

Will Fox 2W HELP Project
2020

THE FALL OF SINGAPORE



Writer's Note

On the 29th of January 1942, the British 18th Division arrived in Singapore by sea. Amongst the troops was Sergeant Sidney Ernest Payne, a butcher and a keen footballer from Petworth, Sussex. Sidney's journey from England had started in Liverpool on the 30th of October 1941. The first stop was Nova Scotia in Canada, where the Americans provided three luxury liners for the troops to travel on. However, this was no pleasure cruise. From Canada, the 18th Division sailed down the East Coast of the USA to the Caribbean to refuel in Trinidad. The troops were not allowed to disembark to explore the exotic surroundings. Next, they sailed across the Atlantic towards Cape Town. On the 7th of December 1941, without warning the Japanese bombed the US Pacific Fleet in Pearl Harbour. The Japanese then threatened to invade Singapore and the 18th Division were immediately diverted from their original destination of the Middle East to defend Singapore at all costs.

Sidney was my great, great uncle. Little did he and the other brave men of the 18th Division know, their diversion to Singapore would deliver them into the greatest military disaster in British history. Sidney grew up on a farm and had rarely stepped foot out of rural Sussex before now. The Singapore quayside onto which he stepped on the 29th of January 1942 would have been a very foreign world indeed.

He was 25 years old, and would not see Petworth or his family again.

Will Fox



Introduction

The Fall of Singapore in 1942 was described by Winston Churchill as the "worst disaster" in British military history. It resulted in 138,000 Allied casualties, 130,000 of which were suffered in Japanese captivity. The event was also considered by many to be the beginning of the end for the British Empire, an Empire that consisted of no less than a fifth of the world's countries and a quarter of the Earth's total land mass. The event came about at the lowest point in the war for the Allies, who were suffering great losses across the globe, and it taught the Allies a lesson: never underestimate the enemy. From this point onwards, things began to look up for the Allies, with the Americans joining the war to aid the Allied cause, after the Japanese bombing of Pearl Harbour.

So what was this largely forgotten British military disaster?



Singapore is a small island complex, south of Malaysia, and was claimed by the British as a colony in 1819 by Sir Stamford Raffles, a British man who was Governor of Bencoolen at the time. He transformed the small, primitive island into a British stronghold, with a large portion of the population there being British colonials. With neighbouring country Malaya (now known as Malaysia) also under British control, Singapore was deemed an "impenetrable fortress" and "the bastion of the Empire". The only ways for an enemy to take Singapore would be to first conquer Malaya (an operation that would be extremely expensive, difficult and time consuming) and to then invade Singapore through the jungle in the north-west of the island (another very tricky feat); or to launch an attack from the sea (also near-impossible due to the heavy defences placed on the coast and the effectiveness of Britain's incredibly powerful navy).

The reason Singapore was so important to the British was because it provided a safe route to trade with the whole of south-east Asia, for goods such as rubber and tin. It also provided a good way to defend other British Asian colonies, and Australia and New Zealand if they were ever to be attacked.

Singapore did not play a role in The First World War, as the conflict did not reach south-east Asia, so by the time The Second World War began, Singapore was not entirely battle ready. There had been a lack of funding in previous years and it was reported that Malaya and Singapore were at high risk of capture if an enemy chose to invade. In December 1941, the Japanese began their conquest through Malaya. General Tomoyuki Yamashita led the 5th and 18th Infantry Divisions, supported by the 3rd Air Division, through Malaya. The Japanese were met by little Allied resistance and rapidly advanced through Malaya and into to Singapore.

It was at this point that the British were alerted to the imminent threat of a Japanese invasion of Singapore. The British expected an attack from the sea, so placed the majority of their forces on the north-west of the island, on the coast. However, the Japanese came into Singapore through the jungle in the north-east, catching the Allies by surprise. After only a week of fighting in Singapore, the

Japanese defeated the ill-equipped and unorganised Allied forces, capturing Singapore.

British General, Arthur Percival met with Yamashita on the 15th February 1942 to discuss terms of surrender. Percival thought that he wouldn't be able to keep Singapore from Japanese attack any longer, so decided to settle for an all-out surrender. All 80,000 remaining British, Australian and Indian troops were taken prisoner by the Japanese.

The prisoners of war (POWs) were kept in Singapore for a year and then sent to Thailand and Burma, to build the Burma "Death" Railway. The Japanese were incredibly cruel and ruthless towards their prisoners, and many of their actions resulted in punishments after the war, as they were war crimes. The POWs were not given enough food, water, or other basic necessities like toilets, and many faced torturous punishment or even execution for very minor actions that their captors deemed disobedient. Disease also spread quickly through the camps where the POWs were forced to work, resulting in many deaths. The work that the prisoners had to do was also arduous and unrelenting, and many workers were forced to work until they died from exhaustion.

The Japanese formally surrendered on September 2nd 1945 after the atomic bombings of Nagasaki and Hiroshima, finally bringing an end to the Second World War. Singapore was handed back to Britain after the fall of the Japanese Empire, and it was made an official Crown Colony in 1946. In 1963, Singapore became independent and today is one of the best-functioning cities in the world. It has one of the fastest growing economies, one of the best education systems, and has one of the lowest crime rates on the planet.



What caused the Fall of Singapore?

The reasons for the Fall of Singapore can be split into two categories: the sloppiness of the British and the effectiveness of the Japanese.

At this time, the Japanese Empire was growing substantially after joining the Axis forces. The total Empire had a population of 105 million in 1940 and they were definitely a force to be reckoned with. The Japanese army had a strong air force and a well-equipped, well-trained infantry. An attack on Singapore was a good option for the Japanese, as intelligence inside Singapore informed them that the British were not prepared. Capturing the base would also provide a naval base which could be used to control the Pacific War, a way to keep control of Malaya, and an opportunity to invade Australia and New Zealand. In the Malayan Campaign, the Japanese army used their resources and time effectively, so their advance on Singapore was as quick as possible, much like the German's Blitzkrieg tactics earlier in the war.

The British, on the other hand, were not prepared for an attack on Singapore, although it was inevitable. The British were just spread too thin at this point. Although they had soldiers from Australia and India, the British did very little to use what they had to their advantage. By the time the Japanese had conquered Malaya and reached Singapore it was too late for the British to stop it. However, they still sailed a whole division of troops into Singapore, whilst knowing very well that it was already a lost cause.

One reason for the Fall of Singapore was British arrogance and complacency. Perhaps the most important moment in winning a battle happens before the fighting has begun- the planning. Gathering intelligence on your enemy and knowing their every move makes it much easier to defeat them, and possibly stop them before they can do anything. You know how most effectively to spread your forces, how much force you need, and you know when to put what into action. This was something that the British

lacked in the defence of Singapore. The reason the British possessed no information about the Japanese was because of arrogance and complacency- they believed that the Japanese were stupid and thought that they would be a pushover, even though they had no evidence to support this.

Singapore before the war was inhabited by rich British colonials, alongside natives. The colonials were very much "living inside a bubble" and were oblivious to the effects of the war raging around them. They lived a life of playing cricket in the tropical heat and drinking tea as the sun went down. They disregarded the possibility of invasion and thought nothing of the warnings of imminent invasion. When the British Generals came to place heavy guns on the golf course to defend Singapore as the Japanese approached, the chairman of the golf club demanded that the General ask for the permission of the golf club committee first. And it wasn't just the colonials who were this naïve- many of the officers positioned in Singapore behaved similarly. They referred to the Japanese and the Singaporean natives simply as Chinese, due to their racist British nature, and regarded them as stupid. This made it very easy for Japanese spies to enter Singapore and gather information on Allied plans. For example, the "chief photographer" at the Singapore base was Japanese and working for his country's intelligence force.

The British then did not send any spies or other special forces to gather information from the Japanese, as they completely underestimated them and thought that it would be a waste of time. The fact that the Allies had gathered no intel meant that the final attack on Singapore caught them completely by surprise. There were two ways into Singapore; through Malaya and then through the jungle in the north-west or attacking the coast in the north-east. The British were expecting a naval attack from the Japanese; therefore, they placed the large majority of the defences on the coast. If they had gathered intelligence, then they would have known that the Japanese were planning to attack through the jungle in the north-west. Because the bulk of the Allied forces were positioned on the north-east, the north-west of the island was unprotected, and the enemy walked straight into Singapore. This was such an important reason for the Fall of Singapore because

the British were caught by surprise, due to their complacency, and had no time to change plans to meet the Japanese attack from the jungles. Because of this, the Allies' chances of successfully defending Singapore were damaged early on, as they could no longer keep the enemy out of the country.

Lack of British intelligence also meant that the Allies completely underestimated the Japanese army. They believed that the enemy had outdated equipment and so they posed no threat. The Japanese equipment, however, turned out to be far superior to that of the British and they paid the price for it. They lost many aircraft to the newer, deadlier craft used by the Japanese, and lost two of their best battleships to the more tactical enemy ships and bombers. The British were also unaware of the various techniques used by the Japanese. For example, the Japanese had used bicycles to advance through the tropical jungles, so navigating large, clumsy transport vehicles through the heavily wooded area was not a problem to deal with. If the British were aware that the Japanese were using these tactics, then something could have been done to effectively counter them and stop them being as effective as they were. But because of their arrogance and complacency, no intelligence was gathered to inform the British about Japanese tactics and techniques. They were therefore left clueless in what to do to prevent the Japanese from carrying out such an effective attack. And of course, the more effective side wins battles.

Another example of British complacency is the decisions made by the Government regarding Singapore and the Far-East. In October 1940, more than a year-and-a-half before Singapore fell, Commander-in-Chief Robert Brooke-Popham realised that Singapore did not have sufficient air support to fend off an attack. He appealed to the Government to supply him with more aircraft but was ignored. When General Arthur Percival was tasked with defending Singapore, he soon realised that the Government attached little to no importance to the defence of the Far-East. As Winston Churchill said, "The Far East does not seem to require... the maintenance of such a large force." Churchill was being too complacent, as he viewed the Allies' hold on the Far East as invincible no matter what. This was not the case, and if he had been alerted to that fact then Singapore may not have fallen. If he was aware that Singapore and the Far

East lacked essential air force then that could have been provided. With a larger presence in the air, the *Prince of Wales* and the *Indomitable* would have had a much larger chance of successfully making it to Singapore. If the warships had made it, they would have defended the north-west of the island (the coast) from a naval attack. With the warships securing the coast, the Allies would have more resources to defend the north-east of the island with, and would have had a better chance of stopping the Japanese from entering Singapore. But without the two warships, the north-west of Singapore (the jungle) was left vulnerable. The Japanese capitalised on this and caught the British by surprise, a deciding factor in the Fall of Singapore.

Another reason for the Fall of Singapore is poor British planning and organisation. In the years prior to the Fall of Singapore, the Allies had made some poor decisions that resulted in a waste of time and money. After the First World War, the British made plans to build a major naval base in Singapore in 1919, in case of a Pacific war. If a Pacific War were to break out in the future, a very large portion of the British Navy's fleet would be relocated from Britain to this naval base. From there, the ships could be dispatched to all over the Far East. However, the base would cost over 2.5 billion pounds in today's money, so the British needed other Allies to invest in it. The British appealed to Australia and New Zealand to invest in the construction of the facility, as it would be a crucial part in their defence in the event of a Pacific War. This was called the "Singapore Strategy". Both Australia and New Zealand joined the Singapore Strategy and construction began on the 54 kilometre-square base in 1923 and it was finished in 1938.

The problem with the Singapore Strategy was that Britain had not planned for a conflict on a global scale that included a Pacific War. This meant that Britain's resources were stretched too far. They were trying to protect not only themselves but also the rest of Europe, which was quickly being conquered by the Axis forces. They could not, therefore, provide Australia and New Zealand with the protection which they had paid so much for. Instead of the promised fleet of warships, Britain could only provide two craft- the *Prince of Wales* and the *Repulse*.

The *Prince of Wales* and the *Repulse*, however, were two of Britain's finest ships and without them, Singapore would be left incredibly vulnerable. In October 1941, the British Admiralty sent the two ships along with the aircraft carrier *Indomitable* to Singapore. However, the *Indomitable* ran aground early on in the journey and was unable to continue, an incident that could have easily been avoided. But perhaps the poorest decision that the British made was to send the ships without air support. When the two remaining ships were near to Singapore on December 10th, they were attacked by Japanese bomber planes, alongside the Japanese navy. With no means of fighting back against the aircraft, the *Repulse* and the *Prince of Wales* were quickly sunk. If the ships had completed their journey, then Singapore was not likely to have fallen, as the Allies would have been able to spread their defences to the south-west of the island with the battleships defending the south-east. Spreading the defences across the island would have been a crucial part in a successful defence of Singapore because the Japanese would not have been able to catch the British by surprise when they came through the jungle.

Another huge example of poor British planning and organisation was the poor management and training of the troops sent to defend Singapore. For the British troops, Singapore was a completely different world and none of them were ready for the soaring temperatures and exotic jungles. And for most of them, they had never been outside of their country, let alone their continent. When they arrived, the infantry were terrified of the jungle, leading to high levels of fatigue because of the lack of sleep. On top of this, their leaders were not organised enough to lead them, causing many troops to be cut off from their battalions. All this chaos allowed the jungle-ready Japanese to advance through the jungles of Malaya with ease. This problem was mainly caused by a lack of British training and the lack of organisation from the leaders. Without leadership and good organisation, the Allied troops were in no state to defend Singapore; consequently, Singapore was quickly taken by the Japanese.

The troops that suffered the most from these poor decisions were those of the 18th Division, Sidney Payne amongst them. On October 30th 1941, the 18th Division set sail from Liverpool, heading for the

Middle East. They stopped at Cape Town to refuel and it was there that they received the order to head for Singapore instead, as the Japanese were threatening to attack. They stopped once again at Bombay (now known as Mumbai) in India on January 29th and remained there for two weeks. It was at this point that Winston Churchill called for the troops to remain in Bombay and be trained in "jungle fighting" before entering Singapore. He also questioned whether the 18th Division should be sent into Singapore at all, as the situation was becoming ever more hopeless. The final decision, however, was down to General Archibald Wavell. Although he knew that Singapore was a lost cause as early as December 10th, when the *Prince of Wales* and the *Repulse* were sunk, he ordered for the 18th Division to enter Singapore without being trained to fight in the jungles. They arrived on January 29th and were met with chaos and confusion. They were told that they were too late to save Singapore, and that a Japanese victory was imminent. Besides, even if they had arrived in time, they would not have been able to fight, as all their equipment, including lorries, Bren-gun carriers, anti-tank equipment and even their rifles had accidentally been sent to Indonesia. Sidney and his comrades had been sailed straight into a death trap. Without their guns, the troops of the 18th Division didn't stand a chance and were quickly captured. All this was caused by a lack of organisation from the British leaders.



Sidney and the other troops of the 18th Division were held as prisoners of war at Changi Prison in Singapore for the first year of occupation. On the 21st of March 1943, Sidney and 554 other men of the 18th Division left Singapore on train number 7 of "D" force, bound for Thailand to work on the Burma "Death" Railway.

Although the Allies were unorganised and in poor condition, Japanese effectiveness played a huge part in the Fall of Singapore. They were ruthless in their advance through Malaya and very clever in their capture of Singapore. One of the reasons that the Japanese were so effective was that the infantry were experienced in "jungle fighting". Singapore is not very far from Japan, and the exotic climate and environments weren't too alien to the Japanese soldiers. This meant that their advance through the jungles of Malaya and into Singapore were rapid and efficient. The leaders knew what they were doing and confidently led their men through the partly unknown territory. General Yamashita in particular, showed great leadership, and kept his troops going throughout the long, arduous campaign. This had a positive impact on the troops, boosting their morale increasing their ability to fight.

The Japanese's Malayan Campaign had been planned very carefully, so the Japanese knew exactly what they were doing when they arrived. One of the best decisions in the Malayan Campaign was to use bicycles to advance through the jungles. Thousands of bicycles were brought from Japan to Malaya so instead of transporting troops in trucks, each individual soldier would ride a bicycle. This meant that when they passed through heavily wooded areas, navigating too many large, clumsy vehicles through the dense jungle was not a problem. It also meant that if they came under fire from the enemy, it would be harder to hit the small, individual units.



The Japanese air force, the *Imperial Japanese Army Air Service* (IJAAS) was also a key part in Japan's success. They had some of the newest fighters, unlike the British, who had older, less agile craft. The IJAAS was a key part in the destruction of the British ships, the *Prince of Wales* and the *Repulse*. The British sent the two warships to Singapore without air support, leaving them open for attack. The IJAAS took advantage of this situation and quickly decimated the ships with little resistance. The decision to attack the ships was a wise one, as Japanese intelligence told the leaders that the enemy battleships were unguarded and that they were getting close to Singapore. That meant that it was the best time to attack, as the British warships were about as close to Japan as they were going to get. This meant that the Japanese would have to use less fuel to get the planes to their destination, making the attack as efficient as possible. As I have previously mentioned, being efficient is effective and being effective wins battles.

The decision making from General Yamashita was also a key part in Japan's success. One of the greatest decisions was to attack Singapore through the jungle in the north-west, rather than a naval invasion in the north-east. Japanese intelligence knew that the British were placing most of their defences in the north-east, as that was where they believed the attack was going to come from. The reason that the British thought that the enemy would come from the north-east was that coming through the jungle was deemed impossible, as it was a heavily wooded, dangerous area. But the Japanese had already prepared for jungles, with the inclusion of bicycles in their equipment and the appropriate training of their troops. Knowing that the British were not expecting an attack from the jungle meant that the Japanese could take them by surprise and take Singapore more quickly.

But Yamashita's greatest decision, in my opinion, was to call a bluff in the surrender negotiations. After a week of fighting in Singapore, Yamashita found that his ammunition supply was dwindling rapidly. He knew that if the British held out for any longer that they would win the battle. It was known that the British had very little intelligence on the Japanese, so Yamashita sent a request for surrender to General Percival. The two Generals met on February 15th at the

Ford factory and Percival accepted an all-out surrender, not knowing that the British were winning the battle. This was a great outcome for the Japanese, as they had suffered minimal casualties; had full control over Singapore; taken back East Asia, removing the white and Western power from the area; and humiliated the British Empire. This was such an intelligent strategy, as there was almost no way that the Japanese would have been able to take on the remaining British forces after their campaign through Malaya. But with smart thinking and clever negotiating, the problem of spending too much money and using too many resources to take Singapore was eliminated.



I think that the most important reason for the Fall of Singapore was British arrogance and complacency. The arrogance and complacency of the British was inevitably their downfall and was the reason that they suffered such humiliation after the defeat. Their arrogance was caused by their racism towards the Japanese; they believed that they were stupid, therefore meaning that they posed no threat. In reality, they were instead a rapid, ruthless, and very effective fighting machine, armed with all the latest equipment. Due to the fact that the British thought very little of the Japanese, they did not bother to gather intelligence about them to use in planning. The reason that this was the most important part in the Fall of Singapore is because in my opinion, knowing what your enemy is going to do next is the greatest weapon you can have. Knowing where they will be, how they will fight, or when they will

fight means that you know how to most effectively position your troops and which tactics will be most effective to use. This is most important when you have minimal resources, as you need to use what little you have as efficiently as possible. To be a step ahead of your enemy, you of course need to gather intelligence. This is most often, especially in World War Two, done by spies who infiltrate the enemy base, pretending to be one of them to gather information to bring back to their leaders. The reason that the British's lack of intelligence was such an important reason for the Fall of Singapore was that they had no idea what the enemy was doing. They did not know how many troops the Japanese had (which eventually led to the British surrendering after Yamashita called a bluff) and they were left completely in the dark about what the enemy's plans were. This situation, however, is often the case for most battles, with the two opposing sides having no information about each other. But it was such a big fault on the British side because the Japanese were gathering intelligence and spying on the British, swaying the fight in their favour. To summarise, lack of British intelligence on the Japanese meant that the British lost Singapore because they did not know where or how the Japanese were going to attack. They therefore had to guess, and were wrong, losing the battle.

Another way in which British arrogance and complacency was the most important factor in the Fall of Singapore was the fact that the British did nothing to stop Japanese spies from infiltrating their base. So not only did the British not gather intelligence but they were also oblivious to the enemy gathering intelligence on them. The British's naivety towards the Japanese spies was once again caused by their racism. Their belief that the all oriental people, including the Japanese caused them to think that they did not have the capability to spy. The British were so oblivious, that they allowed a Japanese man to work as the chief photographer at the Singapore naval base. He turned out to be a spy and gave incredibly valuable British information to the Japanese. The reason they didn't question the decision to hire the Japanese photographer was because they thought he was Singaporean and stupid. The information gathered allowed the Japanese to take the British by surprise by attacking through the jungles, leaving the Allies with very little time to

react. They could not confront the Japanese quickly enough to stop them advancing further into Singapore, therefore forcing the Allies to surrender. All this was caused by the arrogance that caused the Allies to allow a spies to infiltrate their "impenetrable fortress"

SINGAPORE FORCED TO CAPITULATE

MR. CHURCHILL'S STATEMENT

"CEASE FIRE" SOUNDED LATE AT NIGHT

GALLANT RESISTANCE ENDS

The Prime Minister, in his broadcast last night, announced that Singapore had fallen. The speech is reported on the opposite page.

Japanese headquarters yesterday stated that the surrender was signed at 7 p.m. local time (12.30 p.m. British time) and that the cease fire "sounded three hours later."

The last official report from British headquarters, issued on Saturday, showed that the enemy's advance was being stubbornly resisted.

"UNCONDITIONAL SURRENDER"

JAPANESE ACCOUNT

Imperial Headquarters in Tokyo announced last night that the British Imperial Forces in Singapore had been forced to accept the Japanese terms of unconditional surrender.

A war correspondent of the Japanese News Agency in Singapore reported that fighting ceased along the entire Malayan front at 7 p.m. local time (12.30 p.m. British time).

The British and Japanese Commanders-in-Chief, Lieutenant-General Percival and Lieutenant-General Yamashita, met at the end of the island to discuss the terms of the surrender.



Imperial Headquarters in Tokyo announced last night that the British Imperial Forces in Singapore had been forced to accept the Japanese terms of unconditional surrender.

A peace mission of four British officers, headed by Major White, arrived at the British Army Staff, had requested Japanese Army headquarters to accept the terms of the surrender.

The surrender of Singapore was the first time since the outbreak of the war that a British stronghold had fallen to the enemy.

A week's resistance had ended in a British defeat. The Japanese had captured the island and its 110,000 inhabitants.

The Japanese had captured the island and its 110,000 inhabitants. The British had fought a gallant fight for two months.

The Japanese had captured the island and its 110,000 inhabitants. The British had fought a gallant fight for two months.

The Japanese had captured the island and its 110,000 inhabitants. The British had fought a gallant fight for two months.

The Japanese had captured the island and its 110,000 inhabitants. The British had fought a gallant fight for two months.

The Japanese had captured the island and its 110,000 inhabitants. The British had fought a gallant fight for two months.

The Japanese had captured the island and its 110,000 inhabitants. The British had fought a gallant fight for two months.

The Japanese had captured the island and its 110,000 inhabitants. The British had fought a gallant fight for two months.

The Japanese had captured the island and its 110,000 inhabitants. The British had fought a gallant fight for two months.

The Japanese had captured the island and its 110,000 inhabitants. The British had fought a gallant fight for two months.

The Japanese had captured the island and its 110,000 inhabitants. The British had fought a gallant fight for two months.

The Japanese had captured the island and its 110,000 inhabitants. The British had fought a gallant fight for two months.

The Japanese had captured the island and its 110,000 inhabitants. The British had fought a gallant fight for two months.

The Japanese had captured the island and its 110,000 inhabitants. The British had fought a gallant fight for two months.

The Japanese had captured the island and its 110,000 inhabitants. The British had fought a gallant fight for two months.

LAST SIGHT OF THE CITY

"A FUNERAL PYRE"

EYE-WITNESS'S VOYAGE TO BATAVIA

From Our Special Correspondent

BATAVIA, Feb. 15

Ships began to fall on Fort Kalang

on the evening of Tuesday, February 15.

Old fort was blazed in the north of the

island. The smoke from them lay like a

black pall over Singapore. Troops were

moving about in the streets, some obviously

under orders to fall back.

Twice that morning, we formations of

Japanese bombers had been seen.

There had been no sign of any British aircraft

all day. The city was burning with the wildest

rumours that the Japanese had been

pushed back into the sea. That their

advance troops had reached the Botanical

Gardens, and that the Japanese had been

pushed back into the sea. That their

advance troops had reached the Botanical

Gardens, and that the Japanese had been

pushed back into the sea. That their

advance troops had reached the Botanical

Gardens, and that the Japanese had been

pushed back into the sea. That their

advance troops had reached the Botanical

Gardens, and that the Japanese had been

pushed back into the sea. That their

advance troops had reached the Botanical

Gardens, and that the Japanese had been

pushed back into the sea. That their

advance troops had reached the Botanical

Gardens, and that the Japanese had been

pushed back into the sea. That their

advance troops had reached the Botanical

Gardens, and that the Japanese had been

pushed back into the sea. That their

advance troops had reached the Botanical

Gardens, and that the Japanese had been

pushed back into the sea. That their

advance troops had reached the Botanical

Gardens, and that the Japanese had been

pushed back into the sea. That their

advance troops had reached the Botanical

Gardens, and that the Japanese had been

pushed back into the sea. That their

advance troops had reached the Botanical

Gardens, and that the Japanese had been

pushed back into the sea. That their

advance troops had reached the Botanical

Gardens, and that the Japanese had been

pushed back into the sea. That their

advance troops had reached the Botanical

Gardens, and that the Japanese had been

pushed back into the sea. That their

advance troops had reached the Botanical

Gardens, and that the Japanese had been

pushed back into the sea. That their

advance troops had reached the Botanical

Gardens, and that the Japanese had been

pushed back into the sea. That their

advance troops had reached the Botanical

Gardens, and that the Japanese had been

pushed back into the sea. That their

advance troops had reached the Botanical

Gardens, and that the Japanese had been

INVASION OF SUMATRA

BIG OIL FIELD THREATENED

LANDINGS BY SEA AND PARACHUTE

From Our Special Correspondent

NEW YORK, Feb. 15

From Batavia, Feb. 15—An official

reporter that the Japanese had attempted

to make landings from transports and

southern Sumatra at the mouth of the

Min river, only 45 miles from the rich

oil region of Palembang, but had been

repulsed by the British and Dutch forces.

The Netherlands East Indies High

Command said that the attack had been

repulsed by the British and Dutch forces.

Several hundred parachutes had been

dropped, but that the attack had been

repulsed by the British and Dutch forces.

More than 700 parachutes had been

dropped, but that the attack had been

repulsed by the British and Dutch forces.

More than 700 parachutes had been

dropped, but that the attack had been

repulsed by the British and Dutch forces.

More than 700 parachutes had been

dropped, but that the attack had been

repulsed by the British and Dutch forces.

More than 700 parachutes had been

dropped, but that the attack had been

repulsed by the British and Dutch forces.

More than 700 parachutes had been

dropped, but that the attack had been

repulsed by the British and Dutch forces.

More than 700 parachutes had been

dropped, but that the attack had been

repulsed by the British and Dutch forces.

More than 700 parachutes had been

dropped, but that the attack had been

repulsed by the British and Dutch forces.

More than 700 parachutes had been

dropped, but that the attack had been

repulsed by the British and Dutch forces.

More than 700 parachutes had been

dropped, but that the attack had been

repulsed by the British and Dutch forces.

More than 700 parachutes had been

dropped, but that the attack had been

repulsed by the British and Dutch forces.

More than 700 parachutes had been

dropped, but that the attack had been

repulsed by the British and Dutch forces.

More than 700 parachutes had been

dropped, but that the attack had been

repulsed by the British and Dutch forces.

More than 700 parachutes had been

dropped, but that the attack had been

repulsed by the British and Dutch forces.

More than 700 parachutes had been

dropped, but that the attack had been

repulsed by the British and Dutch forces.

More than 700 parachutes had been

dropped, but that the attack had been

repulsed by the British and Dutch forces.

More than 700 parachutes had been

dropped, but that the attack had been

repulsed by the British and Dutch forces.

More than 700 parachutes had been

dropped, but that the attack had been

ROMMEL ON THE MOVE

AIR "UMBRELLA" ROUTED

20 MACHINES DOWN

From Our Special Correspondent

Cairo, Feb. 15

To-day's news of the first combined

British and Australian air victory in

Cyrenaica came entirely overshadowed by

the fact that Rommel is once more on the

move after a fortnight's stagnation.

Nevertheless, the Axis air force took a

heavy beating—18 Killibucks, without loss

to themselves, shot down 20 out of the

enemy's fighters, and also claim to have

inflicted damage on at the remainder, one

of the anti-aircraft fire accounted for

the enemy's last movement is now in the

direction of the so-called Tami-Makili line,

and our patrols are maintaining contact.

British G.H.Q. in Cairo issued the

following report yesterday:

On Saturday considerable enemy movement

was observed in the Tami-Makili area.

It was observed that the enemy was

moving in the direction of the Tami-

Makili line, and that the enemy was

moving in the direction of the Tami-

Makili line, and that the enemy was

moving in the direction of the Tami-

Makili line, and that the enemy was

moving in the direction of the Tami-

Makili line, and that the enemy was

moving in the direction of the Tami-

Makili line, and that the enemy was

moving in the direction of the Tami-

Makili line, and that the enemy was

moving in the direction of the Tami-

Makili line, and that the enemy was

moving in the direction of the Tami-

Makili line, and that the enemy was

moving in the direction of the Tami-

Makili line, and that the enemy was

moving in the direction of the Tami-

Makili line, and that the enemy was

moving in the direction of the Tami-

Makili line, and that the enemy was

moving in the direction of the Tami-

Makili line, and that the enemy was

moving in the direction of the Tami-

Makili line, and that the enemy was

moving in the direction of the Tami-

Makili line, and that the enemy was

moving in the direction of the Tami-

Makili line, and that the enemy was

moving in the direction of the Tami-

Makili line, and that the enemy was

moving in the direction of the Tami-

Makili line, and that the enemy was

moving in the direction of the Tami-

Makili line, and that the enemy was

moving in the direction of the Tami-

Makili line, and that the enemy was

moving in the direction of the Tami-

Makili line, and that the enemy was

moving in the direction of the Tami-

Makili line, and that the enemy was

moving in the direction of the Tami-

Makili line, and that the enemy was

AMERICA ROUSED BY DISASTERS

A CLEARER VIEW OF THE WAR

From Our Own Correspondent

WASHINGTON, Feb. 15

President Roosevelt sat for two hours

yesterday with the heads of the American

armed forces and the representatives here

of the British General Staff—Field

Marshal Sir John Dill, Lieutenant-General

St. Clair, Major-General Sir John Dill,

Major-General Sir John Dill, Major-

General Sir John Dill, Major-General

Sir John Dill, Major-General Sir John

Dill, Major-General Sir John Dill, Major-

General Sir John Dill, Major-General

Sir John Dill, Major-General Sir John

Dill, Major-General Sir John Dill, Major-

General Sir John Dill, Major-General

Sir John Dill, Major-General Sir John

Dill, Major-General Sir John Dill, Major-

General Sir John Dill, Major-General

Sir John Dill, Major-General Sir John

Dill, Major-General Sir John Dill, Major-

General Sir John Dill, Major-General

Sir John Dill, Major-General Sir John

Dill, Major-General Sir John Dill, Major-

General Sir John Dill, Major-General

Sir John Dill, Major-General Sir John

Dill, Major

Epilogue

Although Singapore was a terrible catastrophe for the British, it marked a turning point for Britain and her Allies. The British had been taught the valuable lesson of never underestimating the enemy and now viewed the Japanese as a force to be reckoned with. It was also at this time that the Americans entered the war after the Japanese bombing of Pearl Harbour just after the Malayan campaign began. But it was not the end of the suffering for the soldiers who fought in Singapore. The surrender meant that all Allied soldiers, Sidney among them, were taken prisoner by the Japanese, and for many prisoners, this meant a fate worse than death.

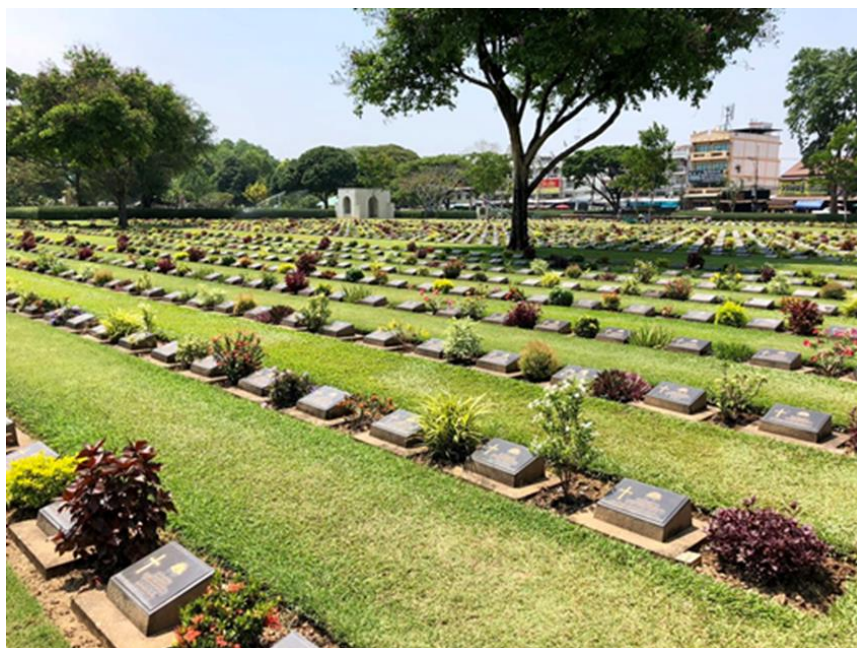
The Japanese were vicious and cruel towards the prisoners and treated them as though they were not human. This was deemed acceptable in Japanese samurai culture, as being taken prisoner was the most dishonourable thing that can happen to a person. According to Bushido (the samurai code of honour literally meaning "The Way of the Warrior"), honour is the most important thing in life and death. If honour is lost (in losing battles, being taken prisoner, among other things) then the only way to regain it is by committing seppuku (suicide) at the hand of your katana. The prisoners were given barely any food and lived in terrible conditions. This meant that disease quickly spread through the camp, killing thousands. If disease didn't kill them, then the 18 hours of hard labour per day was likely to. The Japanese wanted to build a railway running from Thailand all the way to Burma, to transport supplies across south-east Asia in a safe, efficient way. This was a good alternative to transporting supplies by boat, as ships were easy to bomb and required air-support at all times to be safe. The railway was called the Burma Railway, but was nicknamed the "Death Railway". It was said that for every sleeper laid, a man would die.

The Japanese were established as a great fighting force, and continued to secure many victories throughout the war. Towards the end of the war, however, they were continually beaten, alongside their Axis allies. All other Axis forces surrendered, but the Japanese refused to give in. Surrender was a

disgraceful act according to Bushido, so the Japanese leaders refused to sign a peace treaty. Eventually, the Americans resorted to dropping the atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki. This forced the Japanese to finally surrender. 140,000 people were killed in Hiroshima (39% of the city's population) and 70,000 deaths occurred in Nagasaki (28% of the population). Japan's Empire fell and all colonies were given back to the Empires which they were taken from, meaning Singapore was handed back to the British.

After the Fall of Singapore, the colonies of the British Empire could now see that the Empire was not, after all, invincible. It also alerted the British to that same fact. Throughout the 1950s and 60s, more and more countries gained independence through campaigns and protests, including Singapore. After the war, Britain was financially troubled, and was struggling to keep themselves going, let alone the dozens of countries that they controlled. This was part of the reason why so many countries were given independence; the British did not have enough resources to support them all.

Today, Singapore has one of the world's fastest growing economies and a population of 5.6 million as of 2017. The population has a great work ethic and has one of the lowest crime rates in the world. But all this may never have happened if a group of young men had not given their lives in a far-off land with little to comfort them as they died a horrible death.



My great, great uncle Sidney Ernest Payne died on Saturday the 29th of July 1943 in the Tarsao Hospital Camp on the banks of the River Kwai, Thailand, along the route of the Death Railway. The Japanese record card with details of his death states that he fell ill on the 28th of June 1943 and died of malnutrition, although this was most likely in fact dysentery, as the Japanese wanted to avoid recording dysentery as a cause of death in the prisoner of war camps. His parents Stephen and Annie, brothers Jack, Albert and Fred (my great-grandfather), and sister Kitty, never knew how he died.

JH/227 3956 泰 IV/2291. 12616.

收容所 Camp	馬來 泰 昭和17年2月1日	番 號 No.	馬本四 4858
姓 名 Name	PAYNE SIDNEY ERNEST	生 年 月 日 Date of Birth	6.9.17
國 籍 Nationality	BRITISH 英	所 屬 部 隊 Unit	No. S/111189
階 級 身 分 Rank	SERGEANT 軍曹	捕 獲 年 月 日 Date of Capture	昭和17年2月1日 18.2.43
捕 獲 場 所 Place of Capture	シンガポール SINGAPORE	母 名 Mother's Name	ANNIE
父 名 Father's Name	STEPHEN	職 業 Occupation	牛肉屋 BUTCHER
本 籍 地 Place of Origin	COPSE GREEN NR PETWORTH SUSSEX	特 記 事 項 Remarks	死亡 打 補修
通 報 先 Destination of Report	DITTO		

Sidney's prisoner of war record card. The red line through it shows that he died.

Sidney was buried in the Hospital Cemetery of the No. 4 Branch Camp, before his body was re-interred at Kanchanaburi War Cemetery after the war, beautifully maintained to this day by the Commonwealth War Graves Commission. The camp cemetery is now no more than a clearing in the jungle between clumps of bamboo, with the River Kwai flowing serenely alongside.

There could not be a place more different to the rolling farmlands of Sussex, and it is difficult to imagine how scared and alone Sidney felt when he lay ill and dying on makeshift bamboo slats in the overwhelming heat and humidity of the hospital hut so far away from home. I am eternally grateful for the sacrifice he and countless others made in fighting for the freedoms we enjoy today.

