

## Chapter Seven— Into battle

Major Charles O'Brien, in an interview given in 1945, stated with confidence that Japanese troops who massed north of the Mersing River had been prevented from crossing while Eastforce remained in position.<sup>1</sup> He said that the only sighting of Japanese troops south of the river prior to the withdrawal was one unconfirmed report of a three man patrol.<sup>2</sup> He was wrong. Japanese troops—how many cannot be known—had infiltrated south of the river, arriving, perhaps, in twos and threes, possibly camouflaged with bushes or other natural flora, and their presence remained unsuspected. Tsuji, in his garbled version of the events that occurred on the east coast, was later to claim that Koba's detachment (of the 55th Regiment of the 18th Division) "had crept skilfully through the jungle and pressed its attack entirely in the rear, while simulating an attack from the sea."<sup>3</sup> In fact, they had either mounted or simulated attacks from the north, not from the sea, the most serious of which was a company sized attack on the Mersing Bridge.<sup>4</sup> The purpose was to distract the defending Australians. While the Australians were thus occupied, Japanese troops infiltrated south of Mersing, hidden from view in the jungle and rubber. Their rallying point was in a rubber plantation, the Nithsdale Estate, on top of a hill that was adjacent to the road and just a few miles south of Mersing. The hill, which rises gradually at first and then comparatively steeply to a height of about a hundred feet, is marked on survey maps as Feature 46. Here, camped high above the road, hidden by a shroud of rubber trees, the invaders could prepare for Tsuji's "attack from the rear", a plan that was entirely in keeping with Japanese fighting methods hitherto employed in the Malayan Campaign.

---

<sup>1</sup> Charles O'Brien, interview by Captain G.H. Nicholson, Nakom Paton Camp, Thailand, 23 September 1945, transcript in the possession of the author.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>3</sup> Tsuji, *Singapore: the Japanese Version*, p.206.

<sup>4</sup> See Chapter Four.

## INTO BATTLE

Hidden Japanese camps behind Allied lines were not unknown. One was found, abandoned, at an “out-of-the-way” tin mine at Sri Medan on the western side of the Malayan peninsula by a patrol led by Sergeant Christoff of the 2/30 Battalion. The men described “a place laid out as a regular camp, and it appeared that the enemy might have infiltrated large numbers to this spot over a period, to be armed and brought into action when needed.”<sup>5</sup> The scale of the Japanese defences on top of the hill on the Nithsdale Estate is the proof that the enemy had penetrated south of the Mersing River before the Australians withdrew from their defensive positions. Major A.J. Balsillie of the Royal Australian Artillery, who toured the Malayan battle sites in 1961, described an excellently sited network of trenches dug into the brow of the hill which, although they had been damaged by the artillery during the battle, were, even after twenty years, still four feet deep. Japanese relics which included helmets, gas masks, ammunition and even a saki cup were still present, as well as a number of Chinese coins, further proof, perhaps, that these troops were Koba’s forces (the Japanese 18th Division had come from Canton in China).<sup>6</sup>

It is ironic that Varley chose the stretch of road adjacent to that same hill for his ambush. When the Australians abandoned their defensive positions and withdrew from Mersing, they assumed that the Japanese north of the river would follow, making their way south along the road. Brigadier Taylor approved Varley’s plan on 23 January 1941 for an ambush of those Japanese forces who were in the area (see Chapter Four) on the proviso “that the orders as issued by higher command for withdrawal must be followed, so that the attacking companies must be prepared for immediate withdrawal after their

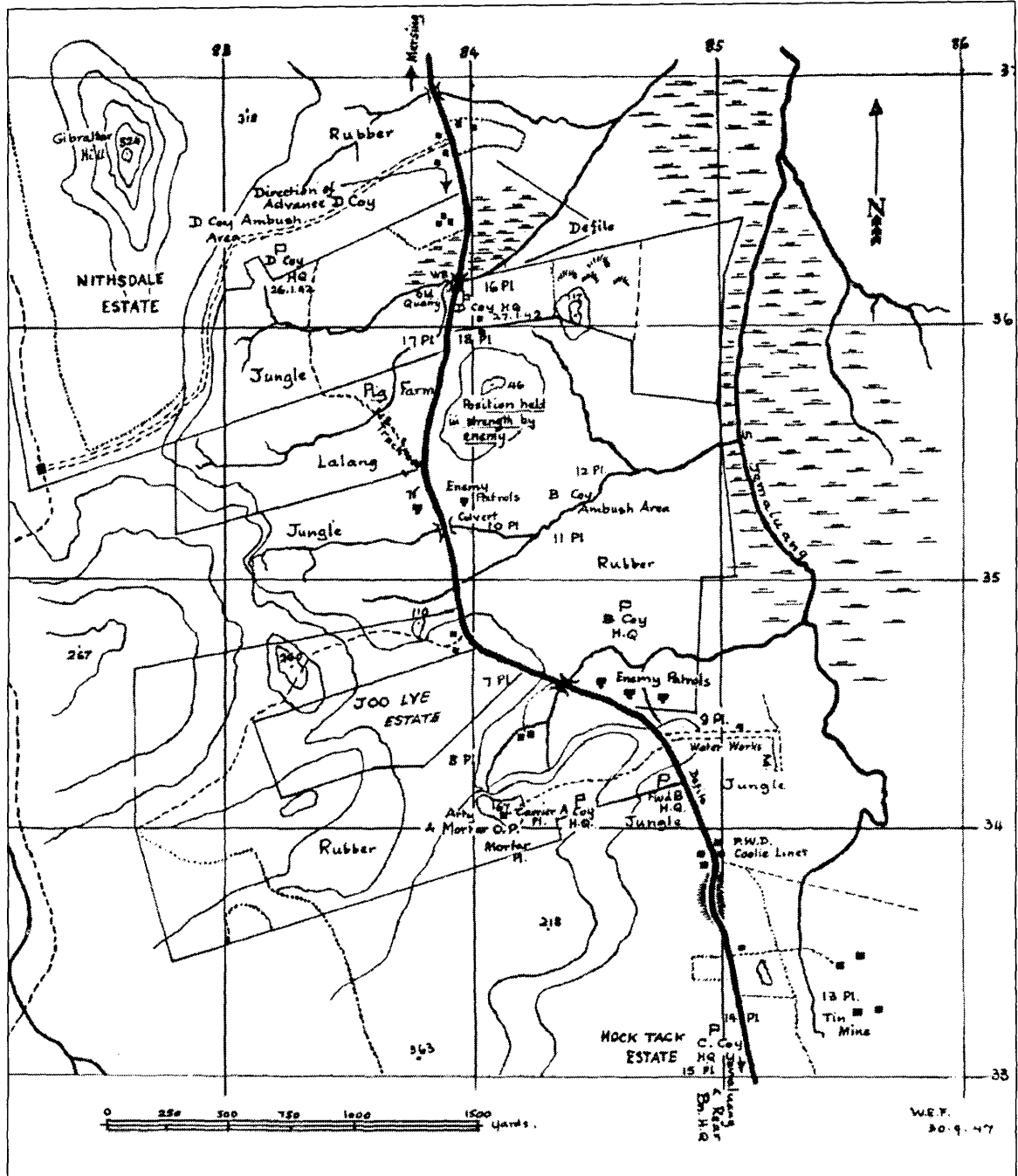
---

<sup>5</sup> A.W. Penfold, W.C. Bayliss, K.E.Crispin, *Galleghan’s Greyhounds: the Story of the 2/30th Australian Infantry Battalion, 22 November 1940 -10th October 1945*, Sydney, 2/30 Battalion AIF Association, 1979, p.145.

<sup>6</sup> Major J.A.Balsillie MBE, letter published in *Reveille*, 1 February 1962.

# INTO BATTLE

NITHSDALE ESTATE ACTION—THE SKETCH SHOWS THE DISPOSITIONS OF 2/18TH AUSTRALIAN INFANTRY BATTALION ON THE NIGHT OF 26/27TH JANUARY 1942.



Men May Smoke, Final Edition of the 2/18th Bn. AIF Magazine, June 1948, p.25.

## INTO BATTLE

attack.”<sup>7</sup> The 2/20th Battalion destroyed the Mersing Bridge (which the Japanese were rapidly to repair) before passing through the 2/18th Battalion’s abandoned positions that evening in accordance with the plan. During the next two days officers and NCOs of the 2/18th Battalion inspected the designated ambush area, through which the Mersing road ran almost in a straight line from the north, but clearly they never went to the top of the hill! The battalion was supported by the 20th and 60th batteries of the 2/10 Field Regiment, which were positioned just north of Jemaluang Village. They would provide the artillery barrage. The Japanese forces which were *already* in the area on 23 January never did come down the road—or at least a large number of them did not. Instead, they infiltrated through the jungle and rubber or were already in position on the hill. However, on the morning of 26 January the 2/18th Battalion learned that a Japanese convoy had successfully landed at Endau and that a force of enemy troops had disembarked and was marching south. This, the Australians assumed, was the beginning of the long awaited invasion of the East coast.<sup>8</sup> In fact, the force was the 96th Airfield Battalion and its signal unit which were to operate the Kahang and Kluang airfields after they came under Japanese control.<sup>9</sup> As this had already been effected, they did not delay. The Australians expected the enemy to enter the ambush positions at dawn on the following day—it would not be earlier as everyone knew that the Japanese neither fought nor moved at night!<sup>10</sup>

Viewed from above, the designated ambush area would have appeared as an expanse of jungle that was bisected by the Mersing-Jemaluang road with its narrow fringe of rubber on each side. The forward companies—Don Company, further north on the west side and B Company, several hundred yards further south on the east side—covered the road. A stretch of the road at the northern end cut through a swamp; this section, in effect

---

<sup>7</sup> 2/18th Battalion War Diary, 23 January 1942, AWM 52 8/3/18, <http://www.awm.gov.au/database/awm52/8x3x18.htm>.

<sup>8</sup> Wigmore, *Japanese Thrust*, p.266.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>10</sup> Charles O’Brien, interview by Captain G.H. Nicholson, Nakom Paton Camp, Thailand, 23 September 1945, transcript in the possession of the author.

## INTO BATTLE

a defile, would provide the entrance to the trap. A Company, astride the road in the south, covered the rear. C Company at Jemaluang was in reserve. The plan was to allow perhaps two companies of Japanese to enter the trap before bringing down an artillery barrage at the northern end. Those unhurt who escaped to the west would be “mopped up” by Don Company which, when the barrage ceased, would proceed down the road. B Company would “mop up” those who escaped to the east as they moved to meet Don Company. Enemy troops who evaded both companies would find their way blocked by A Company. Meanwhile the artillery barrage would have recommenced forward (or north) of Don Company’s earlier position to prevent reinforcements reaching the trapped Japanese.

Against expectation, the battle began during the night. By midnight, while the column of Japanese troops from the convoy marched blithely south on the road, either oblivious to their own security or relying on others to provide it, other Japanese patrols—presumably Koba’s forces—were entering the area from other directions or coming down the hill from their secret camp. Aware that Australians were still in the area, they sought to discover their positions. “They kept giving monkey calls to one another as signals. They let off bangers, rifles, Tommy guns and were even reduced to calling out ‘Come out and fight you bloody Australian bastards!’”<sup>11</sup> Despite these efforts, they failed to find B and Don Companies which had drawn back from the road into deep cover.

The men of the 2/18th Battalion held their fire as instructed and waited nervously. The plan was to withhold all fire for as long as possible while the unsuspecting enemy passed into the trap. As well, flashes from rifle fire would allow the enemy to pinpoint a position. The enemy patrol that killed Corporal John Madden when he challenged it had unwittingly blundered upon the forward section of A Company’s 9 Platoon which waited on a low ridge at the extreme south of the ambush area. The Japanese patrol then machine gunned the section’s position and Spence took command. He sent a man back to report to Lieutenant Warden at Platoon headquarters. He instructed another to throw grenades on to

---

<sup>11</sup> John Fuller, letter to his parents, n.d. [The letter was written on Singapore Island before the invasion.]

## INTO BATTLE

the Japanese below. Feeling that the time for discretion was over, he used his rifle to fire at the enemy and instantly drew their fire upon himself. He moved further along the ridge, stopping by a small tree. It was while he knelt beside it, watching, waiting and at the ready, that a Japanese officer materialised out of the darkness behind him, and slashed down with his sword. The blade tore down Spence's back, taking with it knobs from his spine and half his shoulder blade. Swinging as he rose, Spence fired from the hip before thrusting his bayonet into his assailant. He then collapsed, but from the ground he gave further instructions to the men to form a perimeter which would prevent any other Japanese coming up behind them, thus ensuring their safety. Only when Warden arrived with another section of men did Spence relinquish control at which point his active part in the war ended. He would be taken by ambulance to Jemaluang and from there to hospital in Singapore.<sup>12</sup> Meanwhile, Warden, mindful of the danger of firing rifles, ordered a bayonet charge. He was killed in the fight that ensued.

Some time after 3 a.m. Varley was certain that "the best part of a battalion" was in the trap, and he instructed that the artillery barrage commence. One account of the battle described "a continual stream of shells...rushing overhead on to the road in the jungle defile, which became an inferno of shattering explosions and flying metal."<sup>13</sup> B Company received orders to start and came forward towards the road in the dark. O'Brien remembered:

B Coy moved forward by each man holding the bayonet scabbard of the man in front and so dark was it most of the time I was unable to see any sign of the man whose bayonet I was holding. If you want real darkness try the thick full grown rubber estate on a dark night when not a vestige of the sky can be seen...The 1300-1400 yards to the road was a

---

<sup>12</sup> Colin Spence was awarded the DCM for his work that night.

<sup>13</sup> Account credited to Private Bill McAuley, a member of the 2/18th Battalion, copy in the possession of the author.

## INTO BATTLE

nightmare journey. I had to risk close formation to keep control and the Japs firing as usual in all directions sent many rounds into the trees and over our heads...<sup>14</sup>

B Company reached the road at dawn, having found only about 40 enemy troops in the area who, according to O'Brien, were "quickly despatched".<sup>15</sup> Jack Amos wrote later of his amazement that the action in which he took part had been so like a training exercise.<sup>16</sup> A fence and a small slope dotted with bushes and small trees gave 12 Platoon cover while they waited for D Company to meet them in accordance with the ambush plan. A column of marching troops, four deep, came towards them. They were apparently oblivious to any danger to themselves, despite the earlier barrage that must have passed over them. "It was easy to tell they were not Aussies for their boots made very little noise," Barlow observed.<sup>17</sup> Nevertheless, Lieutenant Sulman, thinking that they might in fact be an Indian unit that was part of Eastforce, made certain that they were Japanese troops before he gave the order to fire. "What was not hit soon got across the road on the other side to us so then it was hand grenades and bullets going each way," Barlow remembered.<sup>18</sup> Sulman and two of his men died in the action, killed by a machine gunner who had crawled along the gutter on their side of the road.

Meanwhile, earlier, when the first artillery barrage had lifted after twenty minutes, D Company had charged, sweeping through the Nithsdale Estate to the road, seeking to "mop up" any enemy as it went. Encountering none, the men followed the road south,

---

<sup>14</sup> Charles O'Brien, interview by Captain G.H. Nicholson, Nakom Paton Camp, Thailand, 23 September 1945, transcript in the possession of the author.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>16</sup> Jack Amos, letter to his father, 3 February 1942.

<sup>17</sup> Oregon Barlow, unpublished manuscript, AWM MSS1446, unpaginated.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*



## INTO BATTLE

expecting to withdraw through B Company. However, at the bridge near the old quarry they encountered a party of Japanese. Don Company attacked. The Japanese fled to the higher ground on the eastern side of the road, to what were their previously prepared positions. These were, in all probability, Koba's men. They drew D Company after them into the rubber, the platoons fanning out below them. 17 Platoon was on the road, 18 Platoon was further in and 16 Platoon, in support behind them, was furthest east. 17 Platoon was hit by machine guns that had been hidden, waiting, on both sides of the road. The survivors, only about half their original number, together with 18 and 16 Platoons attacked the higher Japanese positions without success. It became evident that the Japanese were present in strength. Jim Toose recalled: "I thought we were just going to clean them up. Well they were firing and seemed to be everywhere. You could see all these tracer bullets... We got the biggest surprise."<sup>19</sup>

Harry Harris was occupied with trying and failing to take out a machine gun on the rise ahead of him when Cec Stanford was hit in the shoulder, the bullet ripping down his back. Some time later he was hit again, this time in the head. They could see the hole where the bullet had pierced his steel helmet. He lay slumped, dead, beside the tree against which he had been propped. When they received orders to pull back, they left his body where it lay. The battalion diary records that the platoon's new assignment was to mount an attack on the Japanese left flank, thereby relieving the pressure on the front.<sup>20</sup> However, Fred Harris asserted that the men believed from the outset that their orders were specifically to connect with B Company: "Edgeley said, '16 Platoon pull out and go and connect with B Company.' I never heard Edgeley say it, but everybody knew it."<sup>21</sup> His brother Harry Harris always maintained that he heard Edgeley give the order.<sup>22</sup> Then Sergeant Max Skinner of 18 Platoon rushed across to them, demanding a bren gun. To 16

---

<sup>19</sup> Quoted in Burfitt, *Against all Odds*, p.50.

<sup>20</sup> Original Draft War Diary re Nithsdale Action given to O.L.Ziegler, editor of *Men May Smoke*, 2 August 1946, copy in possession of the author; Burfitt, *Against All Odds*, p.50.

<sup>21</sup> Fred Harris, interview, 12 December 2000.

<sup>22</sup> Cliff Olsen, interview, 30 May 2002.

## INTO BATTLE

Platoon it was evident that he too had a plan and Private George McLean swapped his Bren gun for Skinner's rifle. As 16 Platoon pulled back, the men heard Edgeley call out, "Hang on boys, B Company is coming!"<sup>23</sup>

16 Platoon withdrew back through the dark behind the battlefield, before advancing through the rubber that skirted the hill. And then a force of Japanese troops, each man camouflaged with bushes and only dimly seen, crossed in front of them, running up the hill. "They looked like little trees," Fred Harris remembered.<sup>24</sup> Harris believed this force of Japanese had run in front of them deliberately, acting as a lure, diverting the Australians back into the melee. If it was so, their plan worked. The officer gave the order and 16 Platoon charged after them, only to encounter "withering Japanese firepower".<sup>25</sup> The charge cost the lives of several more men, and Benny Little, hit in the face almost immediately in front of a machine gun position, had to "play dead" in order to survive. He would arrive at Changi gaol six weeks later. What was left of 16 Platoon eventually extricated itself from the hillside. "When I looked round, the platoon was withdrawing...I sort of crawled backwards until I got back into a gutter in the gully. I stayed there for a while, then I caught up with the platoon," Fred Harris remembered.<sup>26</sup> The charge up the hillside had constituted a long delay—Harris believed as long as two hours—in the platoon's reaching B Company.

B Company's officers believed they were following fixed orders when they waited in their position. They were unaware of D Company's predicament although there was only a quarter of a mile and the hill between them. D Company survivors' resentment

---

<sup>23</sup> Edgeley's specific orders with regard to 16 Platoon's actions remain unclear. Janet Uhr states that they were "perhaps to have them...come up behind the enemy, easing the pressure on his remaining men...perhaps to make contact with B Company."

<sup>24</sup> Fred Harris, interview, 12 December 2000.

<sup>25</sup> Burfitt, *Against All Odds*, p.50.

<sup>26</sup> Fred Harris, interview, 12 December 2000.

## INTO BATTLE

of B Company officers would be permanent.<sup>27</sup> Varley too was critical of B Company's failure to move to support D Company.<sup>28</sup>

D Company's predicament had continued to worsen and the men had long realised that they were dealing with a superior force. "I suggested to my platoon officer that we had a battalion to cope with. Lieutenant Schwenke said, 'More like a brigade'," Corporal Arthur Wright remembered.<sup>29</sup> 18 Platoon, pinned down by the enemy near a small timber hut, laid the wounded in a shallow depression nearby. Schwenke was hit by machine gun fire. Wright saw the two stretcher bearers, Gordon Blair and James Cleary, reinforcements who had joined the battalion at Mersing when the war began, come round on the hut's western side, calling out for the whereabouts of the wounded officer. They were killed instantly by machine gun fire. "I had been slow to realise that Mr Schwenke could only have been hit from the rear. In fact, we were surrounded," Wright wrote.<sup>30</sup>

All but one of D Company's officers who were in the action died. The few men who were not wounded were almost out of ammunition. The Japanese had earlier found and cut all the signal wires so there was no communication beyond the battlefield. However, Sergeant Charles Wagner of the Intelligence section, made his way through the enemy lines to reach the forward companies, and obtained the necessary information.<sup>31</sup> On receiving this, Varley issued orders for an attack by A Company on the left while B Company moved forward on the right in order to extricate D Company. B Company, together with the survivors of 16 Platoon, had marched 300 yards towards Don Company's position when the advance was halted by orders emanating through Brigade.<sup>32</sup> No more troops were to be committed in the action, and the battalion was to withdraw

---

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>28</sup> Arthur Varley, Original Diary of Brigadier Arthur Varley, Diary 5, no date or page number, AWM 54 3DRL/2691.

<sup>29</sup> Arthur Wright, letter to Mrs Blair, 28 July 1996.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>31</sup> Sgt Charles Wagner (later Lieut) was awarded the DCM for his work during the battle.

<sup>32</sup> Wigmore, *The Japanese Thrust*, p.268. Wigmore states that "the orders were received from Brigadier Taylor in consequence of detailed orders he had received from Heath under the general withdrawal plan."

## INTO BATTLE

immediately through the 2/20 Battalion at Jemaluang. Cliff Olsen was present when Varley issued the new orders:

One of the boys, this chap from Manly, was saying, “My brother’s in there. Take us in.” Varley said, I can hear him saying it now, “I can’t. We’ve got to pull out.” This chap said, “But my brother’s in there.” And Varley just shook his head and walked away.<sup>33</sup>

The withdrawal began immediately. To allow the 2/18th Battalion to break off the action, the 2/10 Field Artillery, having received the information as to the Japanese positions supplied by Wagner, brought down a second barrage which, as Benny Little was to report weeks later, inflicted severe casualties on the enemy. Both officers and men were reluctant to abandon Don Company but their discipline was such that they understood the necessity of obeying orders. “Although it went very much against the grain to have to pull out and leave some of the boys in there, who were depending on us, it had to be done,” Jack Amos wrote to his father.<sup>34</sup> Sixty years later, Olsen concurred: “I was just a young private but even I could understand that once they say you’ve got to go, you have got to go.”<sup>35</sup> Varley, however, was to regret his obedience. In Changi, he gathered together the pitifully few original D Company survivors. “He told us, if he had the chance to live life over again, he would have disobeyed orders because one of his crack companies was more or less sacrificed for nothing.”<sup>36</sup>

In the action at Nithsdale the 2/18th Battalion lost six officers and 92 other ranks. The original D Company was reduced to number a 32-man platoon in the reformed company.<sup>37</sup> During the war, on several occasions, different Japanese assessed their own

---

<sup>33</sup> Cliff Olsen, interview, 30 May 2002.

<sup>34</sup> Jack Amos, letter to his father, 3 February 1942.

<sup>35</sup> Cliff Olsen, interview, 30 May 2002.

<sup>36</sup> Harry Harris, quoted in Burfitt, *Against All Odds*, p.52.

<sup>37</sup> When the Battalion Diary was produced weeks later in Changi, 16 Platoon of the original company and 17 Platoon of the reformed company were

## INTO BATTLE

losses in the action at Nithsdale at about a thousand men but in recent years some historians have whittled this number down considerably.<sup>38</sup>

### *Aftermath—the denouement*

After the 2/18th Battalion had withdrawn, so too did the Japanese who returned to Mersing. The Japanese forces, for the first and only time in the Malayan campaign, had retreated from the battlefield. Nevertheless, although the 2/18th Battalion claims the battle on the Nithsdale Estate as a victory, it was a bitter one. The hasty withdrawal proved to have been unnecessary—although Kluang had fallen, the Japanese did not move immediately from there to block Eastforce at Jemaluang, whatever their earlier intentions had been. A Company, standing guard a few miles down the Jemaluang-Kluang road, left behind a section of the mortar platoon when it withdrew from that position. Fuller, returning on his motor bike to rescue his men some hours later, expected to meet advancing Japanese forces around every bend but there was no sign of them. The 2/18th Battalion had abandoned its wounded and at least one D Company survivor, who was hiding in a drain nearby, claimed to have heard the Japanese bayoneting them (he said there had been between fifteen and twenty wounded men lying in a depression).<sup>39</sup> The 2/18th Battalion's new orders were to withdraw immediately by stages to Singapore Island—Malaya had been lost before the battle on the Nithsdale Estate began.

Any lingering romantic notions of adventure and heroics in battle had quickly dissipated. Fuller wrote to his parents the following day:

Until yesterday I had always been looking forward to getting  
a crack at the Japs. I still am but I know now that war is no  
picnic...I have lost three of my very best friends. George

---

confused, probably because the largest component of the new 17 Platoon was made up of survivors of the original 16 Platoon, including the OC.

<sup>38</sup> Warren, *Singapore 1942*, p.191. Warren, in claiming that the Australians "had given as good as they got", limits the number of Japanese killed in the battle at under one hundred.

<sup>39</sup> Arthur Wright, letter to Mrs Hilda Blair, 28 July 1996.

## INTO BATTLE

Warden, Verne Schwenke and Les Sulman were killed...They have been my best pals all along. George and I always went on leave together...I won't describe any of the fighting here. I don't feel like it at the moment...<sup>40</sup>

Twenty-four hours later he showed both a more philosophical acceptance of the costs of war and satisfaction at having sole command of the Mortar Platoon restored to him:

I was very upset at first when I heard that George Warden, Verne Schwenke and Les Sulman had been killed. However I am now resigned to the philosophy that "War is war" and that we must be prepared for such things. It was a bit hard to take at first...I am now once more the O.C. Mortars, and naturally I am very glad.<sup>41</sup>

The Japanese, now in control of Malaya, returned to the Nithsdale Estate and disposed of their dead. They left the Australians where they had fallen. It was six months before a de-mining party of Prisoners of War arrived to clear the Mersing area of its mines and bombs. The party included Charles Wagner, Jock Crighton, Ginty Pearson and Harry and Fred Harris from the 2/18th Battalion. The Japanese officer in charge of their camp told the prisoners that a thousand Japanese soldiers had died in the battle at Nithsdale. Impressed that some of the men in the de-mining party had been in the action, he gave the Australians permission to bury their dead. Fred Harris remembered his horror and sadness:

We had to bury the fellows. It was a terrible sight. All our friends were skeletons there. A friend of mine—he was a big man and he wasn't quite a skeleton...Captain Edgeley, we didn't find him but his map case was sitting on a rubber tree stump...And Cec Stanford's body wasn't there. His tin hat

---

<sup>40</sup> John Fuller, letter to his mother, 28 January 1942.

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*, letter to his mother, 29 January 1942.

## INTO BATTLE

was there. And his haversack. When we looked in his hat, the bullet had gone in and gone around it. He must have been just knocked out. The bullet grazed him. He must have just wandered off. And died in the jungle somewhere.<sup>42</sup>

Harry Harris was able to satisfy his curiosity as to why he had been unable to dislodge the Japanese machine gun on the hill. The gunner had been firing from beneath a log. Harris had the satisfaction of seeing how good had been his marksmanship despite his failure to dislodge the gunner.

They found Max Skinner's and Scotty Lancaster's remains together, right out in front near the top of the hill, close to the Japanese positions. Skinner's arm was still in plaster from a football injury. He had wanted a bren gun and George McLean had given him his before 16 Platoon pulled back. Fred Harris remembered:

When we turned Maxie Skinner's skeleton over, he was laying on a Japanese sword... They must have got right up into Japanese headquarters and done some damage with the bren gun. He must have grabbed the sword... I think... there should have been a few fellows there got VCs and he should have been one of them. He had wanted the bren gun for something.<sup>43</sup>

The burial party hid the sword in the roof of the hut. They buried their dead in two graves, a big one at the foot of the hill and a smaller one for 16 Platoon's dead on the hill. They built a cross using timber rafters taken from the hut, engraving on it lettering which they filled with melting asphalt from the road, and erected it on the site.

But that was in the future. In January 1942, the 2/18th Battalion's sojourn in Malaya was rapidly drawing to a close, as does a short story once its climax is told. The

---

<sup>42</sup> Fred Harris, interview, 12 December 2000.

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*

## INTO BATTLE

battalion made its way south, by truck and by foot. Although the withdrawal of Eastforce in accordance with the general plan for the withdrawal of all Allied troops was, according to Wigmore, “unmolested”, it was not entirely without incident.<sup>44</sup> While Japanese ground troops did not move south from Mersing to occupy Jemaluang until 29 January, Japanese aeroplanes controlled the air. Soldiers on foot straggled along—the men did not march in columns that could be attacked from the air. Even so, four members of the mortar platoon were caught out in the open by a plane. The only shelter was a big log. The plane, spitting bullets, passed over them four times. Between each pass the men hopped from one side to the other, cramming their bodies as closely as possible against the far side of the solid timber. Eventually the pilot tired of his sport and departed but it was some time before the soldiers dared to move.<sup>45</sup>

Such incidents only served to heighten the tension. That night the mortar platoon met in a sand quarry. The men set the mortar up, ready should the Japanese come down the road. They were tired, hungry and irritable. One man was meant to sleep while his mate kept watch, but they were all asleep when Private Gordon Kilby had his nightmare. Mervyn Blyth recalled:

We had absolutely had it. We slept where we fell...And all of a sudden there's this fellow yelling, "They're here!" and he's flailing around, all tangled in his ground sheet. He knocked the mortar over. I heard the bolts going back on the rifles. We thought we were about to be slaughtered. I reckon that we could have lost some of our blokes shooting each other, shooting ourselves. Then Johnny [Fuller] woke up to what was going on. He tackled him and brought him down.<sup>46</sup>

---

<sup>44</sup> Wigmore, *Japanese Thrust*, p.269.

<sup>45</sup> Mervyn Blyth, interview, 17 August 1999.

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid.*

## INTO BATTLE

Fuller's tackle was a good one, low and straight, directly in front of the wavering muzzles. Six years later, as a Rugby international, he no doubt performed many other impressive tackles, but for the men of his mortar platoon the tackle of most consequence would always be the one in the sand quarry on the road to Singapore.

\* \* \*

The 2/18th Battalion's preparations had been essentially complete when "the balloon went up" on 7 December 1941. Nevertheless, despite the speed with which the Japanese overcame resistance and moved down the peninsula, it was still several weeks before the 2/18th Battalion met them in battle. After eighteen months of continuous training, the men of the 2/18th Battalion were disciplined, motivated and even eager to take their part in the war from which they had for so long believed themselves to be sidelined. They moved from their huts to camp in their dug outs; they applied finishing touches to their defences and then extended them; they finally received their ammunition; they went out on patrols and they guarded their positions; and, once more, they waited. Meanwhile, they were justifiably proud of the defences that they had built along the beaches south of Mersing which had closed what would have been for the Japanese a most convenient "gateway to Singapore". For the soldiers this period of waiting was one of heightened awareness, of simmering excitement and fear. They wrote then of their excitement but survivors today also remember their fear—how would they react under fire? What if they let down their mates? Only experience would tell them. Nevertheless, now that the battalion was poised to justify its existence, the battalion spirit manifested itself in a universal helpfulness and enthusiastic commitment to any given task. The men were fit, trained, equipped, and, despite their nervousness, confident that they were so.

The battalion in the weeks leading up to the battle had assumed its final shape to which all its members (apart from the problem few who had to all intents and purposes ceased to count) actively, even enthusiastically, contributed. The battle on the Nithsdale Estate should thus have proved a fitting climax to eighteen months of preparation because

## INTO BATTLE

it was a test of every aspect of the battalion's preparedness—the co-operative battalion spirit that Varley and his men nurtured, the calibre of individual officers and men, their knowledge of the country, their skills and equipment.

The battle signified the “Coming of Age” of the 2/18th Battalion. While the metaphor was not original, it was one with which the men were familiar, as it had been used to chart the battalion's development in its magazine, *Men May Smoke*. The objectives of the battle had been to destroy as many of the enemy who were moving down the east coast as possible, to prevent them from connecting with the enemy force on the west coast via Kluang (or at least to delay them from doing so) and to cover from infantry attack Eastforce's own withdrawal along the Kota Tinggi Road to Singapore. As might be expected in such circumstances, the chaos of battle unleashed costly errors of judgement and equipment failure. However, when the 2/18th Battalion withdrew from the action, it had achieved its objectives. The men's identification with their battalion was such that even those who were not involved in the action could be proud that it had at last justified its existence.

Nevertheless, the cost was great, and, at the grass roots level, it overshadowed the achievement. As the battalion withdrew from its battle positions, the men did not know that the Japanese would not follow them immediately. They were yet to be convinced of their victory. However, they did realise that they had abandoned D Company and, more particularly, the wounded, to their fate. The enormity of D Company's losses was quickly apparent as so very few survivors made their way down the road to rejoin the battalion.

For Varley, the ambush, planned to take place during daylight, was disappointing. It had not taken the enemy entirely by surprise. Certainly B Company had been caught in a position inappropriate for a night time operation.<sup>47</sup> Communications between headquarters and the different companies failed. In the chaos of battle, mistakes were made at every level and instructions were misunderstood. With daylight, the situation might have been

---

<sup>47</sup> Warren, *Singapore*, p.191.

## INTO BATTLE

rectified to some extent—intermittent gunfire could still be heard—but the orders came to withdraw.

Approximately one out of every nine soldiers in the battalion died at Nithsdale. What was left of D Company could be reformed only into a single platoon, its lieutenant the company's only surviving officer who had been in the action. Captain Mosher, who was in hospital and missed the action, would write sadly from Singapore Island: "The 'Barbarians' did a hell of a good job without me...and now I'll never lead my own little gang again."<sup>48</sup>

Despite eighteen months of continuous training and preparation for battle, the Battalion's fundamental mistake in planning the ambush at Nithsdale had been in underestimating the enemy. Varley, his officers and the men themselves were *certain* that the Japanese had not penetrated south of the Mersing River. They *knew* that the Japanese neither fought nor moved at night for they had been so informed time and time again. They had no conception that the Japanese were already in position in the middle of the ambush area and ready to spring their own surprises. With regard to the capabilities of the Japanese, the Australians at Nithsdale prior to the battle had been complacent. The authorities, in fostering racist contempt for the enemy, might have been ultimately responsible but now, on the road and withdrawing to Singapore, both officers and men were forced to re-evaluate.

As they made their way to Singapore the men could see for themselves that the only aeroplanes in the sky were Japanese. Malaya was to be given up to the enemy. The men had to respect the enemy's capabilities. Questions too were rising about the conduct of the war in Malaya to date, about the calibre of some of their officers, about their equipment, even about their training. Yet in the unforeseen and changing circumstances and the general uncertainty, the battalion symbolised all that was familiar and certain.

---

<sup>48</sup> Ken Mosher, letter to his wife, 6 February 1942.

## **INTO BATTLE**

The 2/18th Battalion did not linger. It crossed the causeway from Johore Bahru onto Singapore Island on 30 January 1942. Its departure from Malaya was just eighteen days short of twelve months since its arrival.

## Chapter Eight— Conclusion

The social history of the 2/18th Battalion in Malaya during 1941 and 1942 encompasses the battalion's development and its activity from its inception in Sydney in 1940 until its departure, along with all other Allied troops, from the Malayan Peninsula at the end of January 1942. While its military doings are integral to both, it is the interplay of relationships and actions among its members both within and beyond the battalion that are the focus of this study. This approach of microhistory, which concentrates on the individuals and groups within the battalion, reveals the interaction of the men with each other, and thereby demonstrates the day to day operation of the battalion and its development over eighteen months. The battalion diarist in *Men May Smoke* traces the its development from "Birth" to its "Coming of Age"—images that relate to the growth and maturation of a living entity rather than the fixed structure. Certainly the men—volunteers who had enlisted in the AIF in order to go to the war—were impatient for battle experience which represented, for them, the achievement of their goal. But this goal aside, the battalion's journey through eighteen months covered a range of experiences which challenged officers and men alike. How they met each challenge as it occurred has provided the narrative of this thesis.

The men of the 2/18th Battalion were volunteers who relinquished their hitherto unquestioned civilian status when they enlisted. The application of rigorous discipline and a relentless training schedule transformed them into soldiers. Six months after the battalion's formation, it arrived in Malaya, where the men set about acclimatising to the new conditions. The twin tenets which dominated their lives—discipline and training—did not slacken as they adjusted to each new encounter regardless of whether it was training in the jungle or route marching, coping with the climate or their own health and homesickness, or solving problems relating to their equipment or clothing or dealing with the different people living in Malaya. With acclimatisation and experience the men

## CONCLUSION

became adept and confident in the Malayan conditions. Training lessened after the move to Mersing only to the extent that the time was required to build defences, while the high level of discipline was always maintained. The men obeyed orders and did as they were instructed while they fulfilled their allotted roles according to their rank. And yet, despite their lack of control, they were not powerless. Each chapter in this thesis demonstrates their adherence to both their own codes and agenda.

As much in response to as despite the onslaught of discipline and training, an *esprit de corps* developed within the battalion that was always encouraged by a commanding officer who believed firmly in its value. The officers' and men's identification with the battalion only increased when they found themselves virtually isolated together in Malaya, far from home and equally far from war in the Middle East and the rest of the AIF. When that spirit was in the ascendant, the battalion operated with an efficiency that seemingly made light of all difficulties.

The soldiers of the 2/18th Battalion thus withheld or gave their support according to how they felt at a given time. In the army, discipline would always win over active disobedience; but when an objective had the men's backing, they cooperated willingly. At such times, when the battalion spirit was strong, when the men were interested and supportive, the battalion did, perhaps, develop the persona of a living entity as the battalion diarist in *Men May Smoke* suggests. Regardless, the battalion always operated best when the soldiers concerned in an enterprise were committed to its success—the contributions of the soldiers, both individually and generally, did directly affect both the function and the development of the battalion itself in Malaya.

From Malaya the men of the 2/18th Battalion went to Singapore and fifteen days later they became prisoners of war. During the years in captivity, although they were scattered through camps across South East Asia and in Japan, the men retained their identity as 2/18th Battalion men as small groups sought to stay together and support each

## CONCLUSION

other. When the war ended, the 2/18th Battalion was disbanded but the survivors formed 2/18th Battalion (AIF) Association which has continued to provide that support. The battalion spirit, encouraged from the battalion's beginning by Colonel Varley and nurtured as much by the men themselves, has continued undiminished for sixty-five years.



Page 264 of this thesis intentionally left blank

Downloaded from [e-publications@UNE](mailto:e-publications@UNE) the institutional research repository of the University of New England at Armidale, NSW Australia.

# Bibliography

## ***Archival Sources***

### Australian War Memorial:

#### Official Written Records:

AWM 52 AIF and Militia Unit War Diaries (1939-1945): 2/18th Battalion AIF War Diary.

AWM 54 Written Records (1939-1945) created by AIF units.

AWM Private Records (letters and manuscripts).

### National Archives of Australia (Melbourne):

Series MP729, MP272, MP 508, MP742 Written Records

2/18th Australian Infantry Battalion Association Archives, in possession of author.

## ***Unpublished material***

- |                                |  |
|--------------------------------|--|
| Barlow, S.A.,                  | The Army Years of Jack Barlow, AWM MSS1446.  |
| Colenso, Raymond,              | “Poems from the Frontline: A Collection of Verse”, AWM PR00689.  |
| Cottee, F. M.,                 | Growing Up in Australia 1919-1945, in possession of owner.   |
| Crichton, Jock,                | Account of the experiences of the demining party of Prisoners of War at Mersing in 1942, 2/18th Australian Infantry Battalion Association Archives, in possession of author. |
| Hopson, M.W.,                  | Diary, July 1940 to December 1942, AWM PR82/13.  |
| MacCauley, Bill,<br>(believed) | Account of battle on the Nithsdale Estate, 2/18th Australian Infantry Battalion Association Archives, in possession of author.   |
| Morrison, Mark,                | Report analysing the British loss in the Malayan Campaign, 1945, AWM MSS1392.  |
| Oakes, R.F.                    | Manuscript, AWM MSS1037.   |

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Taylor, Harold, Diary, 1941, AWM PR85/042.
- Varley, Arthur, Diaries, handwritten journal covering war period 1941 to 1942, not transcribed; 12 May 1942 to 26 March 1944, transcribed, AWM PR3DRL/691.

## Letters

- Amos, Jack, to his father, May 1941 and February 1942.
- Balsillie, Major A. J., to *Reveille*, Journal of the RSL, 1 February 1962, p.13.
- Black, Allan, to his family, February 1941-January 1942.
- Blair, Gordon, to his brother, 1941.
- Cruickshank, Gordon, 3 January 1942.
- Darlington, Jim, to Mrs Mosher, 20 November 1941.
- Earley, Tom, 23 December 1941, published in Arvier, Robyn (ed.), *Don't worry about me: wartime letters of the 8th Division AIF*, Riverside, Tasmania, 2004.
- Fraser, Douglas, to his mother, *Inverell Times*, March 1941.
- Fuller, John, to his mother and members of his family, February 1941-February 1942.
- McGee, Roger, to his family, February 1941-January 1942, in possession of his nephew, Mr Roger Stuart.
- McLaughlin, George, to his wife, July 1940-February 1942, in possession of his daughter, Mrs Ethnee Brooks.
- Mosher, Ken, to his wife, February 1941-February 1942, in possession of Mrs Imelda Mosher.
- Munro, Bruce, to his family, April 1941-July 1942, in possession of Munro family.
- Schwenke, Verne, to Mrs Mosher, 24 April 1941, in possession of Mrs Imelda Mosher.
- Short, Merton, to his family and to a friend, July 1940-February 1942, AWM PR01174.
- Stanton, Les, to his sister, undated, in possession of his niece, Mrs Margaret Fisher.

## **BIBLIOGRAPHY**

Stanton, Ned, to his sister, 20 December 1941, in possession of his niece, Mrs Margaret Fisher.

Wright, Arthur, to Mrs Hilda Blair, 28 July 1996, in possession of Mrs Blair.

### ***Interviews***

Adams, Frank, interviewed by author, Inverell, 20 August 2002.

Balsillie, A.J. (Jack), telephone interview by author, 29 May 2005.

Blyth, Mervyn, interviewed by author, Sydney, 17 August 1999 and 2 September 1999.

Cottee, F.M. (Mac), interviewed by author, Sydney, 19 June 2001.

Forsyth, Joe, interviewed by author, Inverell, 26 July 2000.

Forsyth, Keith, interviewed by author, Inverell, 25 July 2000.

Fuller, John, interviewed by James Burfitt, 20 June 1989, transcript in possession of author; interviewed by author, 1990.

Harris, Fred, interviewed by author, Sydney, 12 December 2000.

Loxton, Alan, interviewed by author, Sydney, 27 August 1999.

McGrory, John, interviewed by author, Sydney, 13 July 2000.

O'Brien, Major Charles, interviewed by Captain G.H.Nicholson, Nakom Paton Camp, Thailand, 23 September 1945, 2/18th Australian Infantry Battalion Archives, transcript in possession of author.

O'Grady, Stan, interviewed by author [with Fred Harris], 14 July 2000.

Olsen, Cliff, interviewed by author, Forster, 30 May 2002.

Pearson, Ginty, interviewed by author, Tamworth, 22 May 2001.

Spence, Colin, interviewed by author, Forster, 3 May 2000 and 10 January 2002.

Spratt, Doug, interviewed by author, Sydney, 26 June 2002.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

### **Newspapers and Magazines**

<i>Australian Women's Weekly</i>	January 1941-January 1942
<i>Inverell Times</i>	February to June 1941
<i>Malay Mail</i>	1941
<i>Straits Times</i>	1941
<i>Sydney Morning Herald</i>	June 1940-December 1941
<i>Telegraph</i>	February 1941- January 1942
<i>Time-Life</i>	January 1941 - December 1941

### **Books**

Allen, Louis,	<i>Singapore 1941-1942</i> , 2nd edition., Singapore, Frank Cass & Co. Ltd, 1993 [1977].
Attiwill, Ken,	<i>The Singapore Story</i> , London, Frederick Muller, 1959.
Barber, Noel,	<i>Sinister Twilight: The Fall and Rise Again of Singapore</i> , London, Collins, 1968.
Barrett, John,	<i>We Were There: Australian Soldiers of World War II tell their Stories</i> , Ringwood Victoria, Viking, 1987.
Bean, C.E.W.,	<i>The Story of Anzac: Official History of Australia in the War of 1914-1918</i> , Sydney, Angus & Robinson, 1942.
Beautmont, Joan,	<i>Australian Defence: Sources and Statistics, The Australian Centenary History of Defence</i> , Vol.6, Melbourne, Oxford University Press, 2001
Bennett, Gordon H.,	<i>Why Singapore Fell</i> , Sydney, Angus and Robertson, 1944.
Bentley, R.C.,	<i>English for the Higher School Certificate</i> , Sydney, Dymocks, 1972 [1966].
Brown, Cecil,	<i>Suez to Singapore</i> , New York, Random House, Inc., 1942.
Burfitt, James,	<i>Against All Odds: The History of the 2/18 Battalion A.I.F.</i> , Sydney, 2/18 Battalion Association, 1991.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Butcher, John G., *The British in Malaya 1880-1941: the Social History of a European Community in Colonial South-East Asia*, Kuala Lumpur, Oxford University Press, 1979.
- Callahan, Raymond, *The Worst Disaster: The Fall of Singapore*, 2nd Edition, Singapore, Cultured Lotus, 2001, [1977].
- Chai, Hon-Chan, *The Development of British Malaya 1896-1909*, Kuala Lumpur, Oxford University Press, 1964.
- Chapman, Frederick Spencer, *The Jungle is Neutral*, London, Chatto and Windus, 1949.
- Chapman, Ivan, *Sydney University Regiment*, Sydney, Playbill Pty. Ltd., 1996.
- Clarke, Burnett, *Behind the Wire*, St. Lucia, University of Queensland Press, 1989.
- Clisby, Mark, *Guilty or Innocent? The Gordon Bennett Case*, Sydney, Allen & Unwin, 1992.
- Day, David, *The Politics of War*, Sydney, Harper Collins, 2003.
- Dyer, Gwynne, *War*, London, Guild Publishing, 1986.
- Elphick, Peter, *Singapore: the Pregnable Fortress: a Study in Deception, Discord and Desertion*, London, Hodden & Stoughton, 1995.
- Evans, Richard J., *In Defence of History*, London, Granta Books, 1988.
- Fraser, David, *And We Shall Shock Them: the British Army in the Second World War*, London, Hodder and Stoughton, 1983.
- Gander, Terry, *Allied Infantry Weapons of World War Two*, Wiltshire, Crowood Press Ltd, 2000.
- Ginzburg, Carlo, *The Cheese and the Worms: The Cosmos of a Sixteenth-Century Miller*, trans by J. & A. Tedeschi, Baltimore, The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1992 [1980].
- Glover, Edwin Maurice, *In 70 Days: the story of the Japanese Campaign in British Malaya*, London, Frederick Muller, 1946.
- Grey, Jeffrey, *A Military History of Australia*, Melbourne, Cambridge University Press, 1990.
- Gullick, J., *Malaysia: Economic Expansion and National Unity*, London, E. Benn, 1981.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Hall, Timothy, *The Fall of Singapore*, Melbourne, Mandarin Australia, 1983.
- Hefner, Robert W. (ed.), *The Politics of Multiculturalism, Pluralism and Citizenship in Malaysia, Singapore and Indonesia*, Honolulu, University of Hawaii Press, 2001.
- Holmes, Richard & Kemp, Anthony, *The Bitter End: The Fall of Singapore 1941-42*, Chichester, Antony Bird Publications, 1982.
- James, David H., *The Rise and Fall of the Japanese Empire*, London, Allen & Unwin, 1951.
- Johnston, Mark, *Fighting the Enemy: Australian soldiers and their adversaries in World War II*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2000.
- Johnston, Mark, *At the Front Line: Experiences of Australian Soldiers in World War II*, Melbourne, Cambridge University Press, 1996.
- Kennedy, Joseph, *British Civilians and the Japanese War in Malaya and Singapore 1941-1945*, London, MacMillan Press, 1987.
- Keogh, E. G., *Malaya 1941-42*, Melbourne, Printmaster, 1962.
- Kirby, S. Woodburn, *The War Against Japan*, London, Her Majesty's Stationery Office, 1957-1969.
- Leason, James, *Singapore: the Battle that changed the World*, New York, Doubleday, 1968.
- Legg, Frank, *The Gordon Bennett Story*, Sydney, Angus & Robertson, 1965.
- Lodge, A.B., *The Fall of General Gordon Bennett*, Sydney, Allen & Unwin, 1986.
- Mant, Gilbert, *The Singapore Surrender*, Kenthurst, N.S.W., Kangaroo Press, 1992.
- Martin, A.W., *Robert Menzies A Life, Vol 2 1944-1978*, Melbourne University Press, Carlton South, 1999.
- Miller, Harry, *The Story of Malaya*, London, Faber and Faber, 1965.
- Morrison, Ian, *Malayan Postscript*, Sydney, Angus and Robertson, 1943.
- Mullins, Mervyn, "Birth of a Battalion: The History of the 2/18th Battalion AIF 1940-1945", *The Field* (Journal of the Fairfield R.S.L.), September 1980 to February 1983.
- Nath, Prithvi *The Japanese Offensive*, New Delhi, Stirling, 1990.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Penfold, A.W., Bayliss, W.C., Crisp, K.E., *Galleghan's Greyhounds: the Story of the 2/30th Australian Infantry Battalion, 22 November 1940 - 10th October 1945*, Sydney, 2/30 Battalion AIF Association, 1979.
- Percival, A. E., *The War in Malaya*, London, Eyre & Spottiswoode, 1949.
- Phillips, W.W., "Religion", *Australians: Historical Statistics*, Wray Vamplew (ed), Fairfax Syme & Weldon Associates, Broadway, NSW, 1987.
- Robertson, John & McCarthy, John, (eds.), *Australian War Strategy 1939-1945: A Documentary History*, St Lucia, University of Queensland Press, 1985.
- Roff, William, *The Origins of Malay Nationalism*, New Haven & London, Yale University Press, 1967.
- Ross, Jane, *The Myth of the Digger: The Australian Soldier in Two World Wars*, Sydney, Hale & Iremonger, 1985.
- Said, Edward W., *Orientalism*, London, Penguin, 2nd ed., 1995 [1978].
- Scott, Jack, *A Fair Crack of the Whip*, Charters Towers (North Queensland), Mimosa Press, 1984.
- Simson, Ivan, *Singapore: Too Little Too Late: the Failure of Malaya's defences in 1942*, Singapore, Asia Pacific Press, 1970.
- Smith, Tony; Robinson, Richard & Arnold, Peter (eds.), *Encyclopedia of Family Health*, Sydney, Reader's Digest Assn.(Aust.)Ltd., 1994 [UK 1990].
- Smyth, John, *Percival and the Tragedy of Singapore*, London, MacDonald, 1971.
- Tsuji, Masanobu, *Singapore: The Japanese Version*, Sydney, Ure Smith, 1960.
- Uhr, Janet, *Against the Sun: The A.I.F. in Malaya 1941-42*, Sydney, Allen & Unwin, 1998.
- Walker, Allan S., *Middle East and Far East, Australia in the War of 1939-1945, Series Five, Medical, Volume II*, Canberra, Australian War Memorial, 1953.
- Walker, Allan S., *Clinical Problems of War, Australia in the War of 1939-1945, Series Five, Medical, Volume I*, Canberra, Australian War Memorial, 1952.
- Ward, Russel, *The Australian Legend*, Melbourne, Oxford University Press, Second Edition, 1965 [1958].
- Warren, Alan, *Singapore: Britain's Greatest Defeat*, Singapore, Talisman, 2002.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Waterford, John, *Footprints*, Canberra, Bramill Sons & Morris, privately printed, n.d.
- Wigmore, Lionel, *The Japanese Thrust*, Australia in the War of 1939-1945, Series One, Army, Volume 1V, Canberra, Australian War Memorial, 1957.

### **Book Chapters and Articles**

- Hamill, Ian, "An Expeditionary Force Mentality? The Despatch of Australian Troops 1939-40", in *Australian Outlook*, Volume 31, Number 2, August 1977.
- Kratoska, Paul H., "Country Histories and Writing in South East Asian History" in Abu Talib and Tan Liok Ee (eds.), *New Terrains in Southeast Asian History*, Singapore, Singapore University Press, 2003.
- Levi, Giovanni, "On Microhistory" in Peter Burke (ed.) *New Perspectives on Historical Writing*, Cambridge, Polity Press, 1991.
- Silcock, T. H. and Aziz, Ungku Abdul, "Nationalism in Malaya", Secretariat Paper No. 8, Institute of Pacific Relations, New York, 1950.
- White, Richard, "The Soldier as Tourist: The Australian Experience of the Great War", *War & Society*, Volume 5, Number 1, University of New South Wales, May 1987.
- White, Richard, "Sun, Sand and Syphilis: Australian Soldiers and the Orient: Egypt 1914", in *Australian Perceptions of Asia*, David Walker (ed.), an issue of *Australian Cultural History*, No.9, 1990, Sydney, University of New South Wales, 1990.

### **Online material**

- Dasgupta, Anindita, "The 'Madrasi' in Malaysia", *Himal: South Asian*, 15(12), December 2002, p.21-27, 2002, (10/02/2003), <http://origin.island.lk/2002/12/29/featur06.html>. [accessed 2 October 2003].

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

Frei, Henry P., "Malaya in World War II: The Revolving Door of Colonialism: Malaya 1940-46", 2001, [www.kasei.ac.jp/library/kiyou/2001/3.FREI.pdf](http://www.kasei.ac.jp/library/kiyou/2001/3.FREI.pdf), [accessed 10 February 2003].

Lim, Choo Hoon, "The Battle of Pasir Panjang Revisited", *Journal of the Singapore Armed Forces*, Volume 28 Number 1 (January to March 2002), [www.mindef.gov.sg/safti/pointer/back/journals/2002/Vol28\\_1/1.htm](http://www.mindef.gov.sg/safti/pointer/back/journals/2002/Vol28_1/1.htm), [accessed 9 February 2003].

Magnusson, Sigurour Gylfi, "The Contours of Social History, Microhistory, Postmodernism and Historical Sources", *Mod nye historier. Rapport til Det 24. Nordiske Historikermøde 3*. Redigeret af Carsten Tag Nielsen, Dorthe Gert Simonsen og Lene Wul (Århus 2001), pp. 83-107, [www.akademia.is/sigm/contours.html](http://www.akademia.is/sigm/contours.html), [accessed 20 January 2003].

Tourres, Marie-Aimee, "The Politics of Multiculturalism", (International Institute for Asian Studies) *IIAS Newsletter*, No.30, March 2003, pp.34-35, [www.iias.nl/iiasn/newslet.html](http://www.iias.nl/iiasn/newslet.html), [accessed 2 October 2003].

Wavell Report, (signed by General Wavell 1 June 1942), produced by Major H.P.Thomas, [http://www.britain-at-war.org.uk/Wavell\\_Report/body\\_index.htm](http://www.britain-at-war.org.uk/Wavell_Report/body_index.htm), [accessed 10 February 2003].