



THE FALL OF MALAYA & SINGAPORE

DATE: DECEMBER 08 1941 – FEBRUARY 15 1942

Belligerents	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">  British Empire •  United Kingdom •  India •  Australia •  Malaya 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •  Japan

INVASION OF MALAYA

Malaya (the mainland component of present-day Malaysia) was a key British colony prior to the Second World War. Economically, it was the source of large quantities of natural resources, particularly tin and rubber; and strategically it provided a large defensive barrier to any landward advance on Singapore and its naval base - the cornerstone of British power in the Asia-Pacific Region.

The Japanese Army was well aware of the significance of Malaya and began planning for an invasion in October 1940. It launched this operation with landings on the north-eastern coast of Malaya, at Kota Bharu, at 1.45 am on 8 December 1941; occurring 40 minutes earlier than the raids on Pearl Harbor this was the first major Japanese attack of the Second World War. Soon after, Japanese troops were also landed at Patani and Singora on the south-eastern coast of Thailand. The Kota Bharu landings developed into a drive down the eastern side of the Malay peninsula, while the troops landed in

Japanese invasion routes in 1941

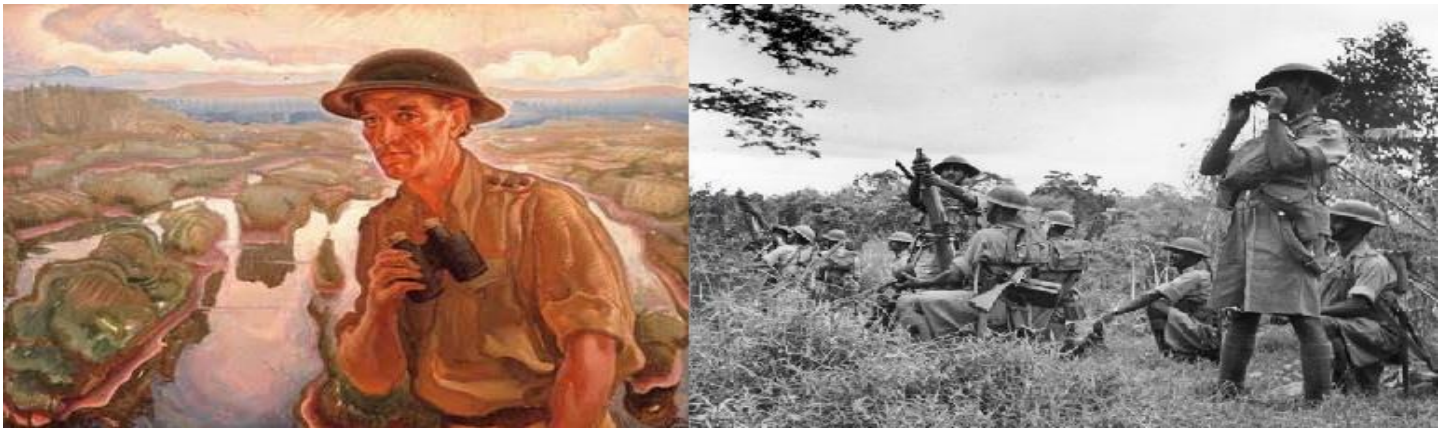


Thailand advanced down the western side. Badly organized defenses in northern Malaya proved no match for the Japanese and in early January the British command decided to concentrate their efforts in the southern Malay region of Johore.

The operations in Johore were entrusted to the 8th Australian Division, with an Indian brigade attached, under the command of Major General Gordon Bennett. Despite several local tactical successes by Australian units at Gemas (14 January), Bakri (18-19 January) and Jemaluang (27 January), the Australians were not able to hold the Japanese and the withdrawal towards Singapore continued. On 31 January 1942 the last British Commonwealth troops withdrew across the Straits of Johore to Singapore, and a large gap was blown in the causeway behind them.

The rapid success of the Japanese advance was due to several factors. The first was that they had complete control of the air. Although British Commonwealth squadrons were deployed forward in Malaya, their obsolete aircraft were easily destroyed by the Japanese. The need to protect the airfields also severely limited the freedom of action of commanders on the ground early in the campaign.



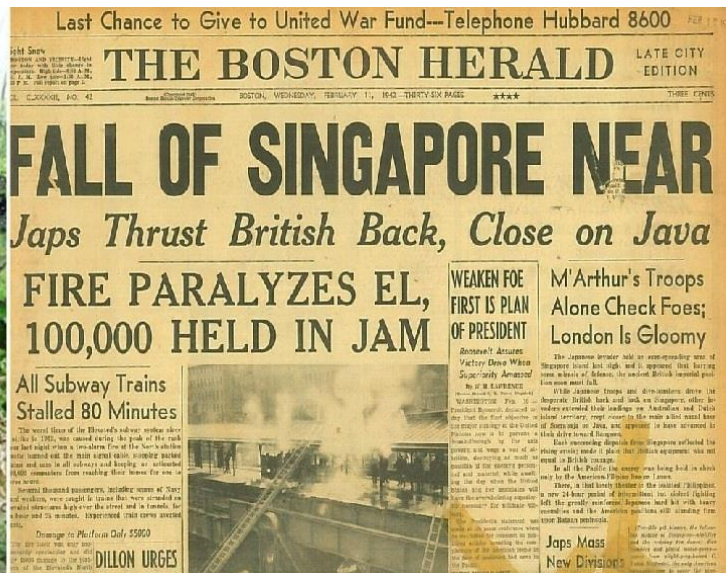


Secondly, the Japanese units had extensive operational experience that manifested itself in efficient and well-executed battle drills. Contrary to popular belief, the Japanese were not overly experienced in jungle warfare. They utilized Malaya's roads to ensure a speedy advance (during the Malayan campaign they advanced on average 15 kilometers per day) and when they met with opposition, sought to outflank it through the jungle. The defensive tactics of the British and Commonwealth forces were ill-suited to this approach, and, also heavily dependent upon the roads for their mobility, they were usually forced to withdraw. On the west coast the Japanese also used watercraft to facilitate outflanking moves. In the case of the 8th Australian Division, operations were also seriously handicapped by severe disharmony between Bennett, his staff, and his subordinate commanders. With the loss of Malaya, no more than a kilometer of water separated the Japanese from Singapore, and any hope of successfully defending Singapore was lost.

THE FALL OF SINGAPORE

During the Second World War, Singapore was the site of one of the British Commonwealth's greatest military defeats. Britain had built a large naval dockyard on the north coast of the island during the 1930s to use as a base from which to project naval power throughout the Asia-Pacific and thus the island became central to their strategy in the region. The British presence guaranteed by Singapore was also the cornerstone of Australian defence policy. British naval vessels, however, would not be permanently based at Singapore. The whole "Singapore Strategy" was dependent on vessels being dispatched from European waters in time of crisis, an extremely doubtful prospect should Britain be under direct threat. Various senior Australian army and naval officers had warned of the weaknesses of the "Singapore Strategy", but successive Australian governments chose to ignore them, the costs of a more independent defence policy making them particularly receptive to British reassurances.





Ultimately, when the Japanese threat loomed in late 1941 Britain could spare few vessels for Singapore. Only two vessels had arrived by October 1941, the relatively new battleship *HMS Prince of Wales* and the ageing battle cruiser *HMS Repulse*. It had been intended they would be accompanied by an aircraft carrier but this vessel ran aground in the West Indies leaving the ships devoid of air cover and thus extremely vulnerable - both were sunk on 10 December 1941. With the loss of the ships, the Singapore Strategy crumbled and with it so did the rationale for defending Singapore. When British Commonwealth forces withdrew onto Singapore Island in January 1942 they prepared for a defence that was now to be conducted for mainly political reasons, perhaps the foremost being to maintain American support. Churchill revealed in his memoirs, however, that there was "no doubt what a purely military decision would have been."

The defense of Singapore was poorly conceived and conducted. Despite clear indications that the Japanese would concentrate their attack on the island's north west, the British commander, Lieutenant General Percival, sought to defend the entire coastline leaving him with little depth and an inadequate reserve. The 8th Australian Division, considerably weakened after the fighting in Malaya, was allocated the vital north-western sector. When the Japanese attacked on the night of 8 February 1942 it was too weak and dispersed to hold them back, initiating a disorganized retreat towards the center of the island. In succeeding days Percival's reluctance to commit reserves from other parts of the island, and a virtual command breakdown in the 8th Division, led to the British Commonwealth forces being pushed back into a steadily decreasing perimeter around Singapore city. It was an untenable position. Over 1 million civilians remained in the city, the Japanese had captured its main water supply, and their aircraft were free to bomb at will. At 8.30pm on 15 February 1942 over 130,000 troops, including 15,000 Australians, surrendered to the Japanese. 1,789 Australians had been killed since the 8th Division had entered the fray in Malaya in mid-January and 7,000 of those captured would die before the war's end.



MEMOIR '44

M'44 SCENARIOS FOR THE FALL OF MALAYA & SINGAPORE

The Fall of Malaya and Singapore campaign includes 21 standard scenarios. These scenarios chronicle the major engagements of the campaign, and include only the best available in the Scenarios from the Front (SFTF) files section on the DoW website.

No campaign rules are included; not all M'44 players have access to the Campaign books. Instead, simply tally up the number of medals won in each scenario after playing both sides. The Fall of Malaya and Singapore campaign is divided into 2 parts. A medal tally table for each is included below, as well as a final medal tally table.

Scenarios include India/Gurkha, Thai and Australian forces. Although optional, it is suggested that you use the unofficial Battle of Nations rules when playing scenarios that feature these armies.

<p>BoN 20</p> <p>Thailand - Thai Army</p>  <p>Thai Honor</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Infantry at full strength in Close Assault do not suffer Terrain battle dice reductions.	<p>BoN 15</p> <p>India - British Indian Army</p>  <p>Stiff Upper Lip</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Same as BCF [Nations 5]. <p>Indian Tenacity</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• When any Indian unit is attacked and sustains no casualties, but is forced to retreat, it may ignore all flags. <p>Gurkhas</p> <p>Indian/Nepalese Infantry Units marked with a Gurkha badge apply these rules:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Unit may ignore 1 flag.• When in terrain that ignores a flag, may ignore 2 flags instead.• Unit at full strength in Close Assault battles at +1 dice.• Unit may move 2 hexes to combat into Close Assault.
<p>BoN 5</p> <p>Australia - Australian Army</p>  <p>Stiff Upper Lip</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Same as BCF [Nations 5]. <p>ANZAC Spirit</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• When an Australian unit is unable to retreat, it may ignore 1 flag.	

PART 1: INVASION OF MALAYA

- [1. DEC 08: Landing at Kota Bharu](#)
- [2. DEC 08: Thailand – Pattani](#)
- [3. DEC 08: Siege of Ban Sadao](#)
- [4. DEC 10 – DEC 11: Battle of Changlun **](#)
- [5. DEC 11: Battle of Jitra](#)
- [6. DEC 14: Mauling at Gurun](#)

- [7. JAN 07: Battle of the Slim River **](#)
- [8. JAN 14: Ambush at Gemas](#)
- [9. JAN 18: Ambush at Bakri](#)
- [10. JAN 28: Namazie Estate](#)
- [11. JAN 29: Success at Ayer Bemban](#)

**Scenario notes:

- Battle of Changlun: there is no set number of medals for Conditions of Victory. A win by either side scores 6 medals.
- Battle of the Slim River: in the event of a win, the Axis player scores 6 medals.

There are a total of 134 medals for the 11 standard scenarios.

SCENARIO (+ total medal count)	P1.....	P2.....
1. Landing at Kota Bharu (14)		
2. Thailand – Pattani (12)		
3. Siege of Ban Sadao (14)		
4. Battle of Changlun (12)		
5. Battle of Jitra (12)		
6. Mauling at Gurun (12)		
7. Battle of the Slim River (12)		
8. Ambush at Gemas (14)		
9. Ambush at Bakri (8)		
10. Namazie Estate (12)		
11. Success at Ayer Bemban (12)		
Total Medal Tally	/134	/134

PART 2: THE FALL OF SINGAPORE

- [1. FEB 01: Kranji Landings **](#)
- [2. FEB 01: Beyond Kranji Beach **](#)
- [3. FEB 08: Sarimbun Beach](#)
- [4. FEB 08: Battle of Sarimbun](#)
- [5. FEB 09: Johore Strait **](#)

- [6. FEB 10: Battle of Bukit Timah](#)
- [7. FEB 11 – FEB 15: Singapore](#)
- [8. FEB 13: Britain's Last Stand](#)
- [9. FEB 14: Impregnable Fortress **](#)
- [10. FEB 15: The Fall of Singapore **](#)

**Scenario notes:

- Kranji Landings: if the Axis player wins by occupying both the Village and Supply Depot, score 6 medals.
- Beyond Kranji Beach: the 6 Allied infantry units and single artillery unit are British. Use BCF rules.
- Johore Strait: Sudden Death victory by the Axis player: score 6 medals.
- Impregnable Fortress: you may wish use Urban Combat cards (Sword of Stalingrad Battle map pack) in this scenario.
- The Fall of Singapore: both the Singapore town hex and the water reservoir hex are permanent medal objectives for the Axis player.

There are a total of 135 medals for the 10 standard scenarios.

SCENARIO (+ total medal count)	P1.....	P2.....
1. Kranji Landings (12)		
2. Beyond Kranji Beach (10)		
3. Sarimbun Beach (12)		
4. Battle of Sarimbun (14)		
5. Johore Strait (12)		
6. Battle of Bukit Timah (12)		
7. Singapore (12)		
8. Britain's Last Stand (14)		
9. Impregnable Fortress (21)		
10. The Fall of Singapore (16)		
Total Medal Tally	/135	/135

There is a grand total of 269 medals for the 21 standard scenarios.

FALL OF MALAYA & SINGAPORE	P1.....	P2.....
1. Invasion of Malaya		
2. The Fall of Singapore		
Final Medal Tally	/269	/269

Acknowledgments to the authors of the scenarios that make up this campaign compilation:

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Pattonfan	Brycie35	*player178326
secret_strategem	Bryan_Chua	

This Fall of Malaya & Singapore campaign booklet was compiled by [Semba](#)