

Lt. Bonnell (Leicesters), 2/Lt. Oldridge (Leicesters), 2/Lt. Joaquin (Leicesters), also Sgt. Perkins (E. Surreys).

1300: Temporarily the battalion was put under 22nd Brigade A.I.F. and was in reserve, in cover, S.E. of their H.Q. The Brigade Commander and the C.O. went off to Command for orders, and several officers were sent to try and round up parties who may have gone by other routes.

1530: The battalion came under shell-fire, meant for an A.A. battery nearby, and had a few men wounded, including the R.S.M. The battalion moved some 200 yards.

1730: Hot food was produced and some fifty-odd men arrived under Lt. Abbott. The Battalion was organised into two Companies; one Leicester and one E. Surrey. Lt. Colls (E. Surreys) and Lt. Dagg (Leicesters) also joined the Battalion.

1830: The C.O. returned with orders for the Battalion to be attached to 44 Brigade I.A. who were in position on the left of 22nd Brigade A.I.F. The Battalion was to be in reserve in the area of Brigade H.Q. near a hill called "Hill 125", some thousand yards south of its present position. The Battalion moved there at dusk and spent a quiet night.

Feb 12th The enemy attacked early along the front of the Australians and near the junction with 44th Brigade. Major Kennedy's Company was put in position in the low ground behind the junction between the Brigades. All day long the position remained obscure, and both Brigades had difficulty in getting orders from higher command. 1500: About 1500 hrs news was received that the Australians had been driven off the high ground overlooking "B" Company. 22nd Brigade reported that they were counter-attacking, but progress of the attack remained uncertain. In the meantime 1st M.I. Brigade on the west of 44th Brigade and west of Reformatory Road were being heavily attacked, and was falling back. At dusk the Brigade Commander decided to pull in "B" Company, and concentrate the Battalion near Brigade H.Q., and later the Brigade was withdrawn in the dark in order to conform with the withdrawal of the Loyals and the Malay Regiment in 1 M.I. B, to some high ground west of the railway and S.E. of Buona Vista Road, where they arrived almost dawn.

Move 22

Feb 13th Here it was found that some R.E. units were in position on the right, with the A.I.F. east and north east of them beyond the railway and the Beds and Herts on the left, joining up with 1. M.I. B. on Ayer Rajan Road. The Battalion, still very weak, was in reserve to 44 Brigade, whose Battalions were 6/1st, 7/8th and 6/14th Punjabs, under Brig. Ballentine. It was heard later that parties had been sent off from most Battalions by sea, to form cadres in India. The party from the British Battalion consisted of:-  
Captain W.G. Gingell M.B.E., M.M. Quartermaster (E. Surreys), Captain L.W. St G. McNair M.T.O. (Leicesters), Sgt Farrands (Leicesters) plus 25 men from both Battalions, mostly from M.T.  
The party was taken off in "The Dragonfly", one of the ships that had

see App 17  
Ms Watts-  
Carter  
report

helped to rescue the Battalion from Poncor. "The Dragonfly" was the last ship to leave Singapore and was sunk, together with many others, in the Banka Straits two or three days later by bombs. It is believed that Captain Gingell was the only one to be rescued.

A quiet day with no contact until late afternoon. About 1700 hrs rations arrived, having "run the gauntlet" through the city, where there was much shelling and bombing.

About 1715 hrs a party of enemy was reported to have broken through on the left of the Brigade. Lt. Dagg was sent out with a patrol, and became involved in a counter-attack of the Beds and Herts on a position north of Buona Vista Road. The counter-attack was successful and the patrol returned, but Lt. Dagg was missing. Shortly afterwards the Beds and Herts withdrew from their forward positions.

On the left 1. M.I.B. had been fighting hard all day, and withdrew in the evening to Gillman Barracks, leaving the left of 44th Brigade open.

2000: At the request of Brigadier Williams 1. M.I.B., to conform with his Brigade, the Brigade Commander decided to withdraw to area of Alexandra Road, and the Brigade moved down the railway with the British Battalion as rear guard.

2230: The Brigade waited at Alexandra Hospital whilst the Brigade Commander and the C.O. went to try and get orders.

The whole day had been complete chaos both as regards information about any other part of the front, and about any kind of orders from higher authorities.

Feb 14th The Brigade Commander arrived with orders for the Brigade to move to Mount Echo in reserve (on Tanglin - Alexandra Road overlooking Japanese golf course). Here a perimeter camp was formed. Captain K.Y. Dobson (Leicesters) joined the Battalion in the morning from one of the houses on Mount Echo which was being used as a convalescent depot. Australians to our right and "Sappers", R.A.O.C. and 1 M.I.B. on our left, were attacked during the day, but Brigade was not attacked. Captain Andrews, with 44 men, joined the battalion from M.R.C. Col. Morrison and Major Wallis went into Singapore and obtained an interview with the governor, Sir Shenton Thomas, whom the C.O. had known when he (the C.O.) was with J.M. Forces. The Battalion made itself quite comfortable in the houses on the Mount Echo estate, belonging mostly to Hong Kong and Shanghai Bank. Many heavy air raids and much shelling in the city all day.

Move 24

Feb 15th Brigade area again was un-molested in the morning, but 1 M.I.B. and Alexandra Depot on our left again were attacked. Capt. Dobson had an O.P. on the Japanese golf course, which was mortared during the day. 1400: About 1400 hrs the Battalion was heavily mortared for about half an hour, the Battalion sustaining eight casualties. 1630: Orders were received at Brigade for units to show a white flag if attacked, and only to fire if fired on. This order was cancelled immediately afterwards, but thereafter was practically no more firing. 2040: Orders received from Southern Area (Major General Keith Simmons) that Singapore had surrendered and that all troops were to remain where they were, to stack arms and wait for orders.

Feb 16th All arms were collected. B Echelon joined the Battalion. One or two Japanese officers visited the Brigade, but otherwise it was left in peace. 2/Lt. Chippington and Lt. Newland, together with 40 O.Rs, arrived from 1M.I.B, with whom they had been fighting since February 11. Move 24

Feb 17th All Indian troops from Brigade marched off to Farrer Park. Later in the day the Brigade received sudden orders to march to Changi as soon as possible. Changi was some 22 miles away at the north east corner of the island. Move 25

The Battalion moved off, un-escorted, about 1700 hrs, slept for the night on the road, and reached Changi early the next morning. Nearly all baggage was brought in from Mount Echo by M.T.

The Battalion was quartered in some quite good accommodation in coolie lines in Changi Village.

At the end of the fighting at Mount Echo there were only 265 men with the Battalion out of the 786 that had originally formed the British Battalion at Ipoh.

The following Officers were with the Battalion at the end. Many others, officers and men joined the Battalion at Changi, either from hospital or M.R.C.:-

Lt. Col C.E. Morrison, M.C.	Commanding Officer	Leicesters
Major R.G.G. Harvey	2nd in Command	Leicesters
Major C.O.N. Wallis	Adjutant	E. Surreys
Capt. E.Y. Dobson		Leicesters
Capt. I.R.H.S. Clarke	O.C. H.Q. Coy.	Leicesters
Lt. P.J. Farley		Leicesters
Lt. J. Cressley	Quartermaster	Leicesters
Capt. C. Roberts	Signals	Leicesters
Major I.W. Kennedy	No 1 Company	Leicesters
Capt. I.V.D. Mitchell		Leicesters
Lt. G.H. Hart		Leicesters
Lt. Brotchie		Leicesters
Lt. R. Savage		Leicesters
Capt. P.A.C.K. Bruckman	No 2 Company	E. Surreys
Lt. Faulkner		E. Surreys
Lt. Colls		E. Surreys
2/Lt. Abbott		E. Surreys
Capt. Andrews	No. 3 Company	E. Surreys
Capt. A. Roy		R.A.M.C.

*See also Apps 15, 19 and 20 P.O.W. interviews.*