

## **Appendix 19: Narratives by personnel of 2 Surreys taken Prisoners of War during operations.**

### **1 No. 6141393 Cpl. C. Brown, H.Q. Company**

I was with Battalion Headquarters at Gurun on 15.12.41. I was attached to Battalion H.Q. having originally being in the carrier platoon, our services having terminated at Alor Star Bridge. On the morning of the 15th we were told to get out by Capt. Hill. Lt. Bateman then took command. Having gone through the rubber the whole party split up, myself being instructed to take Ptes Warner, Upton, Johnson and the Malay interpreter, and to go on to Bedong to see if it was occupied. We found neither Japanese nor British in Bedong, and proceeded back to the rubber, where Lt. Abbott was going to await our return, but unfortunately, owing to the terrific storm hampering our progress, we found out from the natives that "all soldiers go". I then pushed on but could not find them, so we rested at a house in the jungle. We got lost in the jungle and swamp due to Ismail, the interpreter, who decamped with our cash. We finally found the bearings to Sungei Patani where we came across a house where we got food and sleep. On the morning of the 20th we were told that two Japanese officers wished to speak to us. We were then sent it to Alor Star prison on 26 December 41, to Taiping prison on 6 February 42, and to Kuala Lumpur prison on the 8th of July 42, finally to Singapore on the 17th of July 42.

(Signed) C. Brown, Cpl. 2/E Surrey Regiment.

### **2 No. 6142291 Pte. W. Church.**

I was in action at Gurun on 17th December 41 with P.S.M. Clark, Cpl. Mason and Pte Paget, when a man from the Leicestershire Regiment ran into our position and told us that we were surrounded. We then made our way along the river with some more men, chiefly from H.Q. Company, when we were fired on again. Some of the men climbed the bank and managed to get away, but we four hid undercover on the river bank until the firing ceased. We then made our way along the river again, climbed up the bank and then hid under cover as Japanese were on top of the bank. When we looked up there were four Japanese standing behind us. P.S.M. Clark told us to put up our hands as they might take us prisoners, but they opened fire on us and left us there. After reviving from the wound I received in the shoulder and hand, I got some water from a water bottle and it tried to give the other three a drink, but they were dead. I then made my way into the jungle, and after a week's walking around, entered a Kampong near Gurun railway station. I was looked after by Tamils in the Kampong for about four days. These Tamils obtained dressings for my wounds from Penang hospital, and treated them. At the end of the four days, a native with an armband came to me and asked if I wanted a cigarette. On replying in the affirmative, he left, returning later with three Japanese soldiers, and I was taken to Gurun railway station, thence to Sungei Patani where I was questioned and threatened to be shot if I did not divulge any information. I did not impart any information to them. Next I was taken to Alor Star prison where I was kept for three days. Whilst in the prison I was operated on by a surgeon (native) from the Alor Star General Hospital. The meals consisted of rice, salt and hot water. After six weeks I was transferred to Taiping, where the food was very much better. Four months later I was sent to Kuala Lumpur.

(signed) W. Church, 2/E Surrey Regiment.

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### **3 Sgt. G. Forman, dated 19 July. No 6141438 1942**

After withdrawing from Guron on 15 December 1941, I followed the remainder of the men across the railway and paddy. In the paddy we were fired upon by enemy aircraft, and when these had gone over I continued across.

On entering a rubber plantation we were still being sniped by the enemy, and so pushed on through the plantation.

Later a party was organised under 2/Lt. Nelson, A/Tk. Regiment, and he led us on again. On striking jungle it was decided to make smaller parties. 2/Lt. Nelson took one, a sergeant of the A/Tk Regiment another, and I took the third party, consisting of Sgt Avery, L/Sgt Glazier, L/Cpl Walker, Ptes Craig, Doherty Driscoll and myself.

We carried on 'till the evening and stopped at about 18:00 hours, and had some food. Shortly after the other parties arrived, and also a party of approximately 30 Gurkhas.

We remained together in one party for the night, and broke up again the following morning. I led my party on then for approximately seven days, when we picked up Pte Cotterell of the Leicesters.

The following day Sgt Avery, L/Cpl Walker, Ptes Craig and Doherty decided to push along on their own. L/Sgt Glazier, Ptes Driscoll and Cotterell and myself continued due South, and on the 24th at the village of Gotomba a Mr Sampson (a Tamil overseer) of a rubber plantation took us in his house, and clothed and fed us until the morning of the 26th, when we moved on, following a track on which we were directed by Tamils, who told us that a Company of British had proceeded up a day or two before.

On the 27th we met an English Forest Officer, who had come down from North Kedah. He spoke Malay and very well, and we discovered that the Company was in front of us by two days. We decided to push on as fast as we could, and try and pick the Company up.

On about 30th December we were led to a Kampong where we found, in all, 13 of Battalion H.Q. One man, Pte Hurst, had been left badly wounded, and later information was that he was found by a party of 1 Leicesters and, as he was dying and they could do nothing for him, they left him a revolver to use at his own discretion.

The names of the 13 were Capt. Hill, Lts. Bradley, Smith and Bateman, C.S.M. Foley, Sgts. Harrison and Turner, Cpl. Hall, L/Cpls Greenwood, Frost & Saunders, Ptes Franklyn and Bryce. We then joined up with this party, making 12. Ahead of us were three men, Cpl Reynolds, and Ptes Greenall and Edser.

On about 1st January, Ptes Greenall and Edser left Cpl. Reynolds, who was suffering badly from sores and cuts, with us, and continued on their own. On the 2nd Cpl Reynolds had a bad turn and died at approximately 13:30 hours. He was buried, the particulars of the place being in the hands of Lt Bateman. We rested for a day, as Lt Bradley was suffering from sores etc, and Lt Smith had malaria.

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On about 5th January Lts Bradley and Smith were left with a party of Argyls while the remainder of the party continued on.

About 7th January, at a village called Lassar, we were fired up on by a patrol of Japanese, and at this point C.S.M. Foley, Pte Driscoll and Mr Delmont (the forestry officer) were discovered to be missing. We tried to follow the tracks but were unsuccessful.

A day later Capt. Hill fell down and injured his kneecap. As he could not walk at all on the 12th, Cpl Hall and L/Cpl Saunders volunteered to remain with him, while the remainder of the party, under Lt Bateman, continued on.

On the 12th we were informed by some Chinese that's a Malay had gone to Sungee Siput to warn the Japanese we were in the area, so it was decided to break up into two parties and go downstream by boat, to the Perak river, and here cross, and make for the west coast. In my boat I took Sgt. Turner and and Ptes Bryce and Cotterell.

On the 14th, we were captured by the Japanese at Kampong Eng, Kuala Kanser, and two days later taken to Taiping Jail.

Approximately six days later Lt. Bateman , Sgt Harrison, L/Sgt Glazier and Pte Franklin were brought into the jail. Later Cpl Hall and Lt Saunders arrived, stating that Capt. Hill had told them to go on.

On arriving at Kuala Lumpur on 1 July, we found Mr Delmont and Pte Driscoll there.

They informed us that C.S.M. Foley had died in the jungle, and had been buried by them. Whilst at Taiping Jail two men of the East Surrey Regiment died: Ptes Foulger and Doherty.

(signed) G. Forman, Sgt.