

Appendix 14 : Statement by Capt. Andrews on the circumstances leading up to his being cut off from "D" Company on the Jurong Road (Singapore Island).

"D" Company were ordered to counter-attack West along the Jurong Road, and to gain contact with "C" Company, who were on the North of the road, about half a mile away. One of my platoons was to be left in position covering battalion headquarters. I sent a runner back for my reserve platoon, which was in position about 200 yards from my H.Q. That runner has not been seen since. In the meantime the advance was started with one full platoon, and one scratch platoon with no automatics. Contact was soon made, and it became evident that the presence of the reserve platoon was essential in order to employ an outflanking movement around the Japanese right flank. I, therefore, went back myself to find the reserve platoon. It was not in its position and, after shouting for the platoon commander and getting no response, I returned to my company, to find the enemy in possession of the place, and not a sign of British troops. I subsequently discovered that the reserve platoon had withdrawn to a rear position, the platoon commander informing me by a runner, which never reached me, and that the company had been ordered to withdraw while I was away, and that on my return I must have passed close to my own men.

I was fired at by the enemy, and got undercover in a mangrove swamp, from which I was able to take stock of the situation after I was satisfied that the enemy were not going to put a cordon round me. The thicket was machine-gunned for a space, and three grenades were thrown into it, but caused no damage.

The Japanese were by this time on the road, and well East of me, and I therefore intended to cut South and try and rejoin the battalion further down the road to Bukit Taman.

As soon as it was dark I crawled away and made slowly South by my compass. The Japs were sleeping on beds made of palm fronds, and very near so my progress was slow. Eventually I reached some very thick mangrove which held me up considerably, and by 1 a.m. I decided to stop until dawn.

At first light I continued and found a small drain with running water in it. This proved an invaluable guide. I spent the whole morning going down it, the only incident occurring when I nearly ran into a party of Japs bathing round a corner. This forced me on the right bank of the stream, which by then was of considerable size. I bypassed them and, after ploughing through the mud for the remainder of the day, arrived at the Jurong River near Kampong Java at about 6 p.m. I swam the river at this point, and contacted a Malay in the village, who informed me that there was a British Naval Patrol dhow below the Jurong boom. I made my way there, but found the report untrue.

It was at this stage that I decided to find a boat and sail round towards the Beach Bymas, in Pasin Panjang. While making enquiries to this effect I saw a party of about 100 Japanese moving along the West Coast road towards Reformatory Road. They were following the road from the South which precluded any possibility of my reaching a boat at this point. I therefore returned to Kampong Java, where I was given a substantial meal and spent the day moving towards the Mortar Ranges. I contacted a Jap sentry on the way, who fired at me without effect. At about 1700

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hours I saw a party digging in on a hill on the Mortar Ranges, and concluded that I had reached our front line. I made my way forward to establish their identity for certain, when a number of Jap planes flew over very low, whereupon the troops on the hill signalled to them. This party later proved to be an O.P. There were a number of other enemy posts round to me, some as little as 250 yards away. I saw a Japanese Inspecting Officer making his way round them. I decided to wait until night, and then slip through their lines and contact our troops, when identity could be established, at dawn.

As soon as it was dusk, I set off, and all went well until I started a dog barking in a Kampong. This drew a number of rifle shots, probably directed at the dog and not me. Pulau Bukan was blazing, and I reached a broad track which I had to cross, and which the Japanese were using as a line of communication. I crossed without mishap although there was sufficient light to read by. It was the British Artillery which held me up that night. This shelling lasted until the early hours of the morning. At dawn I went on, and at about 1000 hours contacted the West Coast Road near the A.P.C Depot. it was here that I heard carriers moving West along the road and, on their return I saw a British officer in one of them, and I stopped him and was taken to the Gap Road Hotel. I rejoined my battalion at Mount Echo the following morning.

(signed) E. Andrews, Capt., The British Battalion