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**RESTRICTED**

# JAPANESE LAND OPERATIONS

(From Japanese Sources)

December 8, 1941, to June 8, 1942

CAMPAIGN STUDY No. 3

NOVEMBER 18, 1942

MILITARY INTELLIGENCE SERVICE

WAR DEPARTMENT

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Washington, November 18, 1942

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## Section I

## INTRODUCTION

The following report of Japanese land operations during the first 6 months of the war was written by a military observer during the period of his confinement with the American Embassy in Tokio, from December 7 until June 17, 1942. *The information on which it is based was drawn entirely from Japanese sources:* official bulletins, news reports, speeches, radio commentaries, magazine articles, and accounts of personal experiences written by officers and men at the front. The only Allied bulletins used were those quoted in the Japanese press.

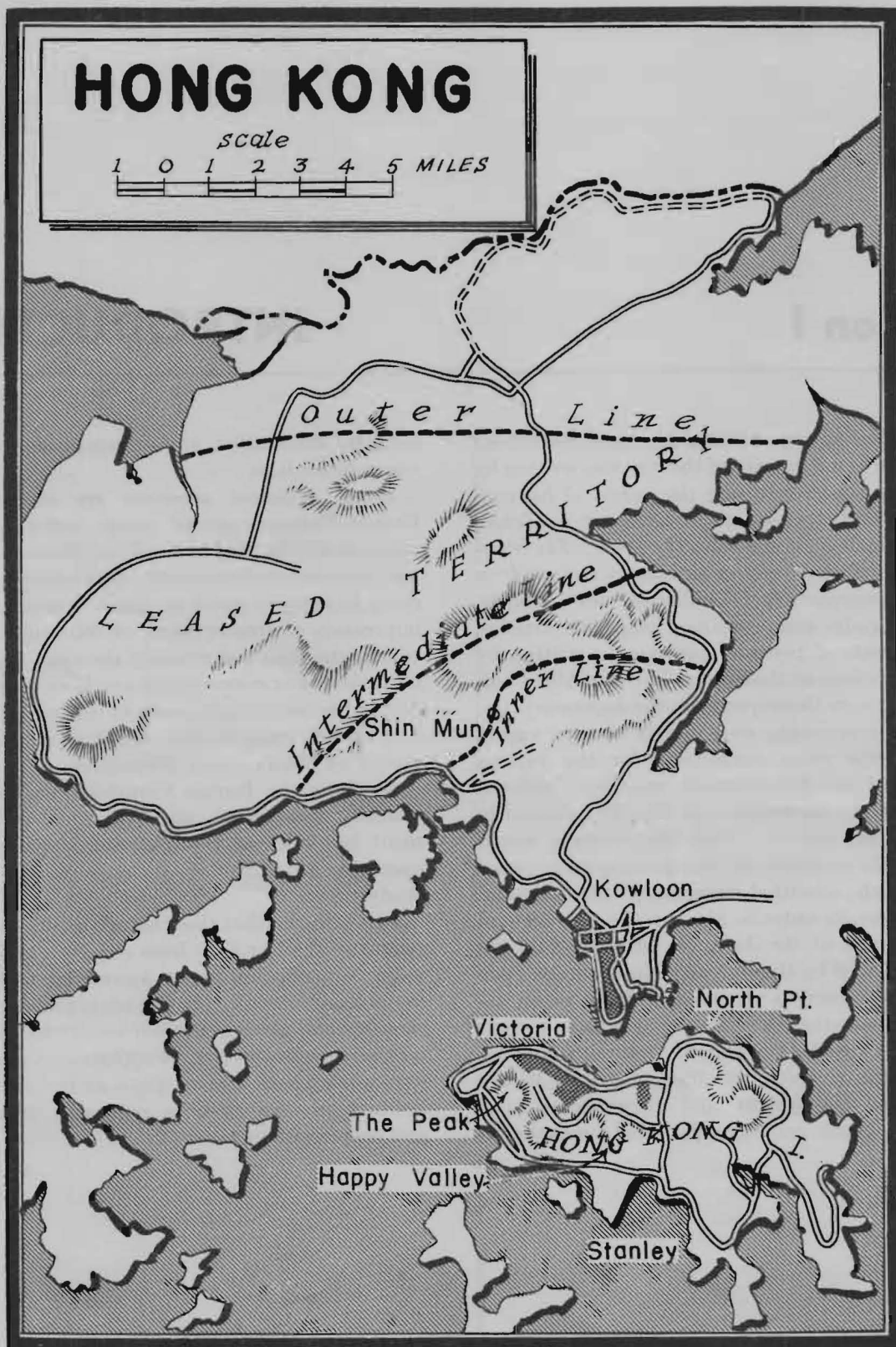
Japanese accounts were nearly always vague, and in some cases conflicting, for the various agencies of the Government frequently differed with regard to the impression that they desired to make on the public. Thus the military would sanction the publication of a personal-experience story which admitted temporary reverses and heavy losses, in order to play up the courage and fighting spirit of the Japanese soldier, while the bulletins issued by the Bureau of Information were inclined to minimize all enemy efforts, in an attempt to make the white man appear as an incompetent and a coward. The information available, virtually all of which was published only in the vernacular, was sketchy and disconnected, and was issued piecemeal over a period of 6 months, so

that its translation and organization presented many difficulties.

When Japanese accounts are checked with United Nations reports, many discrepancies will undoubtedly be disclosed. It is believed, too, that the Japanese occasionally deliberately falsified dates in order to cover up reverses, or to create an impression of greater speed or continuity in their campaigns than was actually the case. However, no revisions or corrections have been made in the original account, since much of its value lies in the fact that it analyzes the record as seen and presented by the Japanese themselves.

By June the Burma Campaign had not been officially terminated, and the Japanese Government had released too little information on this operation to permit its inclusion in the present study.

It is believed that this analysis of the early campaigns in the Far East from Japanese sources is a major contribution to our knowledge of Japanese methods of warfare. It reveals much of the basic strategy and tactics that our enemy has used and may be expected to use. Furthermore, an account drawn from such sources gives an insight into the military psychology of a prepared, determined, and resourceful opponent.



Map No. 1

# Section II THE HONG KONG CAMPAIGN

## 1. THE FIRST DAY OF ATTACK

At dawn on December 8,<sup>1</sup> 1941, a squadron of Japanese light reconnaissance-bombers took off from an airdrome on the outskirts of Canton. Ten minutes later when they appeared over the Kowloon airfield, they found the RAF Hong Kong detachment (some four or five old training planes) and the entire commercial fleet of the China National Aviation Corporation drawn up for inspection in front of the hangars. Cruising leisurely about over the field, the Japanese airmen bombed these targets with no more difficulty than if they had been at bombing practice on a range in peacetime. When they left, half an hour later, the hangars were on fire, most of the planes on the ground had been damaged or destroyed, the China Clipper had been sunk, and one of the huge oil tanks of the Standard Oil Company was blazing furiously. There had been no serious antiaircraft fire, and the dive bombers returned to their base without the loss of a single plane.

As the first bombs were dropping on Kowloon, the leading units of the ground force crossed the border of the Leased Territory. These were the advance guards of the 9th Division, attacking from the north, and of the 103d Division, pushing southeast from Canton. Resistance at first was negligible; in fact, except for a few patrols acting as frontier guards, no contact was made with the British until late in the morning. The Japanese give as the reason for their slow and cautious advance their expectation of stiffer opposition and their suspicion that the enemy was trying to lead them into a trap. As the advance guards of the two columns neared the "Outer Line" (the first defensive position stretching from sea to sea about a mile inside the border), they took up an approach-march formation and moved forward as though expecting to be fired on at any minute. A mile or so in rear, with the heads of the columns just about at the border, the two main bodies

rested quietly along the road until their advance detachments developed the situation sufficiently for them to move out once more. With no enemy air force to fear, the troops were allowed to relax almost as if they had been on a peacetime practice march.

It soon developed that the "Outer Line" was undefended and contained only a few observer groups which withdrew well in advance of the Japanese columns, and the march was resumed. Messages dropped on the columns by reconnaissance planes informed the commanders that there was great confusion on the roads leading north from Kowloon; that British troops were moving into the "Inner Line" (about 2 miles from Kowloon); but that there was no evidence of any real activity in the neighborhood of the "Intermediate Line," a previously prepared defensive position lying half-way between the "Outer" and "Inner" lines. The Japanese, however, refused to believe that some sort of resistance would not be offered along this second position. Once more they halted their columns, deployed the advance guards, and cautiously felt out the line; their advance-guard artillery even threw a few shells into the position in an effort to stir up some activity among whatever forces were in their front.

By the time that they had satisfied themselves that there was in fact nothing opposing them, it was late in the afternoon. Word came down from Force Headquarters to halt along the line generally occupied by the troops at the time, and to establish a strong outpost line about 1 mile south of the former British "Intermediate Line." This extraordinarily cautious attitude was strangely out of keeping with the dash and élan shown by Japanese troops in other sectors, and it is possible that in this campaign they had been somewhat misinformed by their intelligence agencies as to British intentions. These troops, too, had been engaged for the last 2 years in operations against the Communist Fourth Route Army, and there they had learned that too hasty an advance frequently led to dis-

<sup>1</sup> Dates in this area, west of the International Date Line, are 1 day advanced over those used in the United States.

aster. Several references in personal-experience articles written by officers of this unit to the effect that "the situation greatly resembled a Communist guerrilla trap" would indicate that this consideration was at least in the minds of many of the officers, and may have carried some weight in influencing the attitude of the expedition commander.

## 2. THE ATTACK ON THE MAINLAND POSITIONS: DECEMBER 9 TO 13

Still concerned about the British, with whom as yet they had not even made contact, the Japanese established two very strong outposts, reinforcing the advance guards to do so, and sent out a number of strong patrols, each consisting of one or two platoons, which operated in the flat country stretching between their outposts and the line of hills where the British "Inner Line" was located. All night the Japanese combed the area, fully expecting to contact British patrols, but without result. Not even a flare went up from the heights which the British had occupied, and, as one young officer put it, "The continuing quiet created a strange feeling of apprehension. It was impossible that the enemy would let us come so far without a fight. Something was sure to happen." But nothing did. And when at dawn the planes went out to reconnoiter, it became evident that the British were planning on a purely passive defense and that the Japanese would not be interfered with until they actually attacked the British line.

Even so, the Japanese had a formidable task ahead of them. The line, which was about 3 miles long, consisted of a number of strongpoints made up of concrete pillboxes located just below the crest on the forward slope of a range of hills stretching from sea to sea. Because the hills rise steeply out of the flat plain, the troops could avail themselves of virtually no cover as they advanced toward the British lines. The two roads along which the Japanese were advancing climb steeply over this range through narrow passes, one near each end of the line.

The Japanese spent the next 2 days in reconnoitering and developing the defensive position. They kept their main forces well back out of artillery range and shelled the British forward positions at extreme range, so that their own artillery was not greatly interfered with by the guns on Hong Kong Island. Small patrols carefully reconnoi-

tered the country over which the troops would have to attack in their final assault. On the afternoon of the 10th, three offensive patrols the size of a company were sent out to gain contact with British advance posts and to capture some prisoners. They encountered little resistance, for the outposts fell back promptly under cover of a machine-gun barrage from the main position. A few Indians, influenced by handbills scattered over their lines by Japanese planes, stayed behind when their detachments withdrew, and surrendered, furnishing the Japanese with the first prisoners of the campaign.

From these prisoners and from reconnaissance patrols, the Japanese learned that the position in their front consisted of a single line of concrete pillboxes manned by one British battalion (the Royal Scots) and two Indian battalions, and that close-up artillery support was furnished by one 6-gun battery of 25-pounders. Plenty of wire had been laid on the slopes in front of the pillboxes, but, according to Japanese accounts, the organization of defensive fires was very weak—there being far too few machine guns for the size of the sector, and only two places where interlocking bands of fire were used.

On the next day, December 11, the Japanese carried out what they refer to as a "reconnaissance in force," but just what it was intended to accomplish is not clear. They used three battalions in this operation and preceded the advance with a 30-minute artillery preparation which seems to have pretty thoroughly broken up the British wire. But the force used was not strong enough to do much more than again drive in the outposts, and the Japanese appear to have withdrawn without gaining any important results. They admit that on the morning of the 12th all of their troops were back in their original positions.

By this time the Japanese seem to have come to the conclusion that the key to the enemy position was Shin Mun, the strong point on the right of the sector occupied by the Royal Scots. This battalion was on the left of the line, so that the pillbox was about 1 mile in from the western shore of the peninsula. On the reverse (British) side of the hills, a long ravine ran down from Shin Mun to the southwest, opening out into the plain close to the shore and about a kilometer behind the lines. Once in possession of this strongpoint, the attackers would have a covered route leading well

into the British area and would be in a position to assist the general frontal attack by pressure from the flank and rear. Aerial reconnaissance had shown that this ravine was the chief British axis of communication. Cutting it would add greatly to the confusion still evident behind the enemy lines.

On the 12th the Japanese staged a night attack with a battalion of infantry reinforced by a company of engineers. There was no artillery preparation, for this was intended as a surprise attack, but the batteries had all ranged in on their targets during the afternoon and were ready to put down their barrages whenever called for. The troops worked their way through the darkness toward the crest of the hill, with the engineers out in front clearing the way through the wire. Not until the Japanese had advanced to within less than a hundred yards of the pillbox did the British send up their first flare. Once they were discovered, the Japanese abandoned all caution, called for artillery support (which came down as a box barrage at the head of the ravine), ripped a way through the remaining wire with grenades, and attempted to storm the position in one wild rush. But the fire was too heavy, and after nearly half the engineers had been wiped out, all the machine guns, light and heavy, of the battalion were brought up and their fire concentrated on the gun ports of the pillbox. Under cover of this fire, small groups worked up close enough to use flame throwers and grenades on the ports, while other units cleaned up the supporting machine-gun nests and rifle groups in the vicinity. A very few minutes work with the flame throwers sufficed to make the garrison surrender. The Japanese then worked feverishly to reorganize the captured position, in preparation for the counterattack which they momentarily expected.

But no attack came. During the night a few shells from one of the forts at Hong Kong fell in the area, but otherwise all was quiet. By daylight the Japanese not only had organized the area for defense, but had brought up two fresh battalions and were ready from this position to attack the flanks and rear of the British forces on their right and left, in coordination with a general attack all along the line which had been planned for 1100 that morning.

Although the Japanese were in a strong position and were sure that they would eventually drive the enemy out, they were planning on a 3- or 4-

day fight, and expected a lot of opposition before they accomplished this result. The artillery preparation started at dawn. Shortly afterwards a number of light bombers flew out to add their loads to the bombardment. A few minutes later, Headquarters was astounded to receive a message from the planes that the British had abandoned the entire position and that their columns were in full retreat. One battalion was deployed as a covering detachment on the outskirts of Kowloon, and the rest of the force had practically completed the move across the narrow strip of water to the island.

Orders went out at once for the troops to advance, and the Japanese infantry pushed forward and up the heights as rapidly as possible, but for some reason no effort was made to cut off the British or to pursue them into Kowloon. From their observation points on the crest of the captured hills, the Japanese could clearly see the British rear guard withdrawing towards the ferry, but they made no attempt to interfere with it and contented themselves with throwing a few shells into the outskirts of the city. They finally entered Kowloon about 1600 and took over the job of policing the city, which they say had been in a state of wild disorder ever since the withdrawal of the British troops that morning.

### 3. THE ATTACK ON HONG KONG ISLAND

During the next few days the Japanese were occupied in "restoring peace and order in the Kowloon Peninsula"; collecting all the small boats they could find between Canton and Kowloon; "securing and protecting the oil farms" on the peninsula, none of which had been destroyed by the British; and establishing gun positions on the captured heights from which they could shell the fortress of Hong Kong. They bombed gun positions and other military objectives on the island once or twice each day, but they used only a few light reconnaissance bombers at a time. Apparently no attempt was made to lay down any heavy concentrations during this period.

According to Japanese accounts, the British were even more inactive. Little if any attempt was made to interdict the passes over the hills north of Kowloon, and the invaders poured troops down into the plain, in full view of the observation posts on Victoria Peak, with very little interfer-



ence and with a minimum of casualties. Not a single round was fired at the oil farms in Kowloon, although a battery could have set the entire place ablaze in 15 minutes of good shooting. On the day before they crossed to the island, the Japanese shelled the Victoria waterfront all afternoon with trench mortars set up on the Kowloon docks, without eliciting any answering fire from the British positions.

On the night of the 18th, the Japanese crossed the straits and landed on Hong Kong at North Point. Artillery fire during the afternoon and evening had put the British pillboxes in that area out of action and set fire to a number of oil tanks located there. There was very little fighting. The confusion caused by the smoke from the burning tanks seems to have prevented the British from realizing what was happening, and two companies of the leading Japanese battalion were already ashore before they came under fire. There was a short fire fight but no counterattack by the defenders, and when the other two companies landed, the British withdrew about a kilometer to some high ground at the base of the little peninsula. From some prisoners captured in this engagement, the Japanese learned that the troops opposing them were a battalion of the Middlesex Regiment.

All day long, in full view of the British observation posts, the Japanese ferried men and matériel across to North Point. As the successive increments of reinforcements arrived, they enlarged the beachhead, gradually forcing the British back towards the hills in the center of the island. Until late in the afternoon, by which time the beachhead had been enlarged sufficiently to provide plenty of maneuver space, the peninsula of North Point was, by the Japanese own admission, a scene of terrible crowding and confusion. The area was well within the range and field of fire of at least three batteries of fortress guns, and the Japanese frankly admit that they accomplished their mission with so few casualties only because the British failed to bring a sufficient concentration on this sector during the first and second days after the landing.

From this time on until the surrender, the battle consisted, for the Japanese, of a slow but steady enlargement of their beachhead. They concentrated their main strength in such a way as to drive south towards the center of the island in an attempt to isolate the defending troops stationed in the eastern part. The advance was slow, for the

terrain was difficult and the British defense stubborn; but progress was steady, and was rarely hampered by counterattacks. The British failure to counterattack puzzled the Japanese throughout the campaign. It was not until after the surrender that they found out that defense plans provided for only a limited number of reserves, so that when the line was once broken sufficient troops to retake the lost ground simply were not available. The absence of reserves, and the lack of depth in all their defensive positions, indicate that the British placed excessive reliance on the ability of their line of pillboxes to repulse any attempted landing. Japanese criticism of the British defense was that it lacked flexibility, and, once pierced, was difficult to reorganize.

By the 21st the British, realizing that their garrisons at Stanley and other parts of the eastern and southeastern shore were seriously threatened by the Japanese push southward from North Point, withdrew all troops from those areas and established a new line which swept in a large semicircle around the skirts of the Peak. Here they dug in for their final defense, and the Japanese say that the severest fighting of this little campaign took place during those last 3 or 4 days.

It was, however, only a matter of time. Powerless to stop the constant stream of troops which poured in to reinforce the attackers, the British were pushed back farther and farther up the slopes of the Peak. On the 23d an unopposed landing was made at Stanley (abandoned by the British 2 days previously), and additional pressure was brought against the defensive ring from the south. The General Officer Commanding was in favor of surrendering at this time, but the Japanese demand was refused by the Governor. The next morning the Japanese put down a heavy concentration on the sector manned by one of the Canadian battalions at the head of Happy Valley, and later in the day followed it up with an infantry assault. As the leading Japanese battalion jumped off, a squadron of light bombers came in low over the Canadians, strafing them with light fragmentation bombs and machine-gunning them. The troops stood their ground well and evidently brought down one of the machines, for the Japanese account refers to "an intrepid Wild Eagle who deliberately dashed his plane into the ground, causing it to explode within the enemy ranks and throwing them into utter confusion."

The Canadians had been pretty badly mauled, for they were not sufficiently dug-in to withstand such prolonged artillery bombardment or an attack from the air. When the Japanese infantry moved into the position early in the afternoon, they found many casualties lying in the shallow individual foxholes which were the only protection the troops had made for themselves. The lack of even the simplest kind of shelter trench shows the disorganization of the defending troops in this final stage of the battle.

The surrender came the next morning, on Christmas Day. The persistent, uninterrupted advance of the Japanese; the confusion behind their own lines, which made it impossible to organize and launch a counterattack; and the reali-

zation that further resistance would only postpone the inevitable and cause serious loss of life among the exhausted troops—all these considerations finally convinced the Governor of the hopelessness of the situation, and caused him to surrender the island and the forces under his command.

On the 26th the Japanese staged a formal triumphant entry into the city of Victoria, with thousands of Chinese lining the streets, waving little Japanese flags, and cheering the long columns of tanks and guns and marching men. In what the Japanese described as a "never-to-be-forgotten ceremony," the first of the Anglo-Saxon strongholds in the Far East fell to the advancing champions of the "New Order."



Map No. 2

### 1. PRELIMINARY LANDINGS

The war in the Philippines began early on the morning of December 8 when the Japanese, following the pattern that they had mapped out for all their campaigns, struck from the air with tremendous force at all of the important air bases in Luzon. The attackers converged from all directions: army bombers from southern Taiwan, and navy planes from carriers cruising in the China Sea and the Pacific. The results secured appear to have been excellent. Capitalizing on the initial surprise, the raiders blasted the planes and fields of the American Far Eastern Air Force until, at the end of 2 days, Imperial Headquarters could announce that more than one-third of the American air strength in the Philippines had been rendered inactive. Japanese losses were light, for their bombing, which was done from a very low altitude, not only destroyed planes and hangars but cut up the runways so badly that American fighters were unable to get off the ground the first day. The destruction of bombers, and of the fields from which squadrons could operate, made it virtually impossible thereafter to interfere seriously with Japanese landing operations.

The first landing was made just before dawn on December 10, at a point about 5 miles south of Vigan on the island of Luzon. The initial landing party consisted of bluejackets and marines who covered the debarkation of a reinforced brigade of army troops. The opposition was extremely weak. In fact, the only American troops encountered were a scout-car platoon of the 26th Cavalry, on reconnaissance duty on the west-coast road, which happened to be on the spot when the first Japanese units came ashore. The Japanese were not even delayed by the four scout cars, and succeeded in damaging one and capturing another. They were, however, unable to prevent the platoon from sending a radio message to regimental headquarters near Lingayen Gulf, and in this way the first news of a hostile landing reached General MacArthur's headquarters.

The troops used in this operation, as well as those used in the subsequent landing at Lingayen, had been carrying out landing operations all summer along the China Coast, from Canton to the Indo-China border. Little if any military advantage resulted from those operations, and it would now appear that they had been intended solely for training. If so, they were well worth the effort, for the two landings at Vigan and Lingayen were effected rapidly and with a minimum of confusion. By the time that American bombers arrived on the scene at Vigan, some 2 hours after daylight, the Japanese had all of their troops and a good part of their supplies ashore, and the air above filled with naval fighter planes from carriers of the escort force.

The American attack, which was carried out by eight light bombers (probably Douglas A-20-A's), was, according to Japanese reports, well conceived and boldly executed. The planes came in at an altitude of less than 100 yards, and dropped 250-pound bombs on the transports anchored in the roadstead and on the escort vessels which were patrolling the area. The Japanese admit the loss of one transport and one "warship," and the damaging of another transport. But if the fleet was anchored as described and if the attack was in fact made from such a low altitude, considerably more damage must have been inflicted, although it should be remembered that the immediate effect on the landing force was negligible, because most of its personnel and matériel were already ashore.

The Japanese claim that all of the American bombers were shot down by their protective fighters. Though this is undoubtedly an exaggeration, American losses must have been heavy, for the second attack, made some 2 hours after the first, was executed by only three planes.

The landing at Legaspi, on the southeastern tip of Luzon, was carried out by a similarly organized brigade which had been assembled in the Marianas. The assault took place at dawn on December 12 and apparently was unopposed. Coming 2 days

after the landing at Vigan and at the opposite end of the island, it resulted in delaying the dispatch of American reinforcements to the northern sector. The timing of these two preliminary expeditions was excellent, for they kept the main American forces immobilized in the central plain awaiting the main Japanese landing. Both advance units behaved as though they were establishing beachheads to protect the landing of larger forces. As the American Air Force had been driven from the air, except for a fighter squadron or two used to protect the concentration of the main army north and east of Manila, General MacArthur's headquarters was deprived of its most important reconnaissance agency and could only wait blindly for the blow to fall.

## 2. MAIN LANDINGS: LINGAYEN AND LAMON BAY

All the Japanese actions up to that time had indicated that their main attack would come at one of the two places where landings had already been effected, that is, at Vigan or Legaspi; and the defensive preparations of the Americans apparently were based on that assumption. The subsequent landing of the two main invasion forces at Lingayen and at Lamon Bay is regarded as one of the most brilliant moves of the entire war in the Far East. It required the Japanese to execute their main landings in the face of enemy resistance; but it split the American forces to such an extent that they were unable to bring sufficiently strong forces to bear at any one point. The troops sent to attack the beachheads at Vigan and Legaspi were threatened in the rear when the main landings came at Lingayen and Lamon Bay, and had to fall back before they could accomplish their mission. This in turn enabled the Japanese advance expeditionary forces to facilitate the main landings by flank attacks on the American troops who were opposing those landings. This propensity for doing the unexpected, and a willingness to take great risks, have characterized the Japanese actions throughout the war in the Far East, and have contributed in no small degree to their initial successes.

The first landing in force was made at Lamon Bay, east of Manila, on December 22. The only opposition came from the normal beach guard units, for the bulk of the defending troops in the southern part of the island were engaged with the

Japanese brigade at Legaspi. Sufficient American troops had been sent to that area to overcome the Japanese already established ashore, and so prevent the landing of additional troops in that same area. Had the Japanese attempted to land their main force at Legaspi, they would have found their covering force driven back onto the beach, and it is highly probable that that part of the expedition would have ended in failure. But the bold landing of a large expedition at Lamon Bay, without the protection of a covering force, threatened the rear of the American troops pressing on the beachhead at Legaspi, forced their withdrawal, and destroyed the last chance the Americans had of defeating the Japanese in detail and preventing them from concentrating a large army on the island. After this, only one thing could save the Philippines: a successful attack by the main American army against the army advancing on Manila from Lamon Bay. This MacArthur apparently prepared to do, but before the battle could be joined in earnest there came news of the successful landing of another large contingent at Lingayen; after this, there was nothing left but to abandon Manila and withdraw to the Bataan Peninsula, where the numerical superiority of the Japanese troops would be offset somewhat by the narrow front on which they would have to attack.

The Japanese attack on the beach at Lingayen on December 24 was further evidence of the perfection of their timing. Lingayen is the only spot on the west coast where a large force can be landed, and it was of course defended by all the American troops that could be made available. Any unassisted attempt to land there would have been exceedingly costly to the Japanese and might even have ended in failure. The first attempts to land in the early morning were repulsed; and the second attack, made after furious bombing from the air and shelling from the fleet, though successful, was costly and was stubbornly contested, and had actually been brought to a standstill by about 1600. Just then, when one more counterattack from the exhausted and outnumbered Philippine-American troops might have driven the invaders into the sea, the Japanese column which had landed at Vigan and had been moving south by forced marches arrived at San Fabian on the gulf, and from there launched an attack on the right flank and rear of the lightly

held American defense lines. The attack was repulsed, but the troops used to repel it were the last of the reserves (a battalion of the 57th Infantry, Philippine Scouts), and their diversion to that task prevented their being used in a counterattack against the Japanese troops who had fought their way ashore. During the night, the Japanese succeeded in landing reinforcements, and the last chance of repelling the invasion at this point was lost.

The next 2 days were employed by the Japanese in enlarging and consolidating the beachhead, taking over and repairing the docking facilities at Lingayen, and landing more troops and supplies. About five divisions with corps and auxiliary troops composed the expedition, and such was the thoroughness of the Japanese organization and the speed with which they worked that, by midnight of December 26/27, all these troops were in position and ready for the push south.

### 3. ADVANCE TO MANILA

The American forces (which apparently consisted of portions of the 1st Philippine Division, with the 26th Cavalry, Philippine Scouts, and a battery of horse artillery attached) withdrew during the night to positions in the vicinity of San Carlos after it had become evident that the beach defense positions were no longer tenable. Any further attempts to interfere with the Japanese landing would have involved the American troops in an action from which they probably could not have extricated themselves, and the road south to the plains around Manila where MacArthur's main army was concentrating would have been completely undefended.

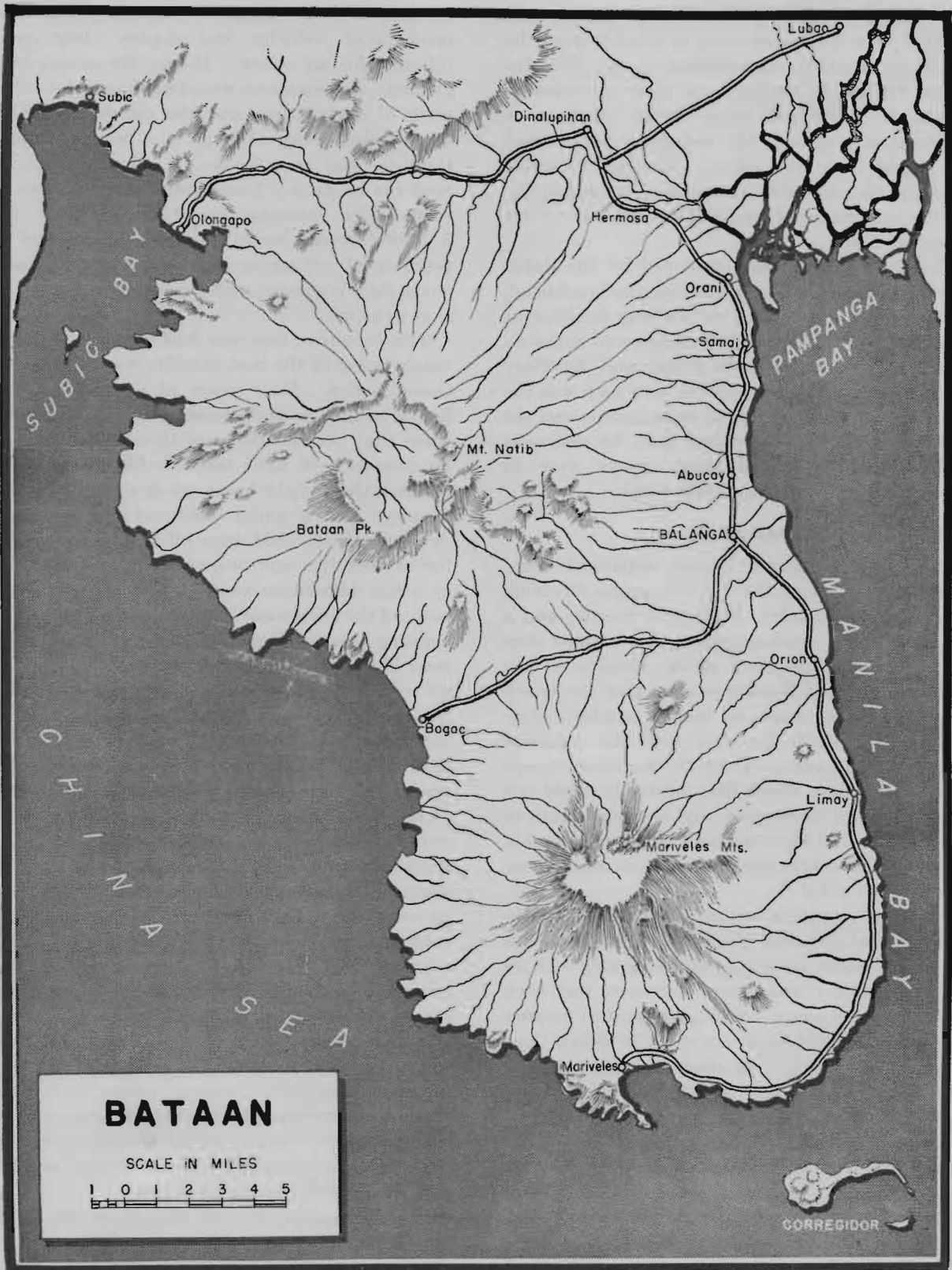
When the Japanese jumped off on their southward drive at dawn on the 27th, they found that only a small force, consisting of the cavalry with its attached artillery and a few engineers, had been left to maintain contact with them and to destroy the roads and bridges in an effort to delay their advance. The Americans made no effort to hold any positions even long enough to make the leading Japanese division deploy, but contented themselves with employing the individual rifle troops of the cavalry as independent security detachments for the engineer working-parties while the latter were engaged in their demolition work. It was a typical cavalry delaying action, with the Americans holding up the Japanese advance guards at the road

blocks just long enough to make them halt their mechanized vehicles and deploy their cyclist infantry for an attack. Before the attack could go home, the engineers would have completed their work of destruction, and the cavalymen would have faded away through the woods, bamboo thickets, and cane brakes to reassemble and repeat the operation 3 or 4 miles farther down the road. The Japanese would be left with 2 or 3 hours' repair work on their hands, and the problem of setting up their own outpost line to cover their engineers while the work of reconstruction went on.

The Japanese, however, had organized their advance forces in the best possible way to cope with these tactics. Four years of operation against lightly armed guerrilla forces in China had taught them that the spearhead of their advance should be composed of light tanks (which would suffer comparatively light losses when opposed by light cavalry) and a mobile body of troops such as cavalry (which could drive off the enemy covering forces when the tanks were held up by a road block or other demolition work). The tanks were the point of the advance and always acted aggressively, pressing forward along the road until held up by a road block. If the terrain permitted, they then moved off to the side and attempted to outflank the resistance in their front, but if the site of the demolition work had been properly located in a narrow defile where such tactics were impossible, the leading tanks simply opened fire from the road on any targets they could find, and the supporting cavalry was brought up, dismounted, and used to drive off the enemy covering forces so that the engineers could repair the damage and the advance be resumed.

On the march south from Lingayen, the Japanese had no cavalry, as that branch is not suitable for use in landing operations, and its transport by sea is uneconomical and difficult in the face of active resistance. In its place they employed cyclist infantry, which required no additional transport space for carrying horses and forage, which was useful as infantry in the assault on the beach, and which later, mounted on bicycles, possessed sufficient mobility to accompany and support the advance mechanized units.

From December 26, when the advance on Manila from Lamon Bay and Lingayen began, all the efforts of the Japanese were directed towards bot-



Map No. 3

ting up the American forces in the vicinity of Manila and preventing their occupation of the Bataan Peninsula. Their two invading columns were ideally situated to accomplish this, for one was approaching from the east and another was pressing on Manila from the north, while the American Army had to withdraw to the west across the very front of the northern column. This entailed almost superhuman efforts on the part of the two small rear guards, which were given the mission of delaying the Japanese advance until the withdrawal could be accomplished. They performed their work well, for the Japanese did not enter Manila until January 2, and the main American forces with the bulk of their equipment were then safely in position on Bataan. The virtual annihilation of the 26th Cavalry and two battalions of the 57th Infantry speaks well for the gallant behavior of the rear guards which made this move possible.

#### 4. THE ATTACK ON BATAAN: JANUARY

After the occupation of Manila, which occurred without incident, the Japanese spent 10 days in assembling, reorganizing, and equipping their troops, reconnoitering the American positions from the air, and carrying out raids on the defensive lines in order to determine their strength. They found the lines to be very strong, stretching across the base of the peninsula from Manila Bay to Subic Bay, taking advantage of the thick jungle and rough terrain, and provided with ideal observation from Bataan Peak and its surrounding hills.

There were only two or three places on the Manila Bay side, and only Olongapo on the western coast, where landings were feasible, and the position of the great island fortress of Corregidor, 3 miles off the tip of the peninsula and squarely in the middle of the entrance to Manila Bay, added greatly to the defensive strength of the American positions. Mariveles, located at the head of the small bay of the same name at the end of the peninsula, and Subic and Olongapo on Subic Bay, were minor naval bases, but their facilities had been destroyed when the Asiatic Fleet left for Surabaya shortly after the first Japanese landings. During the defense of Bataan, Mariveles was used for communication with Corregidor, while the other small ports were not used at all by the Americans—indeed, both Subic and Olongapo were captured by the Japanese early in February.

Apparently carried away by their early successes, the Japanese made the first ill-considered move of the entire campaign when they launched a hasty and poorly prepared attack along the entire 19-mile front on January 12. At no point did their troops succeed in piercing even the first line of defense, and the counterattack executed by two divisions of the Philippine Army drove the Japanese some 2 miles in rear of their original positions and cut the Lubao-Olongapo road, which was their principal lateral axis of communications.

This setback made the Japanese much more cautious, and their next offensive, which was designed to recover the road and their former positions, was carefully planned and well executed after 4 days of thorough preparation by air and artillery bombardment. The battle lasted 3 days, and was by far the most bitterly contested struggle of the campaign up to that time. The initial Japanese push reached its objective within some 5 hours of the jump-off, but their advance units were subjected to such intense artillery fire for the rest of the day and throughout the night that they were never able to consolidate their positions. Early the next morning, realizing the precariousness of their position, and because they were aware of an impending American counterattack, the Japanese withdrew their most advanced troops and gave up about half of the ground they had gained the previous day. The move was a good one, for the counterattack, launched a few hours later, was designed to drive the invaders out of their most advanced positions and of course landed in mid-air as a result of the Japanese retreat. When contact was gained, the force of the American drive was largely spent, and the Japanese troops, instead of being disorganized by having been driven back from their positions, were ready for the attack and stopped it easily.

Later in the day, the Japanese resumed the offensive and succeeded in reaching all their objectives for the second time. This time heavy counterbattery fire by their artillery neutralized somewhat the effect of the American fire, and they were able to hold their positions until the next morning, when a strong counterattack drove them out once more. Now, however, it was the Americans who were unable to hold their gains, for their drive had carried them to the foot of the mountain range across the Olongapo-Lubao road, and their positions in the lowland were obviously



untenable for very long. General MacArthur either had to push on—and this meant a general offensive—or withdraw to his lines across the base of the peninsula. There was only one choice, and during the night he pulled his divisions back to their original positions, probably well satisfied with the time he had gained and the really heavy losses which the Japanese had suffered—the first real losses, in fact, which they had incurred in the entire campaign.

## 5. THE ATTACK ON BATAAN: FEBRUARY

It was now obvious to the Japanese that the reduction of Bataan and Corregidor was an operation which would require a major effort and all of the troops which they could assemble for the purpose. Lieutenant General Homma, the supreme commander in the Philippines, called a halt to operations in other parts of the islands and concentrated all of the troops which he could spare in preparation for a serious attack on the American lines.

Early in February the entire front, which had been quiescent for more than 2 weeks, broke out once more with renewed activity. The Japanese opened the show by staging a series of raids at both ends of the lines. The first few raids were small and short, and designed to secure information and identifications. They soon increased in intensity and scope until, on February 10, two strong attacks, obviously intended to soften up the defensive strong points, were made by units the size of a regiment with strong artillery and even tank support.

All of this, of course, brought out an answering series of raids and patrols from the American side, and scarcely a night went by without a number of fierce minor engagements taking place at various important points along the front. The American raids and counterraids were for the purpose of finding out what was going on behind the Japanese lines, where they were concentrating, and where and when the main assault would come. The patrol activity by the young officers sent out through the dark enemy-infested jungles, and the intelligence work of the Headquarters staff appear to have been well done, for the Japanese admit that the defenders were well prepared and well informed when the two simultaneous attacks at Olongapo and Samal finally took place.

The infantry assaults, which came at dawn, were preceded by an 8-hour artillery preparation, with particularly heavy concentrations on the American batteries, and by a thick blanket of smoke laid on the northern slopes of the Mt. Bataan range to blind the observation posts. The drive south along the East Coast road smashed well into the main line of resistance and created a long narrow salient in the right wing of the American line. All day the Japanese struggled to widen the gap, pouring fresh troops into the line at the western base of the salient, but without effect. When the well-timed American counter-attack came, just as the last effort of the Japanese was petering out, they were swept back to their jump-off positions and completely out of the salient they had fought so hard to create.

During the next 2 days, the Philippine division in this sector acted so aggressively and launched so many local attacks that the Japanese were never able to gather themselves together sufficiently to resume the offensive. They remained active, however, and, in spite of their failure to gain ground, managed to keep the Americans in their front thoroughly occupied, and probably prevented additional reserves being sent to the Olongapo sector where the defenders were experiencing considerable difficulty.

The Japanese assert that the attack in the Subic Bay area against the Olongapo base was the main effort of this February offensive. Certainly they employed a strong force there (apparently two divisions) and drove their attacks home in a most determined manner. None of their assaults was stopped until its objective was reached, and none of the American counterattacks succeeded in regaining any lost ground.

For the first time in this campaign, the Japanese had recourse to their famous *Hōi Jōriku Sakusen*, or enveloping movement by landing behind the enemy's lines. This operation had been used time and again to good effect during the campaigns in the lake region of Central China, and 4 years of practice had made the troops particularly skillful in this favorite Japanese maneuver.

Embarking somewhere in the vicinity of Subic, a specially trained landing detachment made its way up the bay during the night, and shortly before dawn attempted to land about 1 mile south of Olongapo and behind the American lines. They succeeded in gaining a foothold on the beach,

which they maintained for about 2 hours, but they were never able to widen the beachhead or to exploit their initial success, and finally, according to the Japanese account, "were wiped out to the last man." It is more likely, however, that a good many of the prisoners captured by the defenders of the Bataan Peninsula came from this unit.

Although this attack in itself was a failure, it contributed greatly to the fall of Olongapo by disorganizing the rear areas behind the front-line troops (who were engaged in resisting the main Japanese attack), by creating confusion, and by causing the diversion of support and reserve units that might have been used in badly needed counterattacks. On the other hand, the complete elimination by the Americans of this landing unit saved large numbers of their own troops which would otherwise have been cut off by this detachment and caught between it and the main Japanese force pushing south on Olongapo.

Apparently no serious effort was made by the Americans to retake Olongapo. They seem to have made a thorough job of destroying such naval facilities as remained there, to have fought desperately in defense of the place for the greater part of the morning, and then to have withdrawn gradually, fighting all the way, until, at a point about 1 mile south of the town, the withdrawal became a hasty retreat accompanied by considerable confusion. Darkness saved the fleeing troops, and the Japanese halted their advance and spent the night in consolidating their positions. The fact that even when morning came they made no attempt to resume the attack, in spite of the obviously confused and weakened state of the Americans, would indicate that the attackers had selected limited objectives for this fight and, probably, that they had achieved them all.

## 6. THE FALL OF BATAAN

There now ensued a long period of comparative inactivity, broken only by one serious offensive launched early in March. Practically nothing is mentioned of this drive in Japanese reports, and there are indications that it accomplished very little and was costly in both personnel and equipment. The Japanese press at that time was full of reports testifying to the accuracy of the Ameri-

can artillery fire because of the excellent observation available from the Mt. Bataan range, and it would appear that this March drive broke down under the barrages of the defending batteries. Certain it is that for the next month the sky over that sector was full of Japanese reconnaissance planes, combing the area of thick jungle for the battery positions and paving the way for the mass bombing attacks which ushered in the final offensive on April 3.

In preparation for this battle, which was to close a little more than a month later with the collapse of all resistance in the islands, the Japanese moved into the Philippines an additional mechanized brigade equipped with the new medium tanks, about three heavy artillery brigades, and probably one fresh infantry division. In addition, both the Army and Navy air forces were reinforced by numerous bomber squadrons, released by the fall of Singapore and the collapse of resistance in the Netherlands East Indies.

All preparations were carefully made, and it was clear that this time the fight was to be carried through to a finish. Gradually the patrol activity along the front became more intense; air reconnaissance gave way to increasingly fierce air bombardment of the dreaded American gun positions; and the morale of the Japanese troops, heightened by all these preparations, was raised to fever pitch by the news that General MacArthur had flown from Corregidor to Australia and "deserted his command on the eve of its most decisive battle."

Lieutenant General Wainwright, who succeeded MacArthur, seems to have made a thorough estimate of the situation and to have made all dispositions possible to meet the expected attack. But even before the assault really began, it became evident that the constant pounding from the reinforced Japanese artillery, and from the bomber squadrons that seemed to fly at will over the American gun positions, was daily reducing the effectiveness of the defenders' strongest weapon—their magnificent artillery barrages.

In order to conserve their dwindling ammunition supplies, the American batteries remained silent under this rain of fire, except for occasional interdictory fire at night on important roads and a short but fierce concentration on the Japanese assembly areas as the troops were moving into position the evening before the attack.

The attack itself came in true blitzkrieg style just after dawn on April 3. The steady artillery fire, which had been daily increasing in intensity, rose to its maximum rate as the zero hour approached. The gunners poured a constant stream of high-explosive shells on the defensive strong-points, and placed thick black smoke on the heights where the American artillery observation posts were located. As daylight came, all the Japanese bomber planes in the Philippines roared overhead and unloaded on vital objectives which the constant air reconnaissance of the previous month had carefully located: the last remaining airfield on the coast below Balanga; the defiles and bridges in the all-too-sketchy road net used for movement of the defenders' reserves and supplies; the gun positions and ammunition dumps; and the assembly areas where the exhausted Americans were concentrating their scanty reserves.

Again the points of attack were the extremities of the line. But this time the main effort was made on the Japanese left, where they hoped to smash their way down the East Coast road, cutting off the defenders in the hills inland, breaking them up into isolated centers of resistance, and mopping them up at leisure.

The first few hours of the attack were easy going for the Japanese. The heavy preparatory fire of the previous 5 days had forced the defenders to withdraw practically all troops from the outpost line and even, in some cases, from certain positions of the main line of resistance which had been subjected to particularly heavy fire. As the picked combat teams of infantry and engineers worked their way through the jungle, they encountered scarcely any resistance worthy of the name and found that even the defensive artillery barrages were unable to do more than slow their advance a little. Eventually they reached the first strongly defended points and set about the business of piercing the defense zone so as to open the way for their tank battalions. Here occurred some of the fiercest fighting of the war. The struggle surged back and forth over the same ground for 5 days, with heavy losses on both sides. The Japanese objective was to open a gap in the main line of resistance through which they could pour their mechanized units and fan them out in the rear areas, where they could disrupt communications, destroy supply and ammunition facilities, attack concentrations of reserves, and so

disorganize the American sector that any orderly withdrawal of the defending troops would be impossible.

In order to prevent just such a disaster from occurring, the American defensive zone had been organized in great depth, with new centers of resistance one behind the other extending south for a distance of 6 miles. As the 5-day battle raged it became evident to the Japanese that a breakthrough was impossible in the early stages, and they settled down to the arduous and costly task of fighting their way through the strongly fortified zone, step by step, with their infantry combat teams. Day by day they pushed forward under terrific barrages of supporting artillery, consolidated their gains, and fought desperately to beat off the American counterattacks. These had been fierce at first and frequently succeeded in driving the invaders back to their jump-off positions; but as the days wore on, and the same depleted and exhausted Americans had to battle over and over again with an endless stream of fresh Japanese troops, resistance weakened, and the Americans gave up position after position without attempting to retake them.

By the afternoon of April 8, the Japanese attacks on the west had created a salient about 3 miles deep, but the force of their drive had been spent and it appeared that the Americans had little to fear in this sector except a series of containing attacks to pin them down and to prevent the movement of troops to the other flank. On the east, however, where the road runs down the coast to Mariveles, the defenders' situation was much more serious. Here the last of the carefully prepared defensive positions had been pierced, and nothing stood before the Japanese mechanized units, brought up at last for the final thrust, but a few hastily prepared shelter trenches and barricades thrown up by what was left of the American First Corps.

The next morning the tanks jumped off; within an hour they had pushed through to Orion, half-way down the peninsula, and cut the east-west road, which was the American main lateral axis of communication and supply. Here a part of the mechanized force turned west and, following this road, forced its way across the peninsula, completely disorganized the rear area of the American Second Corps and the Philippine Corps, and bottled up those troops in a pocket from which

they were never to escape. At the same time, detachments of Japanese infantry peeled off from the main column, which was following the tanks down the East Coast road, and, forcing their way through the jungles, took what was left of the positions on Bataan Heights in rear and flank, mopping up the last remaining isolated centers of resistance.

The end was now in sight. The only active body of American troops left on the peninsula was a portion of the First Corps which had managed to pull out ahead of the advancing Japanese mechanized units and retreat hastily down the road toward Mariveles. Limay, where the last American airfield was located, fell with scarcely any resistance, and the Japanese High Command, which until this time had allowed no news of the battle to leak out, published the results of their great victory and announced to a thrilled nation the imminent surrender of the entire Bataan defensive force.

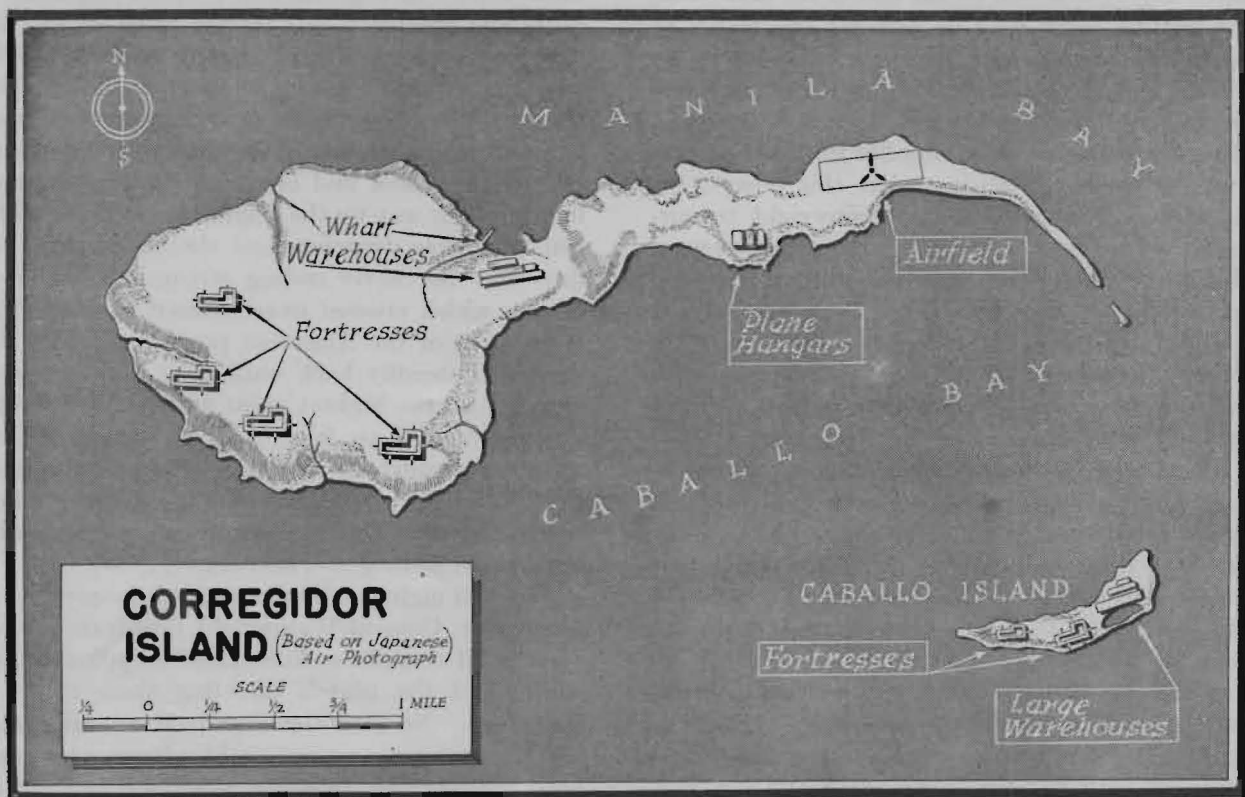
The surrender came on the 11th. Some 2,500 soldiers and marines managed to escape to Corregidor before the vanguard of the Japanese

column entered Mariveles and all communication with the island fortress was finally cut off. General King, the Commanding General of the Peninsula Force, saw the hopelessness of the situation, and sent word to the Japanese that he was prepared to surrender all of the troops under his command.

The Japanese claim to have captured in this battle 60,000 officers and men, and large quantities of supplies and equipment. But the vast majority of the men were caught in isolated groups cut off from all support and supplies, and there does not appear to have been any mass surrender of organized bodies of troops capable of further resistance. The Japanese themselves admit that practically all of the artillery pieces taken were damaged; and since they have never published any figures on the quantity of ammunition captured, it is unlikely that any large units surrendered until most of their combat equipment had been put out of action.

## 7. CORREGIDOR

The attackers lost no time in pushing preparations for the assault on the last remaining stronghold, the fortress of Corregidor. Within 5 hours



Map No. 4

of the entrance of the first troops into Mariveles at the tip of the peninsula, the Japanese were installing their heavy guns on the slopes of Mt. Mariveles in preparation for the great artillery duel that was to last more than a month and finally come to an end with the silencing of all of Corregidor's guns. Mopping-up operations on the peninsula, and the movement of prisoners and captured matériel, were delayed until all units to be used in the initial bombardment of the island were in position. No time was given the worn-out troops who had escaped to the fortress to reorganize and recuperate. As evening fell on the day of the surrender of Bataan, the weary American prisoners, concentrated in groups throughout the peninsula, heard the opening roar of the artillery bombardment, which, in conjunction with daily air bombings, was to continue day and night until the final surrender on May 7.

It was only a matter of time—and both sides knew it—for the frequent bombings and the incessant bombardment were silencing the American batteries one after another. With no Air Corps protection and with all of its antiaircraft batteries out of action by the end of the first week, the fortress could only lie helpless and watch as squadrons of Japanese bombers came down to within 1,000 feet and bombed the gun emplacements at will. At last, early in May, a day came when there was no answering fire from the smoke-shrouded rock. Realizing what this meant, the Japanese called on General Wainwright to surrender in order to prevent further unnecessary bloodshed. But the demand was rejected—apparently in the knowledge that the gallant resistance of this doomed fort was doing much to rebuild the morale of the American people after the successive series of smashing defeats suffered by the United Nations in the Far East.

The second night after the American refusal to surrender the Japanese launched their attack. It was a pitch-black night with no moon, and the constant roar of bursting shells effectually prevented the defenders from hearing the noise of the boats and barges as the assault units approached the island. In the van were about 20 specially constructed steel motor-driven assault barges, each of which contained a light or a medium tank and an accompanying combat team equipped with grenades, light automatic weapons, and light mortars. The second wave, which

followed at a distance of about 2,100 yards, consisted of motor launches, tugs, ferry boats, and anything else that was capable of making the 3-mile trip from Mariveles. Some of the troops and equipment which crossed over after the initial landing, but while the fighting was still going on, were transported in big barges and lighters towed by tugs.

The first wave was within 500 yards of the island before the defenders gave any indication of being aware of what was coming. Then a single searchlight beam swept the dark waters and illuminated the first line of steel barges racing towards the low, flat tail of the island where the small airfield had been constructed. In a few seconds, bursts of machine gun fire broke out, and later a few mortar shells dropped on the beach where the Japanese assault teams were struggling ashore, but there was no artillery barrage from the great fortress which had once bristled with guns of all calibers.

The first landing was effected at 0430, and within an hour the assault teams had taken possession of the tail of the island. But the job of getting the tanks ashore through the debris of the shore barricades and entanglements proved to be so difficult that the assault on the rock had to be started without tank support. Dawn was just breaking when the first infantry units jumped off from the narrow isthmus which connects the tail with the main part of the island and began the difficult task of fighting their way up the heights to the peak. The resistance was desperate and the battle raged all day, but the never-ending stream of reinforcements, which crossed over without hindrance in plain sight of the American positions, forced the defenders steadily back until they were crowded together on the highest point and jammed in the tunnels, unable to fight. Then General Wainwright surrendered, and all serious resistance in the Philippines ended at last when he was taken prisoner along with the 6,500 officers and men who had fought so long and desperately.

The next night, under the terms of the surrender-agreement, General Wainwright broadcast a message to all remaining American-Philippine troops throughout the islands directing them to cease resistance. No attention was paid to this order, and the few remaining units in Mindanao, which had been fighting the Japanese since the capture of Davao on January 4, continued guerrilla activities

until they were all finally rounded up late in May. The only other place where American troops were left was in Cebu, and when the Japanese got around to landing at that point, the two regiments of Philippine troops retreated into the jungle, where they carried on a short but sharp little campaign, finally capitulating when their ammunition was exhausted.

The war in the Philippines was over. Japanese control was undisputed throughout the archipelago, and the military authorities, working in close cooperation with other Japanese Government agencies, set about the great task of exploiting Philippine economy and fitting the Commonwealth into its niche in the Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere.





Map No. 5

## Section IV

# THE MALAYA CAMPAIGN

### 1. JAPANESE PREPARATIONS.

The capture of Singapore was vital to the success of the Japanese campaign in the southwestern Pacific.<sup>1</sup> Not only was the British fortress and naval base a material obstacle to operations against the Netherlands East Indies and India, but it had come to have tremendous psychological value in determining the attitude of the peoples of all southeastern Asia. Rightly or wrongly, these peoples felt that if Singapore were to fall, their fate was sealed; and, similarly, the Japanese felt that as long as the fortress held out, complete success could never be achieved. Singapore was thus a symbol to both sides in this war—a symbol of the will to victory.

The Japanese, with their keen sense of psychological values in war, were more aware of this than were the British and Dutch. Plans for the campaign were worked out in minute detail, and the best troops and equipment designated to carry them out. Japanese accounts give only a hint of their years of painstaking surveying and espionage work throughout the Kra Isthmus and the Malay Peninsula, but they are quite frank in describing preparations made during the summer and fall of 1941. These included negotiations with Thailand for the landing of troops on the Kra Isthmus, for the use of the Bangkok-Singapore railroad, and for arrangements to cache supplies for the use of the Expeditionary Force.

The troops assigned to make the initial landings were selected officers and men, drawn from units which had had long service in China, and organized into two divisions specially equipped for the work they had to do. All of the troops which were to be used in this campaign had been given exhaustive training during the fall in selected areas of Indo-China and Hainan Island, where the terrain approximated that over which they were to fight. When these units landed in Malaya, far from being unused to the climate and the country, as the

British expected them to be, they were trained and seasoned jungle fighters, the equal of any troops with whom they were to come in contact. The divisions which made the landings had spent the month of September in executing landing operations on the South China Coast, in conjunction with units which were practicing for similar tasks in the Philippines.

As the time appointed for the attack drew near, the troops were withdrawn from their training areas and assembled on Hainan Island, where large forces could be concentrated in complete security far from the eyes of prying "foreigners." Here they were completely reequipped with new guns, vehicles, and other equipment of the latest type. A few weeks' training with the new matériel and the expedition was ready for its big test.

Transports and supply ships began to arrive at Kungchow, Taichow, and Yaichow, singly and by twos and threes, during the last half of November. The problem of loading this large expedition at these three ports with their limited harbor facilities was a difficult one. To make sure that the operation could be accomplished smoothly and within the time allotted, Lieutenant General Yamashita twice embarked his entire force in practice runs while awaiting orders from Tokyo to set out on the expedition. When the orders finally came, the troops were embarked quickly and without incident (the matériel having been left aboard ship after the last practice loading), and the transports put out to sea, where they were assembled by the Navy into two large convoys well off the beaten track of commercial traffic. Careful handling of the convoys resulted in their reaching their destinations at the appointed time (0130, December 8), "without being discovered."<sup>2</sup>

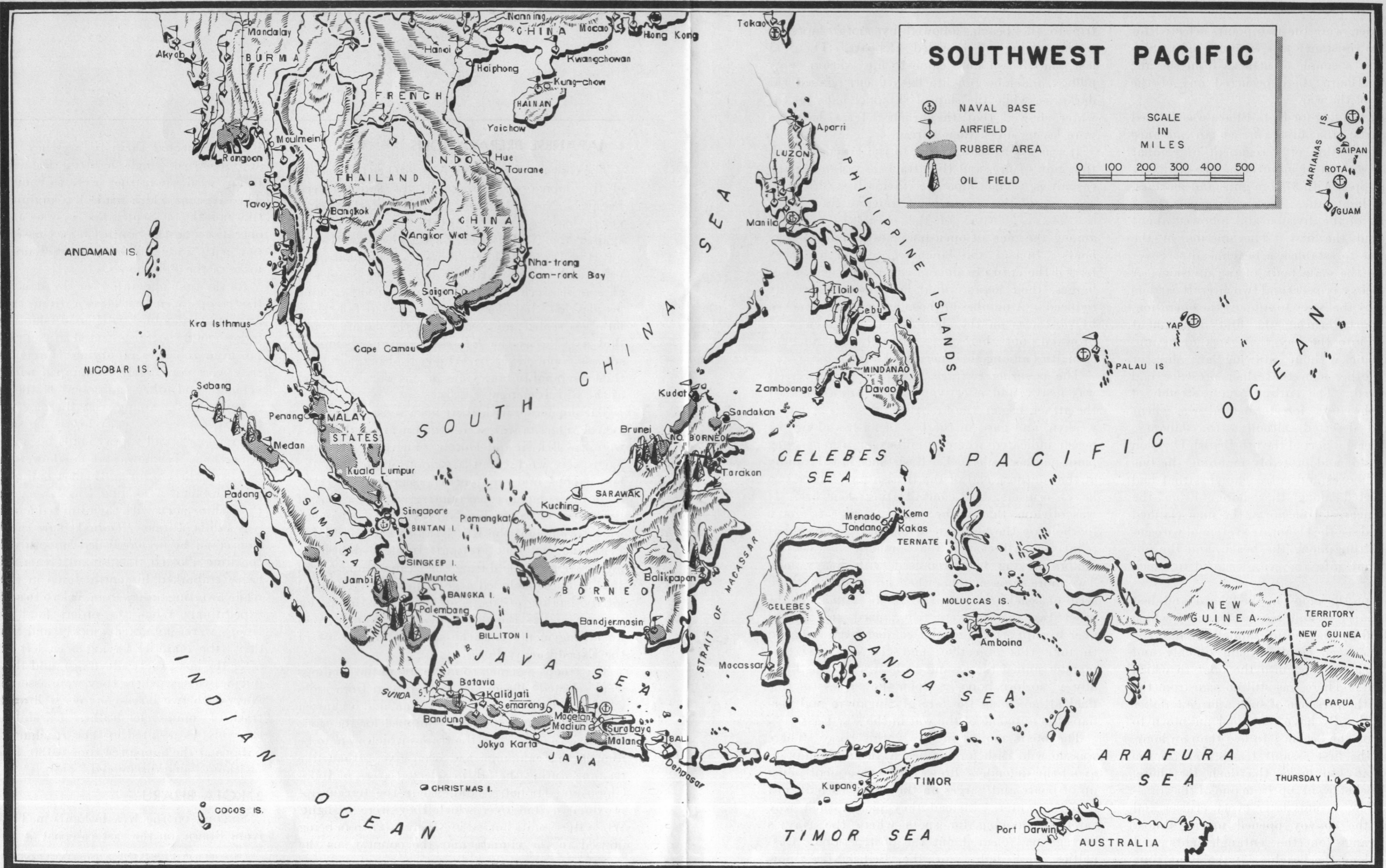
### 2. KOTA BHARU

Singora, on the Kra Isthmus in Thailand, and Kota Bharu, on the eastern coast of Malaya near

<sup>1</sup> This is not correct. Both of these convoys were reported to the American Embassy, Tokyo, as having rounded Cape Camau, the southern tip of Indo-China, on December 5.

<sup>1</sup> For a map showing the strategic position of Malaya and Singapore in this area, see map No. 7, pp. 22-23.





the Thai border, were the two points selected for landings. No resistance was encountered at Singora except for a couple of attacks from the air; but at Kota Bharu there occurred one of the fiercest fights of the war.

The convoy heading for Kota Bharu was divided into two parts: the first carried an advance detachment consisting of a regiment of combat engineers, a regiment of infantry, a two-company battalion equipped with 37-mm guns and mortars, and a unit of light tanks; the second consisted of the remainder of the division and followed about 6 hours behind the first. The mission of the first group was to establish a beachhead to cover the landing of the main body of the division. A squadron of heavy cruisers and two aircraft carriers were detailed by the Navy to support the operation.

The transports bearing the first detachment crept silently into the bay that dark night and dropped anchor without drawing any fire or eliciting any other sign that their presence had been discovered. The entire 15-mile stretch of beach with the dark forests behind was silent and appeared deserted, although the Japanese knew that at least a part of the 9th British Division was in the sector and probably manning the line of concrete pillboxes and entrenchments that had been constructed along the shore. From the decks of the nearest transports, the men claimed that they could see the elaborate system of wire entanglements strung along the beach, and the obstacles built out into the sea, designed to wreck small boats.

The crews of the ships worked hard and fast lowering the steel assault barges (each of which carried a tank), the motor launches, and the lifeboats, while each combat team quickly and without confusion loaded into the boat to which it was assigned. There was still no sign from the shore, though the presence of such a large number of ships could hardly have remained unknown to any watchers on the beach. In less than an hour, the boats of the first assault teams were in the water and ready to make the dash for shore. Suddenly a rocket went up from one of the transports, and a few seconds later every cruiser and destroyer in the convoy opened up at almost point-blank range on the entanglements and obstructions along the beach. At the same time the assault boats moved out on their long

trip to the beach, followed by motor launches towing strings of crowded lifeboats. Then, at last, the British lines came to life. From every pillbox, machine-gun fire flashed out against the darkness, while the slap of shrapnel balls on the water showed that the beach defense batteries were laying down their barrages.

It was a long slow trip in to the beach through that rain of fire, and the attackers suffered many casualties. The Japanese themselves, in their accounts of this engagement, refer to their losses as "heavy." Most of the casualties occurred among the men in open launches and ship's lifeboats. In fact, the Japanese say that had they ferried the entire command ashore in steel assault barges, their losses would have been materially reduced. A number of those barges were wrecked by obstacles on the shore and many men were drowned, but there were virtually no gun-shot casualties among their personnel.

The covering barrage from the naval vessels was heavy and effective. Thirty minutes after the attack began, the fire from the shore began to weaken, and gaps in the line of flashes along the beach indicated where a pillbox or other strong point had been silenced. Resistance faded rapidly at the southern end of the British line, where two heavy cruisers were concentrating their fire. It was obvious that if the Japanese were to get a foothold on the beach, it would have to be at that point, the attacks on the northern and central sectors having been repulsed with heavy loss. Two more ships switched their fire to the southern strip of beach; the survivors of the attacks in the other two sectors were reorganized and moved over to support the regular combat team assigned to take this objective; and the division commander joined the assault to lead what was literally a "forlorn hope." Upon the success of this final attack hung the fate of Singapore and perhaps the outcome of the war in the Far East.

The boats moved in slowly this time. There was no wild rush for the beach, in an attempt to avoid the defenders' fire, with a consequent piling up of boats and barges on the obstacles built out into the water. Instead they picked their way carefully, looking for spots where the Navy's barrage had cleared out the obstructions. Casualties were light, for the British fire, now smothered by the naval guns, was weak. Just

as dawn was breaking, the first Japanese assault teams struggled ashore from their barges and ran their tanks up onto the beach.

Now ensued the most critical period of the battle, if not of the whole campaign. The Japanese had gained a foothold on shore in a weakened portion of the British defense line. But their reserves were used up, and if the defenders could organize and launch a vigorous counter-attack, either with reserves or with some of the battalions in the neighboring sector, the exhausted troops on the beach would be driven back into the sea, and the main body of the division, which was just then steaming into the bay, would be deprived of its covering force and would have to attempt a daylight landing under fire. It was clearly a situation that called for resolution and aggressiveness—two qualities which have been characteristic of the Japanese in this war. The division commander, who was on shore with the landing party, directed the units on the beach to push on as fast and as far as they could to break up any counterdrive that might be forming, and sent word to the newly arrived convoy to rush men and matériel ashore into the occupied sector as rapidly as possible and regardless of losses. To the naval escort was entrusted the task of keeping down the fire from that part of the line not yet in possession of Japanese troops.

His orders were carried out promptly, and soon a steady procession of boat-trains was crossing from ships to beach, carrying reinforcements of men and equipment. All branches and all units worked in excellent cooperation, except that the carrier-borne bombers assigned to raid Khota Bharu airfield came over about 5 minutes after the British planes had taken off, and that short delay cost the Japanese many lives and very nearly wrecked the expedition.

The nine British Blenheim bombers came in singly, flying very low out of the east, where the rising sun shone in the eyes of the antiaircraft gunners. The transports lying at anchor in the bay presented an ideal target, and the damage inflicted must have been terrific. The official Japanese communiqué admits the "loss of four transports, without loss of Army personnel, as all troops had already landed." But personal-experience narratives tell of loaded transports being bombed and sunk, and men swimming ashore. Antiaircraft fire brought down four British planes;

another was wrecked trying to land on the airfield, which had been heavily bombed by Japanese carrier-borne bombers while the British were away.

Forty Japanese dive bombers carried out the raid on the airfield, leaving hangars, shops, and barracks a mass of blazing ruins. A second wave of attackers which came over shortly after the British had landed from their raid caught the Blenheims as ground crews were attempting to service them amid the confusion and wreckage of the bombed field, and destroyed all four of them. So, in one short hour, the Japanese deprived the defending troops of their close-up air support. Until late that afternoon, when a squadron of bombers from some base farther down the peninsula came up and attacked the convoy, the British troops had to fight under a sky filled with unopposed Japanese planes.

Throughout this campaign, as in all their campaigns of this war, the Japanese made air superiority their primary consideration. Day after day their bombers hammered away at British airfields on the peninsula, paying special attention to those in the north whose units were closest to the advancing Japanese columns. At first this work had to be done by naval squadrons operating from carriers off the coast, but within a very few days bases had been established in Thailand from which both Army and Navy land-based heavy bombers and fighters operated to good effect. Until the RAF in Malaya had been rendered virtually impotent, the Japanese devoted their entire bombing strength to the task of blasting the enemy's air bases, never permitting a single air unit to be diverted to any other use. Once complete command of the air had been gained, they used their reconnaissance and dive bombers to strafe British ground troops and supply columns, and their heavy bombers for long-range bombing of bridges and similar important objectives. Twice the British sent air reinforcements to this area in an effort to wrest superiority from the Japanese. Both times, all Japanese air squadrons were called off their previous assignments and concentrated again on the job of smashing the British air force. These tactics served them well. The prodigal use of masses of planes more than compensated for any technical superiority of the British machines; and, though losses were heavy, the Japanese won unquestioned control of the air in the first 4 days

of the war, and, except for a few days during the fighting near the Selangor River, never permitted their ground troops to be seriously hampered by any British attacks from the air.

The British counterattack on the landing party at Kota Bharu came at noon, but by this time the Japanese had established themselves so strongly in the southern sector that it was impossible with the limited number of troops available to drive them back into the sea. The British were occupying such an extended line that they had very few reserves and had to execute the attack with troops from the central sector who had been fighting all night. Although the invaders were not pushed back, the Japanese admit that their advance was halted for the rest of the day by this attack and by subsequent "futile efforts lasting all day on the part of the British to drive our troops from their foothold on the shore."

In spite of the Japanese assertion, it would appear that the British purpose was to contain the Japanese troops in the southern sector in order to permit the main body of the British force to withdraw from a very precarious position. Because the Japanese were in full possession of the southern sector of the British line, which ran north and south along the 14-mile stretch of beach, and were astride the only road leading to the south, the entire British force had to withdraw across the front of an aggressive and superior enemy force. In order to do this, it was necessary to sacrifice a part of their division in containing attacks so that the Japanese would not be able to cut them off entirely from their route of retreat.

The actual withdrawal, after dark, was executed in a masterly manner. While the troops in the central sector attacked the northern flank of the Japanese salient, the units which had been garrisoning the northern sector (the 18th Brigade) marched south through the jungle behind their own troops, until they attained a position on some high ground about a mile south of the farthest point reached by the Japanese. Here they established a line facing north and straddling the road over which the remainder of the British division was to withdraw. As soon as this brigade was in position, the troops in the central sector broke off their attack, and, under cover of a barrage fired by the supporting artillery of the 18th Brigade, withdrew down the road and through the position

established by the 18th. At the same time the remnants of the 20th Brigade, which had originally occupied the southern sector and had been driven well into the jungle by the Japanese penetration of their position, attacked the point of the Japanese salient, and, although repulsed with heavy losses, succeeded in pinning down the Japanese long enough to permit the troops from the central sector to retire.

All units had now been withdrawn from contact with the Japanese except the battalions of the 20th Brigade, and it looked as though they would have to be sacrificed for the sake of the remainder of the division. About 0200, after 24 hours of almost continuous fighting, the commander of the 20th broke off the engagement and directed his battalions to make their way individually south through the jungle and to reassemble at Kota Bharu airfield, south of the position occupied by the 18th Brigade. We happen to know what his instructions were because he and his staff were captured by the Japanese. Many of his men were lost in the jungle, and only two skeleton battalions arrived at the assembly point just before dawn. Nevertheless, in spite of the desperate position of these troops and the exhausted condition of officers and men, none surrendered as a unit; the only prisoners captured by the Japanese were a few stragglers who had become separated from their companies in the darkness. The Japanese, worn out and disorganized by the continuous fighting, made no attempt to pursue the British, but spent most of the next 2 days in consolidating their position and reorganizing their badly mixed-up units. During this period they lost ground contact with the British, but learned from their incessant air reconnaissance that the enemy had withdrawn and was marching south down the East Coast road in the direction of Trengganu.

On the evening of the 9th, the first of a number of convoys bearing the main body of the expedition arrived in Kota Bharu Bay. Within 10 days three infantry divisions, a mechanized division, and a number of corps and army troops were landed at this point and marched south in preparation for an attack on the reinforced 9th British Division, which during this time had taken up positions on the southern bank of the Trengganu River.

### 3. THE ATTACK ON THE WEST COAST: PARIT BUNTAR

In the meantime the second of the two initial Hainan convoys had arrived off Singora in Thailand, just before dawn on December 8. The landing of these troops was unopposed. In fact, the local Thai authorities did all in their power to assist them. Japanese accounts describe how their advance units found three empty railway trains standing on a siding in this out-of-the-way junction of the Bangkok-Singapore railway—and immediately appropriated them. To this detachment, which consisted of a motorized division reinforced with tanks, had been assigned the mission of cutting across the Kra Isthmus, following the railroad and the highway that parallels it, and entering British Malaya through the Province of Kedah on the western coast. The debarkation was carried out in a most efficient manner. The first troops ashore were a specially organized mechanized regiment of armored cars and tanks, which set out at once for the Kedah border without waiting for the rest of the division to debark. Then, behind the protection of an outpost line established by the first infantry units, the division with all of its heavy equipment was brought ashore before nightfall. By the time that his division had moved into its assembly area, the commanding general had received word from his advance mechanized detachment that the Kedah border was lightly held by only a few frontier guards. Early the next morning the division moved out from Singora; at the same time, the advance detachment was ordered to cross the border into Kedah and push south until it encountered resistance which it could not overcome. As the last of the division was leaving Singora, the convoy carrying the advance units of the next division arrived off the port.

It was just about then that a strong British air attack took place. According to Japanese accounts, the raid was heavy and sank "several transports of the first convoy, which of course were empty." But in view of the time of the raid, it is likely that the planes intercepted the second convoy as it was approaching the shore. Before the British airmen could get away, they were engaged by fighters from an accompanying Japanese aircraft-carrier and all but 2 of the 11 bombers were shot down.

General Yamashita, Commander-in-Chief of the Malayan Expedition, who had landed with the

division at Kota Bharu, now flew to Singora to join his West Coast column, realizing that the most serious fighting would take place in this area. The road along which these troops were marching ran through low, flat country, covered with such dense jungle growth that it was impossible to move more than a few feet off the road on either side. In spite of the large number of troops (a total of five divisions by the time they reached the Perak River), the actual fighting was done by small units at the head of the column. Because of the narrow road and lack of maneuver space, the British as well could use only small bodies of troops. But by the clever use of demolitions, road blocks, and small rear-guard detachments armed with motorized antitank guns, they were able to slow up the Japanese advance in its early stages and to inflict heavy losses in both men and matériel.

The fighting in this area was similar to the mountain-pass fighting engaged in by the Germans in Norway and the Balkans, in that the troops were limited to a narrow maneuver space and all targets could be easily located along the narrow route of advance. Profiting by the example of the Germans, the Japanese made good use of dive bombers in reducing the road blocks and centers of resistance which the British had established at frequent intervals. The Japanese say that these targets were easily located from the air and that a few bombs dropped in the vicinity usually sufficed to clear the way for their advance units. During the first 3 days the Japanese never used their artillery. Indeed, it would have been impossible to find a space wide enough to deploy a battery. Not until the leading motorized division reached the Krian River on the 11th did they encounter their first real resistance.

It was the advance mechanized detachment of the motorized division, traveling 5 or 6 hours ahead of the main body, which first encountered British resistance along the Krian River, at Parit Buntar, where the highway and railway bridges had been destroyed. Because of the thick jungle on the British side of the river, the detachment commander was unable to determine by observation the extent of the British dispositions. He brought up his machine guns and riflemen and opened fire on the British lines in an attempt to draw answering fire and so gain some idea of the enemy's dispositions and strength. But the

British refused to open fire so long as no favorable targets presented themselves. As soon as he reached the river the detachment commander asked for dive-bombing support, and directed his engineer company to prepare to cross in their rubber assault boats. At the same time he sent a message back to the column commander describing the situation and reporting his action. The commanding general immediately issued orders halting all units of his column in place, in order to prevent his force from jamming up on a narrow road within artillery range of the British position. The column had been marching at widely extended intervals: the head of the main body was at Prai opposite Penang Island, occupied by the Japanese only that morning, while the remaining divisions were strung out along the road to the north, the last one being still in bivouac at Singora. It is true that, stretched out in this way, the Japanese force presented an unfavorable target for bombing attacks. But the fact that General Yamashita allowed his command to become so strung out that it would require several days to assemble for battle showed that he had little fear of any offensive action on the part of the British.

Immediately on receipt of his advance-guard commander's message, the General drove forward to inspect conditions for himself. He arrived at the riverside just in time to see the engineer company, which had attempted a crossing by rubber boats under protection of a heavy dive-bombing attack, driven back to its own shore before it was halfway across. Realizing at once that crossing this river was a major task, he directed the advance-detachment commander to cease attempts at offensive action, to maintain his position until relieved by infantry which would be sent up later, and to reconnoiter up and down the river for a distance of 12½ miles to locate any fords or other places where crossings might be effected. Patrols soon located two fords, one about 3 miles upstream and 6 miles down, and reported that both were strongly defended by the enemy. The jungle on both sides of the road leading up to Parit Buntar was extremely thick, but a narrow native track branched off this road to the west about 5 miles from the river and led to the western ford. For a distance of about 2 miles before reaching the ford, the path paralleled the river and was only 550 to 650 yards away. Careful reconnaissance by officers' patrols during the afternoon of the first

day and throughout the night had revealed that the British were defending the river bank between the fords and the bridge with only a few patrols. The Japanese decided to attempt a crossing between the bridge and the western or downstream ford. During the night, the engineer regiment of the motorized division moved up close to the river and, with the assistance of some infantry detachments, cleared positions in the jungle for the division's artillery batteries and widened the footpath so that it could be traversed by wagons carrying the assault boats. Because of the difficult nature of the country on the British side of the river, this crossing to be successful would have to come as a complete surprise. The Japanese therefore kept the air over Parit Buntar filled with fighter planes during daylight hours to insure that no British observation plane could get wind of their plans.

By the night of the 19th, artillery positions had been prepared, and the guns opened up a heavy fire on the three British defense positions behind the fords and the destroyed bridges. At the same time troops were moved up opposite those positions in full view of the enemy, giving every indication that when the Japanese attack came it would be launched at one or more of those points. On the morning of the 21st, just about daybreak, after almost 24 hours of continuous bombardment, two squadrons of Japanese dive bombers came over and attacked the British positions at the eastern ford and the bridges. Shortly afterwards the Japanese infantry started out across the river in small rubber boats; but, in spite of the heavy bombardment to which the British had been subjected, they were able to bring to bear enough fire to stop this attack in its tracks. This, however, was all according to Japanese plan. Their main attack had gotten under way before dawn, when the engineer regiment crossed the river at an undefended point about 1 mile upstream from the western ford. Almost the entire regiment had reached the opposite bank before it was discovered by the British. Then a small patrol happened to run into one of the Japanese companies; but the entire patrol was captured, so that no word of the successful crossing got back to the British commander until some 3 hours later when the engineer regiment, after having forced its way through the jungle, attacked the flank and rear of the defensive position opposite the bridges.

In an attempt to save the situation, the British brought up a reserve battalion and executed a counterattack. But by that time an entire infantry brigade had followed in the footsteps of the engineers, and there were far too many Japanese troops on the southern bank of the river to be dislodged. The attack did succeed, however, in delaying the Japanese long enough to permit all British troops to withdraw from their positions and to assemble in the vicinity of Taiping without serious interference. The Japanese did not take up the pursuit that night, and early the next morning the British withdrew along the railroad into the Larut Hills, where their rear guard established itself in the only pass where the railway and highway cross the mountains. The main body continued on and occupied previously prepared defensive positions on the eastern bank of the Perak river, which at this point runs south, parallel to and behind the Larut Range.

#### 4. THE FIGHT IN THE LARUT HILLS

The Larut Hills fight was a small one, for the forces involved on both sides were not large; but it was important, because it held up the Japanese columns for 2 days; and it is interesting, for it shows the extent to which the Japanese had been studying the technique developed by the Germans for fighting in mountain passes in Norway and the Balkans. Larut Hills Pass, which was at the time of this engagement occupied by a battalion of Australian infantry supported by two 6-gun batteries of light artillery, is an ideal position for defense. The road and the railway rise steeply out of the jungle and climb to an elevation of about 1,500 feet in the short distance of 6 miles. The thick jungle floor of the plain provides no space for maneuver or development; and as the road rises out of the forest towards the high land, the country becomes steep and rocky, making it extremely difficult to move more than a few yards to either side of the road. The position occupied by the Australians was organized in depth, with mutually supporting strongpoints extending from about halfway up the pass to the summit. Because of the nature of the terrain, the Japanese were unable to use more than one battalion of infantry in the assault, and had to direct their attack straight up the road without having recourse to any outflanking maneuvers.

In order to accomplish this, it was necessary to

bring an overwhelming fire against the British line. Battery positions were cleared in the jungle at the foot of the pass, and a couple of 155-mm gun battalions shelled the area for several hours prior to the assault. But the observation from the jungle floor was poor, and the assault troops would never have been able to advance had they been forced to depend on this support alone. Here, for the first time, we see mention of self-propelled artillery. The Japanese description of this piece corresponds quite closely to what we know of the 105-mm gun, mounted on a self-propelled tractor, used by the Germans in all their campaigns since May 1940. In the present fight the Japanese seem to have used a battery of six guns, which followed the infantry-engineer combat teams in close support and engaged the enemy's strongpoints with direct fire from positions on the road close behind the assaulting units.

The Japanese proceeded in the only way possible by a series of direct limited frontal attacks against each strongpoint in turn. The objective each time was limited to the strongpoint immediately in front, and after its capture fresh combat teams would be brought up to defend the area against counterattacks launched by the British from strongpoints in rear. Because of the small size of the garrison, such attacks were never very large nor very heavy, but in the early stages of the fight there were frequent local counterattacks made by units the size of a platoon. It was a slow, painful advance, and cost the Japanese heavily in both men and matériel. Although they were able to use only one battalion at a time in the assault, this was constantly replaced, so that before the fight was over, four in succession had been moved up against the lone battalion of defenders.

The Japanese ground troops were aided in this attack by an almost continuous series of dive bombings. By the evening of the 22d, two British artillery batteries mounted on the high ground on either side of the summit of the pass had been bombed out of action. Deprived now of all artillery support except that furnished by one howitzer battery firing from the valley on the far side of the pass, the Australian defense began to crumble. By noon on the 23d, all but the last two strongpoints located in the summit of the pass had fallen to the Japanese, and it was clear that if the defending battalion was to extricate

itself as a unit it would have to withdraw before the next onslaught. Probably under orders from his division commander, the battalion commander withdrew his companies from their positions in the pass, loaded them into trucks behind the crest of the hill, and started down the road into the Perak Valley in an attempt to rejoin the main forces which had constructed a defensive position in the hills to the eastward. While the Bren-gun carriers and trucks were winding their way down the steep mountain road, a squadron of dive bombers came over intending to deliver the preparatory bombardment for the final Japanese assault. Catching sight of the convoy, and realizing that the enemy had pulled out of their position, the squadron commander directed his attack on the column of vehicles. There appears to have been no anti-aircraft fire, and the troops sitting in open trucks moving down a narrow road at a snail's pace suffered terrible losses. When the Japanese infantry passed the spot a few hours later, they found more than 50 charred and overturned trucks and gun carriers scattered along the road.

##### 5. THE PERAK RIVER CROSSING

The capture of this pass gave the Japanese possession of the entire range of the Larut Hills. From their position on the crest, they could look eastward across the Perak River valley some 6 miles to the high ground where the British were entrenched. As the British had withdrawn to the left bank, the Japanese were able to use the entire area west and north of the river without opposition.

The Perak River runs south from Kuala Kangsar, the site of the first of the British positions, where the highway and railway cross the river, for nearly 62 miles as far as Telok, where it turns west and some 12½ miles farther on empties into the Malacca Straits. After crossing the river at Kuala Kangsar, the railway and highway climb the hills on the eastern bank and then turn south, roughly paralleling the river at a distance of 1 or 2 miles. They pass through Ipoh, the site of the second British position, and from there run west close to the river until it flows through Telok, whence the roads continue south toward Kuala Lumpur.

Air reconnaissance had informed the Japanese that the British were preparing to defend the river line at Kuala Kangsar, at Ipoh, and at

Telok, and that the field fortifications at the last two places were so arranged that they were capable of defense against any force coming down the road from the north, as well as against any attempts made to cross the river from the west. All three of the British positions were strong and would be difficult to take. But the line that they were trying to defend was very extended, and, as it faced west and as their line of retreat was to the south, it was extremely vulnerable to any attacks made at its southern extremity, namely, Telok.

General Yamashita had been unable to use more than about one division at a time in any engagement thus far, because of the narrow front on which his troops had been operating. Now, however, with a 62-mile front to attack, he was in a position to use the major portion of his force, and with plenty of room in which to maneuver he could use his troops to greater advantage than merely slugging their way down a narrow road. All of the artillery of the motorized division which had been leading the column was placed in position on the Larut Hills and brought to bear against the British forces at Kuala Kangsar. From the summit of the pass, however, the road wound down the mountain side to the river for about 3 miles in full view of the British batteries, and it was impossible to move any large bodies of troops down this road to positions where they could come into contact with the enemy on the far bank. All that the Japanese could do was to send down small detachments at night, when by moving rapidly and at irregular intervals they could traverse the road without suffering too heavy casualties from the interdictory fire of the British batteries, which kept pounding this road throughout the hours of darkness. The British guns were well protected, and, in spite of the fire of the motorized division's artillery and a number of dive-bombing attacks, the Japanese were unable to silence them; and it became clear that it would be impossible to cross the river at this point. The Japanese determined to attempt a crossing at a point near Ipoh, about 12 miles downstream from Kuala Kangsar. The British positions at this point were every bit as strong as those farther upstream, but the flat, thick jungle which extended right up to the bank of the river enabled the Japanese troops to approach much closer without being seen. The "roads" through this area were scarcely more than native paths. The



Japanese used three regiments of engineers over a period of 4 days in improving the road from Taiping to the point on the river bank opposite Ipoh that they had chosen for their attack.

By the morning of the 26th, the artillery of the division selected for the task was in position in the jungle, and the infantry units and engineers were in assembly areas close to the river, prepared, when the time came, to move forward, launch their rubber assault boats, and cross to the opposite bank. All day long the artillery fired a heavy bombardment against the British lines. The actual crossing was set for the morning of the 27th, and in the early morning hours before daylight three combat teams composed of engineers and infantry moved up to the river bank and waited for the signal to launch their boats. Just after daylight, bombers came over and rained high explosives on the British lines for nearly half an hour. As the last plane disappeared the assault teams shoved off from the bank of the river and started paddling across. Because of the heavy bombardment, the Japanese thought that they were going to be able to cross the river with very little opposition. But the British positions had been so well hidden in the jungle that neither the artillery nor the bombers had succeeded in accurately locating them. As a result, there were enough machine-gun nests and batteries in action that morning to turn such a hail of fire on the Japanese as they paddled slowly across the river that the attack broke down almost before it started. Japanese losses must have been very heavy, for there were no further attempts that day to renew the advance.

Although this attack was itself a failure, it did succeed in ultimately getting the Japanese across the Perak River. The British apparently realized that if and when the Japanese ever did cross at Ipoh, the troops at Kuala Kangsar would be cut off from retreat, and therefore they withdrew the garrison from its defense of the bridges at that point and moved them south to join the troops at Ipoh. This evacuation of course enabled the Japanese to cross at Kuala Kangsar. By the afternoon of the 27th, General Yamashita had a division on the eastern bank of the Perak River ready to move on the British at Ipoh from the north, as well as a division which was ready to attempt a crossing from the west bank.

The attack was launched again on the morning of the 28th, and concentrated fire from the bat-

teries of two divisions plus some additional heavy artillery was directed against the defenders. For the first time in the West Coast campaign, two complete Japanese divisions were employed simultaneously. But in spite of all that they could do, they were unable to dislodge the Australians from any but the most advanced positions. During the day three onslaughts were repulsed by the defending troops. Late in the evening, after having repulsed the third attack, the British command suddenly retired and move rapidly down the road in the direction of Telok, leaving only a small rear guard in the lines at Ipoh to cover their withdrawal. The cause of this retreat was the sudden appearance of a strong Japanese force in the mouth of the Perak River near Telok. This was a third division which the Japanese had moved south through the jungle until it reached the coast at a small town called Lumpat. There, after assembling a number of knocked-down motorboats which they had brought with them, they embarked two specially organized assault battalions which moved down the coast some 19 miles to the mouth of the Perak River, where they headed upstream towards Telok. The plan was to surprise the garrison at Telok before daylight, capture the town, straddle the road coming south from Ipoh, and so bottle up the retreating British troops. A small British river patrol, however, discovered them about 6 miles downstream from Telok and gave the warning in time to alert the garrison. The British were ready when the Japanese boats arrived, and as the attackers had no artillery or aviation support, the defenders had no difficulty in repulsing them. But the appearance of Japanese troops virtually in rear of their lines alarmed the British High Command to such an extent that it was apparently decided to abandon the defense of the Perak River and to withdraw to the vicinity of Kuala Lumpur, where the next defensive line was being prepared.

## 6. THE BATTLE OF KUALA LUMPUR

The defense of Kuala Lumpur consisted of a series of gallant fights in which the British time and again repulsed the most desperate Japanese attacks, only to be forced ultimately to give up their positions because of Japanese landings behind their lines. By this time the British had received both air and ground reinforcements from India, and the 11th Division after withdrawing from

Telok down the road toward Kuala Lumpur passed through the lines of the recently arrived 45th Indian Brigade, which was building a defensive position in a defile just north of Trolak. The terrain at this place is somewhat similar to that encountered by the Japanese in the pass through the Larut Hills, and they were forced to employ the same tactics in their attempts to overcome British resistance at this point. Now, however, their enemies consisted of a full brigade of fresh troops supported by a mountain artillery brigade, and the repeated frontal attacks which had overcome the lone Australian battalion in the previous fight were unable to wear them down. The British had enough troops available for the defense of this pass to enable them to rotate the battalions in the trenches, so that when the Japanese brought up fresh troops, the British also were able to bring reinforcements up into the line. The Japanese unit involved in this action was an infantry division which up until then had not seen any serious action. The motorized division which had led the march ever since the landing at Singora had been pulled out after the Larut Hills fight and withdrawn to Taiping for rest and reorganization.

For some reason or other, the Japanese did not press their pursuit after the British abandoned Ipoh and Telok, probably because the troops which had marched south through the jungle and attempted to land at Telok were scattered between that town and the mouth of the Perak River and Lumpat. The logistics problem involved in supplying this division on the coast was a difficult one. Some time was required to work it out and to reassemble the division at the mouth of the Perak River, preparatory to resuming operations along the coast. As the advance of the main column down the highway depended on the success of the landing operations to be carried out by this unit, the entire Japanese force was held up for several days while the necessary supplies and boats were being assembled in the vicinity of Telok.

When all preparations had been made, the division selected to head the advance moved out of its bivouac south of Ipoh and headed down the road towards Trolak, where an advance detachment had been in contact with the Indian brigade ever since the 28th of December. The march of the division was timed so as to arrive at the defile early on the morning of January 4. The division commander had preceded his troops and had his plans all ready

when the first of his units arrived at the scene of battle. As in the Larut Hills fight, the only way to advance was for the troops to force their way through the pass by sheer superiority of fire power. All of the division's artillery was brought to bear on the narrow British front, and while the bulk of the infantry remained well behind in assembly areas, one battalion at a time, aided by a few flame-throwing tanks and specially trained engineer teams, attacked the strongpoints in succession and fought desperately against the Indian counterattacks until the next assault battalion passed through it to assail the strongpoints in rear. For 3 days the Japanese attacked unceasingly, using fresh troops every day and all the modern weapons at their command. By the end of the third day they had succeeded in penetrating only the first line of the defensive position, and had the British been able to bring up fresh troops, it is very likely that they could have deprived the invaders of even these small gains. The Japanese say that their air reconnaissance showed that a motorized column was in fact proceeding up the road from Kuala Lumpur towards Trolak on the afternoon of January 7. This column, they believed, the British intended to use in a counterattack to drive them out of their position.

That morning, however, the Japanese division which had been assembling at the mouth of the Perak River embarked a detachment of troops in its motor boats and in a number of native boats which had been commandeered up and down the coast, and effected a surprise landing just south of the mouth of the Bernam River where a road runs east through the jungle for about 37 miles and joins the West Coast highway at a point between Trolak and Kuala Kubu. In spite of the fact that this was the second time the Japanese had made use of this maneuver, the British seem to have been caught completely unawares. As the Japanese pushed along the jungle road which led eastward from their landing point on the coast, they encountered no resistance until a detachment of Australians, which had been rushed down the road, intercepted them less than 10 miles from the main highway. Unfortunately for the Japanese, their advance units were lacking in artillery and were unable to push through the Australians to secure a position across the highway south of Trolak. Had they been able to do so and to hold the position until the arrival of the

remainder of their division, the Japanese would have been able to trap the 45th Indian Brigade as well as a brigade of Australians which was still in the vicinity of Trolak. By the time sufficient troops had come up to drive the Australians back towards the highway, the British troops from Trolak had succeeded in effecting their retreat and were well on the way to Kuala Kubu.

At Kuala Kubu a part of the Australian division was astride the road in a position of some natural strength, but as the country was more open than that farther north, the defense of the area was going to be more difficult than that of the narrow defiles and jungle passes which the British had thus far been holding. The Japanese spent 2 days, the 9th and 10th, in launching fierce attacks against the Kuala Kubu defenses. All of these onslaughts were repulsed, and at no time did the Japanese succeed in penetrating even the outer lines. But they did succeed in pinning the British to their position and in making them use the bulk of their troops against the forces moving down the highway. For by this time the British realized that the most serious threat to their defense of the Malay peninsula lay in the Japanese units which were proceeding down the West Coast and landing behind the defensive lines.

In an attempt to block this maneuver, the British had sent a force to Kuala Selangor, at the mouth of the Selangor river, where the next attempt at a landing could logically be expected. A railway runs southward from Kuala Selangor as far as Klang, where it joins the east-west line from Kuala Lumpur to Port Swettenham. It was therefore vital to the defense of Kuala Lumpur for the British to hold Kuala Selangor and Port Swettenham, and they garrisoned these coastal points with all the troops which could be spared from the defense of the main position. However, the heavy attacks by the main Japanese forces engaged so many troops that the British were unable to send an adequate force to defend the coast.

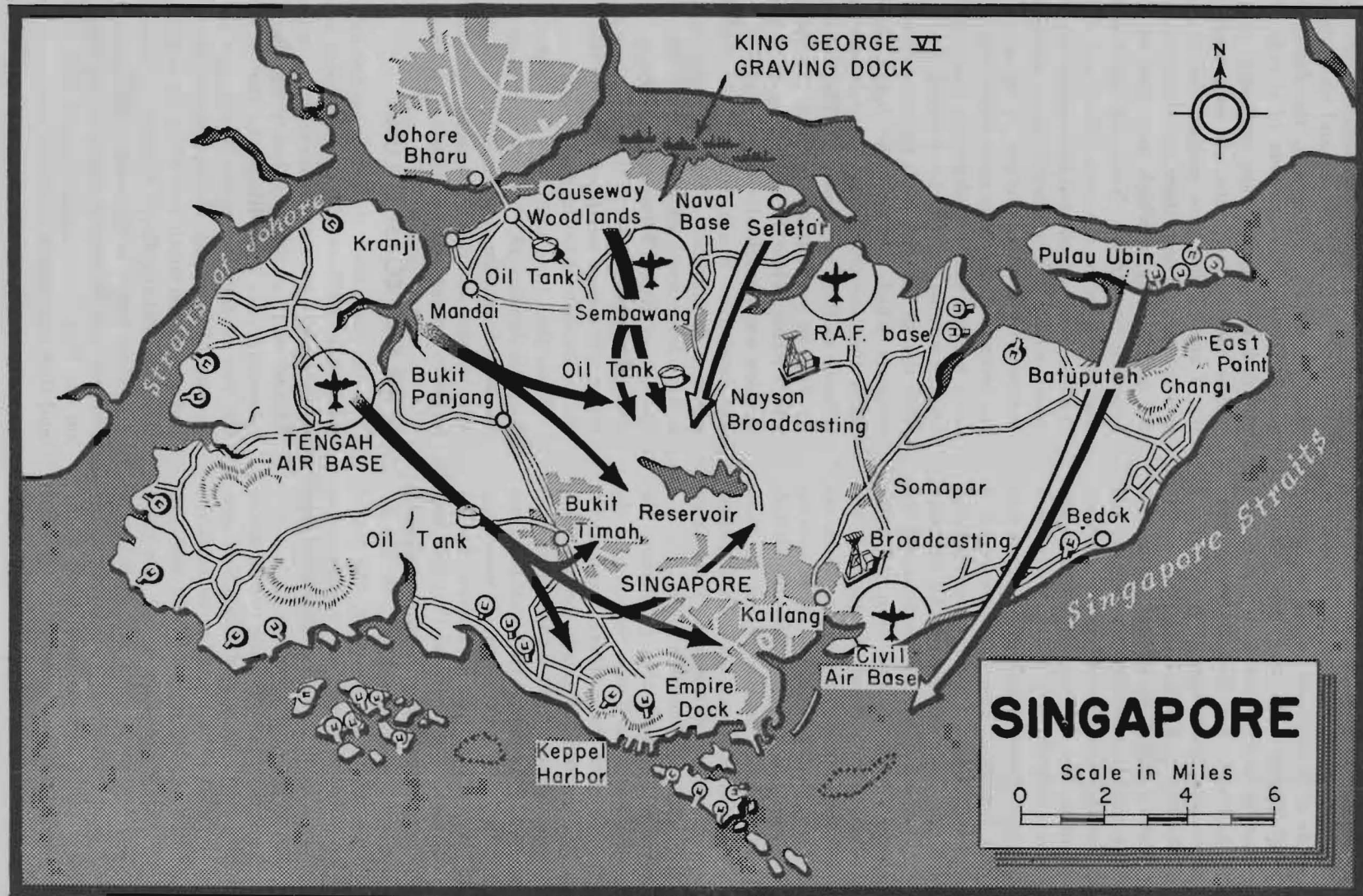
The British succeeded in repulsing two Japanese attempts to land in the vicinity of Kuala Selangor, but the credit for this setback must go to the RAF. A number of new squadrons had been sent out from India and the Middle East about this time, and the British very wisely employed their bombers in breaking up attempts to land along the coast. The Japanese could not have known of the arrival of these new air reinforcements, for their

first attempt to land at Kuala Selangor was not protected by fighter planes, and when the British bombers came in to attack, the Japanese were caught about three-quarters of a mile offshore, crowded into open boats and easy marks for bombs and machine guns. It seems certain that few if any of this force escaped, for in Japanese accounts of this fight there are many references to the gallant way in which men died without attempting to retreat. Next day another landing was attempted at the same place, and that time the troops were protected by a squadron of fighter planes which inflicted heavy losses on the British bombers when they swooped in to attack. But the second attempt also must have been a failure, for it was not until the third day that a successful landing was made. On this occasion, the Japanese filled the air not only with fighters but with dive bombers which battered the beach defense so badly that the troops encountered very little resistance as they came ashore. The Japanese lost no time in pushing south down the railway towards Klang, while the main body of their coastal division was brought down the coast in transports and landed at Kuala Selangor to reinforce the advance detachment. The successful landing of a large force south of the Selangor River sealed the fate of Kuala Lumpur, and on the 11th the Australians pulled out of their positions at Kuala Kubu and moved south, abandoning the city and the entire district to the Japanese.

From that time until they reached the Muar River on January 18, there was no serious fighting; the British rear guards merely delayed the Japanese columns sufficiently to enable their own main forces to retreat without serious molestation.

## 7. THE EAST COAST COLUMN

In the meantime, the Japanese column on the East Coast had been able to advance at about the same rate as the main Japanese forces in the west, without any particularly heavy fighting. After retreating from Kota Bharu the British had held the line of the Trengganu River, but after the piercing of the Perak River defenses these troops had withdrawn south and taken up new positions along the Pahang River in order to keep contact with their forces in the west. The fall of Kuala Lumpur and the retreat south to the Muar River on the West Coast again exposed their left flank, and they were forced to retreat once more, in spite



Map No. 6

of the fact that they were perfectly capable of holding indefinitely the forces with which they themselves were engaged.

## 8. THE CONQUEST OF THE SOUTHERN PLAIN

When the Japanese penetrated the southern part of the State of Negri Sembilan, they came out of the mountains onto the flat plain of the southern tip of the Malay Peninsula, and for the first time in this campaign had sufficient room to employ all of their units at once. The lines which the British intended to hold parallel the Muar River through Gemas and then ran roughly eastward to Endau on the East Coast. Here, for the first time, the two armies faced each other as units, for, until this line had been reached, the high mountain range which runs down the center of the peninsula had separated the armies into two independent columns.

The Australian defense of Gemas was one of the bright spots of the campaign for the British. The Japanese say that it was the fiercest fighting they had on the entire peninsula, and that they suffered their heaviest losses in attempting to break down the stubborn defense of this town. But, gallant though the defense was, it was nullified by another landing south of the Muar, when a Japanese unit, which had embarked in boats at Malacca Town and moved down along the coast, captured Batu Pahat south of the river. At the same time the main Japanese forces crossed the Muar at Bakri, a few miles downstream from Gemas. This engagement was one of the most disastrous of the campaign for the British, for it caught them just as they were withdrawing from their positions as a result of the landing at Batu Pahat. Losses were heavy, and the troops were so badly disorganized that no further attempt was made to stop the Japanese until they reached Johore Bharu, across the straits from Singapore. The retreat of the troops defending the Muar River line forced the withdrawal of the East Coast division which had been successfully defending Endau for nearly a week. Although the British abandoned any attempt at general resistance after the Japanese had forced the Muar River, and simply marched their main columns south as fast as they could go, they left behind two strong rear guards which fought a number of fierce engagements during the retreat and held up the Japanese sufficiently to allow the main British army to get to Singapore in safety.

## 9. THE CAPTURE OF SINGAPORE

When the Japanese occupied Johore Bharu on January 31, they secured complete possession of the Malay Peninsula mainland, and found themselves within a mile of the great British naval base at Seletar and within artillery range of the whole island of Singapore. They had entirely eliminated Singapore as a useful enemy base, and probably could have reduced it in a couple of months by means of a blockade and a continuous artillery bombardment. But a number of factors operated to influence their determination to adopt the more expensive and quicker method of direct assault. The moral effect of an early fall of this so-called impregnable fortress upon both their own people and their enemies was one important point, as was also the desire of the Navy to secure possession of the naval base, thus obtaining free passage for their ships through the Straits of Singapore. These straits, besides being heavily mined, were under the control of the guns of the British fortresses on Singapore and its neighboring islands. Moreover, the troops engaged in the siege of Singapore were badly needed for the campaign against the Netherlands East Indies which was now well under way, and for the campaign in the Philippines which was not progressing according to plan. The High Command, therefore, had determined to capture Singapore as quickly as possible, and for this purpose had sent down into the Malay Peninsula large quantities of heavy siege artillery. These guns, which were sent by rail from Thailand, had begun to arrive in the peninsula soon after the break-through of the Muar River defenses, when it had become evident that the next real fight would be the assault on Singapore itself.

From January 31 until February 5 there was very little activity on the front, as the Japanese spent those 6 days in installing their big guns and disposing their troops for the final attack. Two divisions which had seen very little activity in the march down the peninsula, but which were composed of veteran soldiers of the China campaign who had received special training in river crossings in preparation for this very task of storming the Straits of Johore were now brought up to relieve those divisions which had fought their way down the peninsula. These troops were assembled in covered areas some 6 miles behind the Japanese artillery positions so that they would not be subjected to bombardment by the big guns in the

British fortress during the artillery fight which necessarily would precede the actual assault. Special parties of officers and noncommissioned officers from all of the infantry and engineer units of these divisions made almost daily trips up to the very front lines on the banks of the Straits of Johore, in order to become thoroughly familiar with the terrain over which they would later have to operate in the dark.

The bombardment, which began at 1800 on February 5, is said to have been the heaviest concentration of fire ever put on by the Japanese army. The guns used were of all calibers, but the main punch came from modern 240-mm howitzers which had been specially built for this very purpose.

The backbone of the British defense consisted of the great coast-defense fortresses at Pulau Ubin, Changi, and the outlying islands. But, in addition, there were a number of recently constructed field fortifications which extended around the northern and eastern shores of the island facing the Japanese across the Straits of Johore. These were not permanent fortifications and consisted almost entirely of trenches and earthworks, but they had been constructed to an average depth of some 6 miles and presented a formidable obstacle when manned by resolute troops. The shore of the island was a mass of wire entanglements and other obstructions, and a number of concrete pillboxes had been constructed for shore defense. The range to every point within the Japanese lines had of course been well plotted, and all Japanese accounts speak feelingly of the accuracy of the British artillery fire in the early stages of the fight before the overwhelming weight of the Japanese fire had eliminated it as a decisive factor. For 3 days the artillery duel went on, and all the while Japanese bombers droned overhead in successive waves, unopposed by any enemy airplanes, and, after the first day, with little if any anti-aircraft fire to bother them. Day by day the fire from the British lines grew weaker, as battery after battery was put out of action, and it soon became obvious that the time for the infantry assault was at hand. On the afternoon of the 7th, the infantry-engineer assault teams were moved up to their jump-off positions, and the Japanese light and medium artillery began concentrating their fire on a 300- or 400-yard strip of ground running along the north shore of the island from Kranji to East Point. Observers who watched

this final phase of the preparatory bombardment say that the land across the straits was a solid mass of smoke and fire, and that it looked as though nothing could live under that rain of shells.

That night, however, when the assault teams shoved off in their rubber boats and assault barges to make the dash across the kilometer-wide stretch of water, there was ample evidence that a good many men had lived through that hail of fire. As soon as the British realized that the attack was actually at hand, they flooded the Johore Straits with searchlights and turned loose the fire of all the machine guns and mortars which were still in action. The few remaining artillery batteries which had not been wiped out by the Japanese barrage also joined in and concentrated their fire on the waters of Johore Straits. The Japanese had not expected that so many British guns would still be active and their losses were unexpectedly heavy. In fact, the first wave was repulsed, and very few survivors succeeded in returning to their own shore. The final outcome, however, was never in doubt, for there simply were not enough British guns to cover the two fronts on which the Japanese were attacking. At some time between midnight and 0100 on February 9, one of the Japanese combat teams gained a foothold on the island of Singapore, on the northwest shore about 5 miles from Tengah air base. The British at once attempted a counter-attack to take this beachhead away from the invaders. But the attack seems to have gone astray in the darkness and confusion of the fighting; only one company of Australian troops succeeded in reaching the Japanese position. Here a sharp hand-to-hand fight took place, and for a while it looked as if the Japanese might indeed be driven back to their boats. But another battalion came over just in time, and from then on the attackers were never in any danger of losing what they had gained. Before dawn, another Japanese detachment succeeded in effecting a landing east of the causeway, between Woodlands and the Seletar naval base, and during the daylight hours which followed a steady stream of reinforcements was employed in enlarging these beachheads sufficiently to permit the organization of a new offensive on the island of Singapore itself.

A third landing was effected that same night on the island of Pulau Ubin, less than three-fourths of a mile from the fortress of Changi. By the after-

noon of the 9th, these troops had gained complete control of the little island and of what was left of the British batteries located there. Before the surrender came, the Japanese trained the one remaining serviceable gun in the fortress of Pulau Ubin against Changi and had the satisfaction of bombarding the British with a gun from one of their own batteries.

As soon as the Japanese had firmly established themselves on both sides of the causeway and had by the fire from these beachheads eliminated that of the defenders of the causeway, a party of engineers set about the task of repairing the kilometer-long bridge, which had been destroyed by the British after the last of their troops had crossed from Johore Bharu. Either the Japanese engineers performed an incredible feat (which is what they claim) or else the British did a very poor job of demolishing the causeway (which is what photographs would seem to indicate), for by noon on the 8th the bridge had been repaired sufficiently to enable foot troops to cross, and by evening of the same day wheel traffic was pouring across the causeway in a continuous stream.

From this time on, the battle was merely a matter of time. Actually, the ensuing 6 days saw the fiercest kind of fighting, but the result was never in doubt. The Japanese used the German so-called spearhead method of attack: that is, the fighting was done by two columns which penetrated the British line and then fanned out behind it to the east and west. The result was that before the battle was over, they had broken the British army up into a number of islands of resistance, the principal ones of which were located at the RAF base at Seletar, the fortress of Changi, the high ground north of the reservoir, and the high ground around Bukit Timah. This last-named place was defended by what was left of the Australian division, and the defense of the town was considerably aided by fire from the guns in the batteries off the south coast, which shelled the Japanese to good effect during the 3 days that it took them to drive the Australians out.

The last 4 days of the battle were marked by great confusion, with isolated groups of British almost completely surrounded but fighting desperately in the hope that conditions might not be so bad in some other part of the island and that aid might reach them before they were forced to give in. Even the Japanese troops were badly disorganized, and the control of the fighting seems to have been pretty well decentralized, each regimental and column commander changing the direction of his attack as circumstances required. One by one the British centers of resistance collapsed, and, by the morning of the 15th, Japanese and British troops were fighting in the northwest suburbs of the city of Singapore itself. It was obvious then that further resistance was useless. General Percival, the British commander, sent word to General Yamashita that he was prepared to negotiate for the surrender of his troops and of the island fortress. The two officers, together with a few members of their staffs, met at the Ford Motor Factory at 1900 on the evening of February 15. By 1950, General Percival had signed the document which unconditionally surrendered to the Japanese Army one of the greatest naval bases and fortresses in the world.

In little more than 12 months the Japanese had traversed "impassable" country, had engaged repeatedly in heavy fighting against well-trained troops, had marched more than 600 miles, and had, in a 2-week siege and assault, reduced an "impregnable" fortress. Singapore, the center of the defense of the United Nations in the Far East and the base which was vital for their "punitive blockade" of Japan, had fallen. With it, those powers had lost most of their sources of rubber and tin to the very nation from whom they had hoped to withhold those commodities. And soon, largely as a result of the fall of Singapore, they were to lose the Netherlands East Indies and some of the richest oil fields in the world. As the Japanese authorities did not fail to point out, Japan had broken through the "ABCD encirclement ring" and was now in a position to institute a counterblockade of its own.

### 1. PREPARATIONS

On January 11, 1942, Imperial Headquarters in Tokyo announced that "Because of the hostile attitude of the Netherlands Government in aiding the enemies of Japan since the outbreak of the War of Greater East Asia, the Imperial Government is compelled, against its wishes, to treat the Netherlands East Indies as an enemy, and Imperial units are now engaged in attacking certain bases in Dutch Borneo and the Celebes."

The implication was that until after the outbreak of the war Japan had had no intention of attacking the Netherlands East Indies, in spite of the fact that Holland declared war at the same time as the British Empire and the United States. The conduct of the campaign itself, however, as well as a number of speeches and announcements by military and naval spokesmen, indicates that not only had Japan been planning the conquest of that region for many years, but that its naval construction program had actually provided for a large number of ships of the type which would be needed to carry out such a plan.

The tremendous extent of the area of the field of operations presented many difficulties; but at the same time, that very extensiveness facilitated the operations of an invading power. The Japanese made full use of all factors in their own favor, and so organized their expeditions as to minimize those factors which would benefit their enemies. The long distances involved meant that the Japanese had to maintain extended lines of communication and organize a number of expeditions to strike simultaneously at widely separated points. But those same distances required the Dutch to defend almost equally long lines of communication and to maintain garrisons at a number of different points, none of which could be rapidly reinforced once the campaign got under way. The small army, of some 80,000 men, available for the defense of the Netherlands East Indies had to be kept in Java, except for a few troops which were necessary for the protection

and operation of outlying submarine and air bases. In spite of its tremendous size, complete control of this South Pacific region could be obtained by the occupation of some 10 key points, none of which was defended by a large garrison. Because the Japanese were on the offensive, they had the initiative and could select the time and place of attack, concentrating an overwhelming force which could reduce any one point long before reinforcements could arrive from Java. They knew full well that the only thing which could prevent the success of their campaign would have been a large air force which could attack convoys on the way to their landings, and could bomb captured air bases after their occupation and so prevent the Japanese from using them in preparation for a move to the next point.

The High Command had divided the conquest of this area into three phases, two of which were very carefully coordinated with the concurrent campaigns in the Philippines and Malaya. The first phase, which included the capture of the U. S. islands of Guam and Wake and the occupation of British North Borneo, had to be completed in the earliest stages of the war. The capture of Guam and Wake would effectually cut the U. S. line of communications between Pearl Harbor and the Philippines and so prevent the troops in the Philippines from being reinforced; it was also necessary for the protection of Japan proper, and of her communication lines to the Mandated Islands and to the eastern part of the Netherlands East Indies where her troops would soon be in action. The occupation of British Borneo would remove submarine and air bases which could have been used to attack convoys supplying Japanese troops in the Malay Peninsula.

The second phase was the occupation of outlying bases in the Netherlands East Indies, of New Guinea, and of the Bismarek Archipelago, which would put the Japanese in position to attack the islands of Java and Sumatra and to assault the

<sup>1</sup> See map No. 7, pp. 22-23



mainland of Australia. These operations had to be completed by the time Singapore fell, so that the troops which had reduced the Malay Peninsula could proceed to their next objective, the capture of Sumatra and Java, without unnecessary delay. The first two phases of this campaign, then, were the responsibility of the Navy. The third phase, the taking of the mainlands of the Netherlands East Indies and of Australia, was to be carried out by the Army with the cooperation of its sister service.

The execution of the first phase required a limited number of men and ships, and could be accomplished at the same time that the Navy was busy escorting expeditionary forces to the Malay Peninsula and attacking British air bases there to facilitate the landing of Army troops. The second phase, however, could not be undertaken until the Army was well established in the Malay Peninsula and the planes and aircraft-carriers used in that campaign could be released for other duties. It is for this reason, then, that the Japanese ignored the Dutch declaration of war on December 10, and chose to maintain the fiction that they had no intention of invading the Netherlands East Indies. As soon as their troops were well established in Malaya and the fall of Singapore seemed assured, the Navy organized a number of special attack squadrons, and in a few short weeks had reduced all the outlying bases and was ready to attack the combined Allied fleet and to escort the Army in the final phase of the campaign.

## 2. THE FIRST PHASE

The Japanese brought overwhelming forces to bear against both Guam and Wake, and there is little of interest to record of their occupation of those unfortified outposts. The garrisons of both islands fought gallantly in spite of the hopeless odds, and the troops at Wake defended the place successfully for 6 hours, sinking a Japanese cruiser and a destroyer, and causing the invaders unexpectedly heavy casualties. Japanese accounts are loud in their praise of the way in which the Americans handled the two 6-inch guns, mounted near the beach, whose installation was far from complete. According to the report of the commander of the Japanese landing party, the fire-control apparatus for the shore-defense battery had not yet been set up, and during the action the guns were trained by opening the breech and

sighting down the bore. The destruction of two enemy war vessels and the damaging of a transport by two guns fired in this slow and awkward manner excited the admiration of the Japanese officers, and all of the personal-experience stories referred to this extraordinary feat in terms of glowing praise. It is interesting to note, however, that later accounts published by the Japanese Propaganda Ministry belittled the efforts of the defenders, characterized the defense of the island as negligible, and made very effort to convince the Japanese public that the Americans had behaved in a cowardly manner.

On December 24, two small Japanese expeditions landed at Kuching and Brunei in British Borneo, and in a campaign which lasted a little more than a week overcame the few British police forces and obtained control of the entire Province of Sarawak. Besides denying the British the use of bases in this region, the Japanese thus came into possession of a fine airfield which was to prove invaluable to them some weeks later when they started their drive against the outlying bases of the Netherlands East Indies.

## 3. THE SECOND PHASE

That drive began on January 11, the date of the Imperial Headquarters announcement. The first attack was directed against Menado and was followed by a succession of landings at Balikpapan, Macassar, Amboina, Kavieng, and Rabaul. The landings were carried out by groups which were similarly organized and varied only slightly in strength, so that a description of each engagement would be repetitious. Typical of the actions, and the most interesting from a military point of view, was the short campaign in the Celebes which began with the attack on Menado.

The Dutch garrison at Menado consisted of about 1,200 men and comprised troops of all arms and services. All but 150 were native troops. The strength of the force which the Japanese organized to attack this point is one more example of the policy which they have followed throughout the war, namely, to bring an overwhelming force to bear against every point of attack. The expedition consisted of a naval landing party of 8,000 men in 3 small transports, several cruisers and destroyers, and an aircraft-carrier. In addition, a battalion of about 400 navy parachute troops took off from the captured airdrome near Brunei and

were dropped on the Dutch positions an hour or two before the landing party came ashore. The first indication which the Dutch had that an attack was coming was a furious bombardment by 30 dive bombers from the aircraft-carrier accompanying the convoy. This bombing attack, just after dawn, was directed against the barracks of the Dutch garrison and the airfield at Kakas, and was followed in less than an hour by the arrival of more than 20 transport planes carrying the parachute battalion.

That was the first time that parachute troops had ever been used by the Japanese, and apparently the manner in which the maneuver was carried out left a good deal to be desired. Instead of coming in (as the Germans do) 300 or 400 feet over the objective on which their troops are to land, so that the men of a squad will all hit the ground within a short distance of their assembly point, these planes came over at an altitude of more than 1,500 feet. As a fairly strong wind was blowing, the men became badly scattered and alighted at widely separated points, away from their leaders and far from the equipment bags which had been dropped at the same time. Some of the men were blown out to sea; others landed in a thick jungle and were unable to joint their unit in time to take part in the fight. The mission of this parachute unit was to attack the beach defenses from the rear and to secure their possession prior to the arrival of the convoy. But because the personnel were so badly scattered, they were never able to organize into units large enough to execute an attack. The action did succeed, however, in throwing the Dutch into confusion, and caused them to divert to the task of rounding up the parachute troops a part of their force which should have been employed in resisting the attack on the beach.

The convoy arrived offshore at 0800, and the by-now familiar assault teams immediately left the first transport and raced for the beach under the protective fire of the accompanying naval vessels. The Dutch troops fought bravely, but the extent of shoreline which they had to defend was too great for the number of troops available, and they had erected practically no fortifications for the protection of their men. Their machine guns and artillery kept up a brisk fire until the leading wave of Japanese boats was about 875 yards from shore, when a well-timed attack by a

second squadron of dive bombers completely took the heart out of the native troops, and they broke and fled into the jungle.

The Japanese knew that what they had most to fear in all these landing operations was an air attack launched from other bases in the islands, rather than the ground troops with which they were immediately engaged, and they realized that it was vital to get men and matériel ashore as rapidly as possible before word of their arrival could get to the nearest Dutch air base at Balikpapan. The commander of the expedition therefore directed the initial landing party to maintain contact with the Dutch as they retreated towards Tondano and the airfield at Kakas, and employed the bulk of his force in unloading the transports and getting supplies and equipment safely ashore. The men worked feverishly in their race against time. By the middle of the afternoon more than half of the impediments had been landed, and the Japanese were in high hopes that their unloading operations might be completed and their ships get away before the Dutch bombers came. Since their antiaircraft batteries had been set up on shore and fighter patrols from the aircraft-carrier were constantly circling overhead, they felt quite sure that they would not be surprised by a sudden and unexpected attack.

About 1600 in the afternoon 11 big bombers came in over the hills to the west of the town, and, flying with the sun directly at their backs, were over the harbor and dropping their bombs on the transports below before the Japanese knew what had happened. As the gunners looked up at the planes roaring overhead, they saw painted on the wings, not the Dutch insignia, but the circle and star of the American air force; as a young officer in one of the antiaircraft batteries said, they then realized for the first time that American reinforcements had arrived in the Far East. The Japanese admit the loss of two out of the three transports, but make their usual assertion that all personnel were ashore and that there was no loss of life. In this case their claims are probably justified, for the ships had arrived in the harbor in the early morning and the attack did not come until late in the afternoon. However, personal-experience accounts of junior officers present at the time refute official statements to the effect that the American planes were driven off at once, and tell of how they circled over the beaches where equipment was

piled up and dropped bomb after bomb on the crowded mass of men and matériel. Five of the attacking planes were shot down, and the Japanese claim that the damage they inflicted so demoralized the American squadron that the attack was never renewed.

The Japanese acted promptly after this bombing, and during the night sent the aircraft-carrier down the coast with instructions to raid the airfield at Balikpapan in an effort to destroy the bomber strength located there. According to their version, the raid was a great success. They destroyed four more American planes on the ground, and left hangars, shops, and other facilities a mass of blazing ruin. Whether or not they did in fact accomplish as much damage as they assert, they were not molested again by any planes operating from that base.

Early the next morning, the 12th, the ground troops pushed eastward across the narrow part of the island and pursued the retreating Dutch towards Tondano. On the same day another small expedition landed at Kema on the east coast of the island about 9 miles north of Tondano, and the combined operations of these two columns succeeded in eliminating all Dutch resistance by the end of the day and gave the Japanese possession of the airfield at Kakas. Their plans for the occupation of this area and for its use in future operations had obviously been well worked out, and were executed with remarkable dispatch. On the 14th, a squadron of heavy bombers flew over the Brunei airfield and landed at Kakas, where ground crews set to work at once to put the field in shape for use against Dutch air bases to the south. The Japanese now felt more secure, for they were able to counter any Dutch air attacks with land-based planes, instead of having to depend on the comparatively few planes borne by their aircraft-carrier.

The operations from that time until the end of February consisted of a succession of attacks by naval landing parties against the key points in this region; these attacks gradually extended Japanese control south towards Java and southeast towards Australia. The Japanese received only one setback during this period, when the Allied fleet, cooperating with American bombers, encountered a convoy headed south through the Straits of Macassar and caused it so much damage that it was forced to return to its port of departure.

In this action the Japanese admit the loss of four fully loaded transports, but refuse claims made by Allied headquarters of more serious damage and of the loss of warships. From the accounts available it is evident that the losses suffered were severe, but the setback proved to be only temporary and failed to halt the steady march southward. By January 25 the Japanese had taken Balikpapan, with its airfield, and were making preparations to move south towards Macassar and Bandjermasin, the last of the outlying bases which protected Java. In the extreme east, landings at Rabaul in the Bismarek Archipelago and at Kavieng on New Ireland put them in position to extend their operations towards New Guinea and the mainland of Australia.

Shortly after the occupation of Rabaul and Kavieng, they did land a strong force at Salamaua on the northern shore of New Guinea, in the hope of marching overland and capturing the important city of Port Moresby. This operation is the only one in the early campaign which has failed. In June, the troops were still 100 miles from their objective.

#### 4. THE THIRD PHASE

By February 2, Macassar had been taken, and a Japanese column which had landed at Pamangkat on the west coast of Borneo had pushed overland and occupied Bandjermasin, which is within easy bombing range of Java. When, shortly afterwards, Amboina in the Moluccas fell, the Japanese were able to concentrate their entire naval air strength against the air bases of Java to prepare the way for the great naval and land battles which were to culminate in the reduction of that island. Every day for 2 weeks, squadrons of navy bombers coming from the airfields of southern Borneo, and escorted by fighter planes operating from carriers in the Java Sea, flew over the airfields at Surabaya, Malang, Madiun, and Magetan, fought off the attacks of Dutch and American fighters, and destroyed planes and establishments on the ground. The first few attacks met the severest kind of opposition, and Japanese losses, particularly in bombers, were extremely heavy. But as the bombings went on and a limited Allied air force had to go up day after day to fight fresh squadrons of Japanese planes, the resistance grew gradually weaker, until by the middle of February the Japanese could announce

that the defenders' air strength had been crushed and that their own air force was now free to attack harbors and military establishments throughout the island.

Even before the fall of Singapore the Army had joined in the campaign. On February 14 a regiment of parachute troops was dropped on the airfield at Palembang in southern Sumatra. This field had been previously bombed twice, and the Dutch air force based there had been either destroyed or driven away. The mission of the parachute regiment was to seize the airfield, and to take possession of the oil wells and refineries in the vicinity before the Dutch could destroy them. The first part of its mission was accomplished after a fight which lasted all day. The native troops which comprised the local garrison were badly confused by the necessity of fighting in small groups and against an enemy who came at them from all directions. But from all accounts the Japanese appear to have been equally bewildered, and it was a long time before they could organize their scattered units sufficiently to drive the defenders away from the airfield. By the time they had done this and moved on toward the city to take possession of the oil wells and refineries, the Dutch had done their work and fires raged everywhere throughout the area. The next day a battalion or so of air-borne troops was flown in from Malaya to reinforce the parachute regiment, and for the next 9 days these troops maintained themselves without any support except what came to them by air.

As soon as Singapore fell, on February 16, the Japanese organized an expedition to proceed to the relief of the air-borne forces and to complete the conquest of southern Sumatra. So well were they organized, and so rapidly did they work, that 8 days after the fall of the British fortress the expedition, composed of troops which had taken part in the Malayan campaign, set sail, and on the 24th a part of it landed on Bangka and Billiton Islands, and took possession of the rich tin mines there. The rest proceeded to Sumatra, moved up the Musi River, and landed at the city of Palembang, which was occupied without opposition. With the arrival of these large Japanese reinforcements the Dutch abandoned all hope of further resistance, retreated to the southern tip of Sumatra, and fled across the Sunda Straits to join their main army in Java. By the end of the month,

the entire southern half of the island of Sumatra was under the control of the Japanese Army.

In the meantime, another Japanese expedition appeared off Bali, and on February 19 landed at Denpasar on the southern tip of the island. The troops met with virtually no resistance, but that night, while they were still debarking, the few Allied bombers remaining in Java, together with three or four submarines, attacked the enemy convoy as it lay in the bay. The loss of ships, men, and matériel was so serious that the Japanese were not able to proceed with the occupation of Bali, but were forced to take up a defensive position around the beachhead in order to save what was left of their troops. The force was not relieved until some 3 weeks later, when the collapse of resistance of the main army in Java caused the Dutch troops in its front to surrender. This attack on their convoy by an air force which the Japanese confidently believed had been destroyed alarmed them to such an extent that they renewed the bombardment of the Java airfields, and for 4 days subjected them to a series of devastating attacks which left them such a shambles that no Allied plane ever rose from them again.

The time had now come for the Navy to clear the waters around Java of the Allied squadron and so permit the Army expeditions poised at Singapore to land on the island. In a series of engagements lasting from February 27 to March 1, which the Japanese refer to as the Battle of the Java Sea, the Allied squadron was completely destroyed. A large battle fleet, supported by swarms of bombers and torpedo planes, ranged through the waters of the Java Sea and hunted down the Allied cruisers and destroyers, which had been split up into small groups to protect the vulnerable points along the coast. The last fight, on the night of February 28, was at Bantam Bay, where the American cruiser *Houston* and two destroyers were sunk by the navy escort which was protecting the large Japanese convoy then steaming into the Sunda Straits.

With complete control of the air and of the sea, the Japanese had little difficulty in effecting three landings on the island, and in the entire operation lost only four transports, one of which ran onto a reef in the darkness. The main force landed at Bantam Bay on the night of February 28/March 1, and in spite of the fact that the main strength of

the Dutch army had been concentrated in that part of the island, the Japanese advanced 6 miles inland on the way to Batavia and established a strong beachhead before dark. Other expeditions landed at Semarang, in the center of the north coast, and at a point on the eastern tip of the north coast about 16 miles east of Surabaya. This last detachment had a very difficult time getting ashore and never succeeded in advancing inland at all. It was barely able to maintain its position on the beach until the surrender came a week later. The units which landed at Semarang overcame the very slight resistance which they met after landing, cut straight south until they came to the town of Madiun, where they too were held until the final surrender. The rapid advance of this force, however, to the point it did reach succeeded in splitting the Dutch army and cutting communications between the forces in the west around Batavia and those defending Surabaya.

There was little fighting after the initial landing on the west coast. On March 2, Batavia surrendered without a struggle and the Government moved to Bandung in the mountains, while the

Dutch army fought delaying actions against the advancing Japanese who were pressing up the road toward this mountain resort. By March 7 the Dutch had been forced back into a pocket in the hills surrounding the temporary capital, and Japanese artillery was shelling the town. On the evening of the 8th the Japanese announced that they were ready to launch a general attack against the remnants of the Dutch army, and demanded the unconditional surrender of all the forces in the Netherlands East Indies. The demand was accepted, and the next morning all the troops surrounding Bandung laid down their arms, and the Dutch commander issued instructions by radio to his forces around Surabaya to capitulate also.

In almost exactly 3 months from the beginning of the war, the Far Eastern possessions of the United States, of the British Empire, and of the Netherlands, had fallen to the Japanese. Now, with absolute confidence, the island empire turned to the remaining tasks of conquering Burma, the Chungking régime, and Australia, and thus of establishing itself without question as the supreme power in the region of Greater East Asia.

## Section VI

# FACTORS IN THE JAPANESE SUCCESS

Japanese, both military and civilian, have, in all articles and speeches relating to the war, stressed certain factors which they hold responsible for Japan's success. They emphasize such diverse features as the "august virtues of His Imperial Majesty," the careful planning of the staffs, and the rigid training undergone by both services in preparation for the campaign. Many of their beliefs will seem invalid to Americans who are not familiar with Japanese psychology, but all are important to the Japanese themselves, and a true understanding of what sustains Japanese morale is impossible unless due consideration is given to those intangible elements which weigh so heavily with their people.

Much has been written about Japanese *seishin*, or spirit, and there has been a tendency among Westerners to discount its value, especially in recent years after Japan's military machine became bogged down in China. It would be a grave mistake, of course, to accept the Japanese conviction that their particular brand of spiritual training turns out men of superhuman courage and devotion to duty, but it should be recognized that it has developed an extraordinary confidence in the armed forces, both among service personnel and among the people at large. Constant repetition of the simple tenets of this particular brand of propaganda, aided by the close integration of the Army with village and family life, has built up a unity of ideas and ideals throughout the Empire that is paying big dividends in the present crisis. This deep-rooted confidence in the abilities of the individual Japanese soldier has done much to offset the inferiority complex prevalent among the Japanese for many years in regard to the technical superiority of the Western Powers. Official propaganda and war news are designed to foster this spirit of trust, and great care is exercised to see that no intimation of any military setback ever reaches the people at home. The initial sweeping

successes of their armies and fleets have served to dispel any doubts which might have lingered in the minds of the unregenerate few. The war spirit and morale of the people were higher in the summer of 1942 than ever before. *Yamato Damashi*—the Spirit of Japan—is no longer simply a slogan for patriotic spell-binders; it has entered deeply into the lives of large sections of the people.

The authorities have used the China Incident, admittedly unpopular from the start, to prepare the country—militarily, economically, and spiritually—for war. Restrictive measures, which would have caused undue hardships and considerable unrest if applied suddenly before the gravity of the situation had become apparent to the man in the street, were introduced gradually over a long period as the necessity for each further limitation became evident. The very failure of the war in China was used to prepare the nation mentally, and to induce the populace to accept the idea of total warfare. Much as the people may have deplored the outbreak of the Incident, there was never a moment's doubt in their minds as to how it must end. As the realization came home to them of the need for greater and greater efforts, they accepted the inevitable reorganization of the country's life with characteristic calmness and quiet determination. Three years of clever and incessant propaganda, coupled with the knowledge of American and British aid to the Chungking régime, have convinced the majority of the Japanese people that the two democracies were to blame for the desperate situation in which their country found itself. Gradually the realization was borne in upon them that war with the United States was a possibility, and that if it came, every last ounce of the country's effort would be called forth. There are many Japanese who would have given a great deal to avoid such a war, but they understood how impossible it was to influence the course of events, and therefore fatalistically con-

formed the pattern of their lives to the measures required to prepare the country for its supreme test.

This resigned acceptance of the dictates of constituted authority and the lack of outward enthusiasm were mistaken by superficial foreign observers as war weariness and discontent. What such observers overlooked is that even in the most liberal Japanese the emphasis is on the *Japanese*. In the final analysis, his loyalty goes unquestioningly to his country, and he wastes no time or thought in deploring mistakes made in the past. He knows that, whatever may have been the causes, his country is now fighting for its life, and he is ready in every way for total war. As Japanese commentators never fail to reiterate, Japan passed through the period of mental and physical preparation for war during the 4 years prior to December 1941.

The Japanese point out that during the 4 years of undeclared war in China they reorganized the economy of their country, put it on a war-time basis, and actually increased its industrial output many-fold. Budget figures released in the press indicate that only 40 percent of the appropriations voted to the defense forces was expended for the conduct of the China Incident, while 60 percent was used to prepare the services and the industrial plant for "greater emergencies yet to come." Similarly, of the materials and weapons furnished the services, only one-fifth was sent to China, the rest being used to expand and modernize the armies and fleets which were to be called upon when war really came. Oversimplified and vague as these figures are, the Japanese nevertheless use them to support their premise that the war in China has left Japan stronger rather than weaker, and in a better position than ever before to strike at her enemies.

The Army used the China War as a test for its tactical doctrines, a proving ground for its matériel, and a training school for its personnel. The constant rotation of officers and men through the ranks of active divisions on the China front has built up a magnificent reserve of men with combat experience. Many of these were used as nuclei in the formation of new divisions, so that when the war began, all of Japan's combat troops contained at least a core of seasoned veterans.

The units and commanders designated for the various tasks in the war for which they were pre-

paring were selected months in advance, and were concentrated in special training areas where the terrain and climatic conditions approximate those in the regions where they were to fight. The Malayan Army trained in Hainan and Indo-China, the Philippine force in Formosa, and both units practiced landing operations during the late summer and fall of 1941 along the South China coast. Even the divisions chosen to attack Hong Kong were given rigorous training in night fighting and in storming pillboxes in the hills near Canton. So realistic were these maneuvers that the troops are reported to have suffered "a number of casualties." This kind of training sent the Japanese armies into the field fully cognizant of, and excellently prepared for, the specific tasks they were to perform, and organized and equipped with superabundant strength to overcome the degree of resistance which they knew they could expect.

Japanese commentators make no secret of the fact that the High Command was fully informed for a year before the war as to the strength, dispositions, and likely plans for defense of their then potential enemies. They say that a good deal of this information was gathered by "observing" maneuvers (probably through secret agents) in the Philippines and in Malaya. With all this information in their possession, the Japanese were able to make detailed plans for attack, and to estimate accurately the number of men and the types and quantity of weapons, matériel, and supplies their armies would need in each of the theaters of operations.

The extent of knowledge of the enemy situation was freely publicized in Japan, after the conclusion of the initial campaigns, with a view to impressing upon the public the need for strictest observance of their own Military Secrets Act. This law, which is probably the most airtight ever enacted, is credited with having been responsible for the element of surprise with which Japan overwhelmed her enemies. The authorities drew striking contrasts between the secrecy which shrouded every Japanese move and the "boastful and stupid publicity indulged in by the ABCD Powers."

Considerable use was made of propaganda which the Japanese euphemistically term "informing the oppressed inhabitants of the Co-Prosperity Sphere of Japan's peaceful intentions." Great claims are made for the success of this campaign. The Japanese people were regaled over and over

again with descriptions of the throngs of happy natives who turned out to welcome the Nipponese troops wherever they advanced. Personal-experience accounts bear out these claims to some extent, especially in Burma and in the northern Malay States, where anti-British feeling appears to have been particularly intense.

The Japanese make a great point of the fact that their Army considers no terrain "impassable." They assert that their tactics were frequently based on the principle of attacking through a particular area, in the knowledge that their enemies had been lulled into a false sense of security and complacency by the very fact of its so-called impassability. They emphasize the disastrous effect on the defender's morale once an "impregnable" area has been pierced. Here they frankly admit the tutelage of the Germans who, frequently since the spring of 1940, have shown the world how often the Allied commanders had mistaken terrain which is merely *difficult* for that which is *impassable*.

Another important factor, which the Japanese have kept constantly in mind, is the prime importance of air superiority. Admitting frankly their enemies' greater potential air power, they knew nevertheless that they could seize, and maintain for a long time, command of the air in East Asia, and from the very beginning they directed all their energies to that end. Air force units, both of the Army and of the Navy, concentrated their strength against enemy airfields, and not until the opposing air strength was thoroughly crushed was any considerable part of the Japanese force diverted to other missions. Whenever the enemy managed to reinforce or reconstitute his battered air units in any particular area, the Japanese air force immediately returned to its primary mission and stayed with it until unquestioned supremacy was once more achieved.

The use of dive and light bombers as a kind of long-range artillery was closely patterned on German tactics, as the Japanese themselves admit; and it was especially effective in the early stages of the Malayan Campaign, where the terrain made observation difficult and the emplacement of large numbers of artillery batteries virtually impossible.

There was, according to all accounts, excellent cooperation between the land and sea forces and the air arm of both services. Whatever traditional jealousy might have existed between the Army and the Navy did not extend to the armies

and fleets at the front. The teamwork left nothing to be desired. "Task forces" organized during the summer of 1941 trained and worked together continuously until the outbreak of hostilities. Four years of frequent collaboration against an active enemy on the coasts and rivers of China had given both services much valuable experience, which was put to good use in planning and organizing joint expeditionary forces. Details of command, supply, and other matters which might have given rise to controversy were carefully worked out in advance and clearly understood by all concerned.

The most important factor contributing to their victories, according to all Japanese military commentators, and the one which carries most weight with the outside observer, is the superb offensive spirit which permeates all of the armed forces of the Empire. This spirit, recognized by competent military men as the most vital intangible factor in achieving victory, has been nourished and perpetuated since the foundation of the modern Japanese Army, until it has become a veritable fetish to all ranks. The High Command has counted heavily on the advantages this would give Japan over her less aggressive enemies. It was well aware of the psychological effect produced on the British, Dutch, and Americans by reliance on defense. It put great store in the flabbiness produced in the white man after nearly a century of easy and luxurious rule in the Far East. It attaches great importance to the disunity in the United States over the war issue, and counts on an appreciable interval before an aroused nation can find itself and develop a fighting spirit of its own. By that time, it feels, Japan will be in complete control of all of East Asia.

The Japanese High Command balanced all those factors against Japan's hard, aggressive spirit, and found the scales tipped deeply in Japan's favor. And when the Japanese struck, the High Command made no provision for failure and left no road open for retreat. The Japanese forces struck with all the might and power at their command, risking all on one magnificent gamble. And they will continue to fight in the same manner. In the words of their leader, Premier-General Hideki Tojo, "Japan has no road block. She must and will continue to attack with every ounce of strength of her hundred million people until the British Empire and the United States are crushed forever."