

*Preparation of Initial Reconnaissance Plan.*

40. Seaborne invasion from the N.E. constituted the main threat to Malaya. A reconnaissance plan was therefore drawn up to detect its approach at the maximum distance, responsibility for its execution being divided amongst the Allies. R.A.F. Far East Command was allotted responsibility for the area Kota Bahru-Southern tip of Indo-China-Great Natunas-Kuantan. A reconnaissance plan was prepared accordingly. Its execution necessitated the employment of one G.R. (Hudson) Squadron based on Kuantan and one based on Kota Bahru. The use of two Catalinas was superimposed to ensure an overlap with the Dutch area immediately to the South. Squadrons were exercised in this plan from their war stations.

41. When the Japanese occupied Indo-China in July, 1941, A.H.Q. queried the fact that this reconnaissance plan made no provision for searching the Gulf of Siam, but G.H.Q. confirmed that the limited reconnaissance force available must be concentrated initially upon the more likely area of approach.

*Concentration of Squadrons in War.*

42. In accordance with the principle that squadrons were to be concentrated in the defence of whatever area was threatened, alternative locations for squadrons, dependent on the axis of attack, were prepared.

*Transition to a War Footing.*

43. In the past, a considerable number of code words had been issued, each governing the action of units in various kinds of emergency. As a whole, they were most confusing and liable to result in unco-ordinated action. To rectify this situation, G.H.Q. instructed all Commands, in May, 1941, to prepare for three "degrees of readiness" and laid down the general principles governing each. A.H.Q. took the opportunity to issue Units with an exact description in detail of the action to be taken on promulgation of these degrees of readiness. The transition to a full war footing was thereby made smooth and rapid.

*Co-ordination of Night Flying Arrangements.*

44. Before the autumn of 1941, arrangements for night flying had not been co-ordinated, each Unit employing its own method of laying out a flare path and other lighting. A standardised procedure was drawn up in November, 1941, as it was essential to ensure that all squadrons could operate by night with confidence and could use any aerodrome in the Command.

*Establishment of Air Corridors.*

45. Air corridors "in" and "out of" Singapore were established and promulgated, whilst a standardised procedure for "approach" to all aerodromes in the Command was issued in July.

*Establishment of Operations Rooms.*

46. Operations rooms were opened at each base as it became available for use, the ideal aimed at being that squadrons on arrival should find the same layout, information and procedure as that which existed at their parent aerodromes. This was designed to avoid the delay and disorganisation caused by the necessity of transferring material and documents: it speeded up the efficiency of operations.

*Mobility of Squadrons.*

47. A high degree of mobility was necessary for squadrons to fulfil their laid-down role as the primary defence of the Far East in general, and of Malaya in particular. But the composition of the forces allotted to the Far East included no transport aircraft; and although A.H.Q. drew attention to the deficiency on several occasions no aircraft could be provided. The Dutch Army Air Service had a fleet of some 20 Lodestars and promised assistance, provided their own circumstances permitted. In the autumn of 1941, some Lodestars were borrowed, and selected squadrons were practised in the organisation required for moving.

48. A shortage of M.T. in Malaya made the position more serious. Orders for the M.T. required were placed in the U.S.A. but they could not be met in time. There was no M.T. unit in the Command nor were there sufficient spare vehicles to form a Command pool. Individual units were themselves below establishment in M.T.

*DEVELOPMENTS IN HONG KONG.*

49. No Air Forces were allotted for the defence of Hong Kong. There was a station flight at Kai Tak on the mainland for target towing purposes, but apart from local reconnaissance no war role was envisaged or arranged for this flight.

50. In the summer of 1941, an urgent request was received from Hong Kong pressing for some fighter aircraft because of the great support they would give to civilian morale. This request could not be met. In case it should prove possible later to meet the request for fighter aircraft, a Fighter Sector Control room and Radar Stations were sited and plans were prepared for the provision of a fighter defensive system.

*DEVELOPMENTS IN BRITISH BORNEO.*

51. Facilities for land planes in British Borneo were confined to one aerodrome and one landing ground, at Kuching and Miri respectively. The former was not large enough for bomber aircraft but its extension was in hand when war broke out. Flying boat moorings were also laid in the river nearby. There were no A.A. defences, but a battalion of the Indian Army, with H.Q. in Kuching, was located in Borneo for the protection of the aerodrome and landing ground areas and the Miri oilfields.

*DEVELOPMENTS IN BURMA.*

52. As a result of the Singapore Conference in the autumn of 1940 (para. 6), the findings of which were generally endorsed by the C.-in-C. Far East on his arrival, the Government of Burma co-operated actively in constructing and developing the eight air bases, and additional satellite strips, considered necessary for air operations from Burma. These bases stretched from Mergui on the Tenasserim Coast in a half circle round the Siamese frontier to Lashio in the Northern Shan states. In anticipation of approval, Flight Lieutenant C. W. Bailey, Inspector of Landing Grounds at A.H.Q., had been sent by A.H.Q. to Burma in November, 1940. He had drawn up plans for extending old, and constructing new, aerodromes. Further, in co-operation with the Government of