

War in the Pacific

Defending Australia

The First Six Months

Chapter 4

What will happen next?

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BRISBANE, TUESDAY, DECEMBER 9, 1941.

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JAPAN STRIKES HARD AT PACIFIC BASES

Bombs on Nauru, Singapore, Hong Kong: Fierce Hawaiian Battle

ENEMY TROOPS LAND IN NORTH MALAYA

Heavy Damage at U.S.A. Naval Key Points

JAPAN has invaded Malaya and Thailand, and has attacked Singapore and Hong Kong. She has bombed Nauru and Ocean Island, close to the Australian Mandated Territory zone of New Guinea and the Solomon Islands.

This follows swiftly upon her treacherous and sudden attack on the great U.S. Naval base of Hawaii and the other American key points in the Pacific. No official information has been received in Australia to indicate that the A.I.F. has yet been in action. Our troops are in southern Malaya.

The Prime Minister (Mr. Churchill) told the House of Commons yesterday that Cabinet had met at noon, and he had been authorised to make an immediate declaration of war against Japan. That declaration had been presented at 1 p.m.

Her bombers have done heavy damage to the U.S. sea and air bases in Hawaii and are reported virtually to have destroyed America's advanced base at Guam. Bases in the Philippines have been raided.

Thailand, according to a Bangkok communique, soon stopped resisting the Japanese after they had overrun the southern part of the country. Talks have begun. Japanese warships shelled Bangkok and planes bombed it.

Japanese planes bombed the heart of Singapore twice, one raid killing 60 people and injuring 133.

Japanese landing parties gained a foothold in the north-eastern corner of Malaya, in spite of strong resistance.

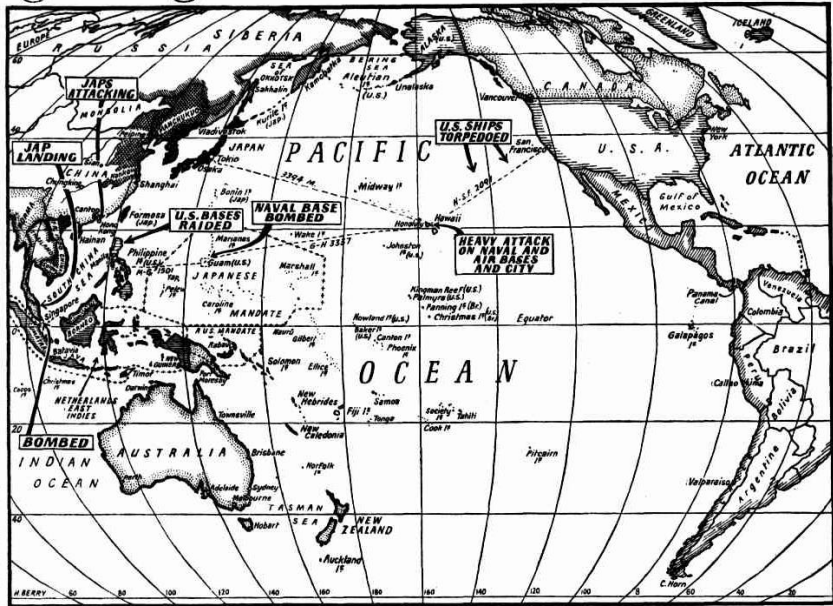
The Japanese ships which landed the troops withdrew, leaving the troops to fight on the beaches.

Australian airmen flying Lockheed Hudson bombers attacked and damaged the Japanese ships.

So far there is no indication of Russia's attitude.

DAWN ATTACK ON HONG KONG

A Japanese communique claims that Japanese troops began an attack on Hong Kong at dawn. Japanese planes are reported to have attacked Hong Kong.



AUSTRALIA TO DECLARE WAR: WIDE NATIONAL DECISIONS

Australia to-day will formally declare a state of war with Japan.

Vital decisions, with others to follow, were made by Federal Cabinet at yesterday's meeting in Melbourne.

Federal Parliament has been called to an emergency meeting next Tuesday to discuss new war measures and plan for national defence.

The War Cabinet will meet at 10 a.m. to-day. A meeting of the War Advisory Council will be held later.

All Australian forces have been ordered to battle stations. A series of important orders, involving movements and duties of defence forces, has been issued.

All Army, Navy, and Air Force leave has been cancelled.

Work in all defence and essential industries will be continued on public holidays.

R.A.A.F. Units At War Stations

MELBOURNE, Monday.—"Units of the Royal Australian Air Force have now taken up positions which have been planned for them in the event of war in the Pacific," declared the Air Minister (Mr. Drakeford) to-night. "Location of these stations naturally cannot be disclosed," he added. "All leave of R.A.A.F. personnel has been suspended, as it is desired that everybody should be at his post."

SEE ALSO

- PAGE 2.—Roosevelt's Appeal To The Emperor; Surprise in London At Japan's Move.
- PAGE 3.—Japan's Treacherous Attack on Hawaii; Japanese Attack While Still Talking Peace; Bombs on Singapore and Hong Kong; Japan Has Foothold in Malaya.
- PAGE 4.—Clash of Vast Navies; Japanese Adopt British Mediterranean Strategy.
- EDITORIAL.—This Must Be Our Answer.
- PAGE 6.—Where The Attacks Have Been Made; Special Pictures.

Enemy Bombs Nauru Island

The Federal Government received information late yesterday afternoon that bombing attacks had been launched from aircraft against both Nauru and Ocean Island.

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9th December

- **The War Cabinet decides:**
- to recall 25,000 trainees into Militia training, bringing numbers in camp and on full time duty to 157,000 and to call up five thousand members of the Volunteer Defence Corps for aerodrome defence and coastwatching,
- that Australian defence called for the return of Nos. 10 and 3 Squadrons from Europe and the Middle East, but they would not press for their return if their equivalent in aircraft strength could be made available—preferably in Catalinas,
- that the three R.A.A.F. squadrons in Malaya would remain there,
- that no further E.A.T.S. drafts would go overseas "for the present" because of the difficulty of providing naval escort,
- that an additional 500 women would be recruited for the W.A.A.A.F., and
- that, to avoid delays, Service Ministers would be permitted to initiate urgent defence measures for works and supply on their own authority.



War Cabinet meeting in Melbourne. Left to right: John Curtin, Sir Frederick Sheddon, Ben Chifley, Norm Makin, Arthur Drakeford and John Dedman. Not pictured Frank Forde and Jack Beasley.

9th December

- Commander Long, Director of Intelligence, reports the Japanese attacks to the War Cabinet and outlines possible forms of future Japanese attack:
 - (1) From Thailand on Malaya, possibly pushing through to Burma to cut the Burma Road.
 - (2) On the Philippines, to suppress American naval and air strength in the area".
 - (3) On the Netherlands East Indies and North Borneo to secure the oil supplies.
 - (4) On the New Ireland-New Britain area from the Carolines and Marshall Islands. "In view of the strategic value of Rabaul to Japan both defensively and offensively."
 - (5) New Hebrides, New Caledonia, Fiji-Samoa. There had been for months unidentified ship and aircraft sightings suggesting Japanese reconnaissance of this area as far south as Fiji-Samoa. It is possible that an attack may be made against one or all of these places to hinder American-British trans-Pacific communications.
- He did not consider a direct attack against Australia and New Zealand likely at this stage. "However, coastal raids by submarines, and by heavier units against strategic coastal areas such as Newcastle by shelling or air attack from aircraft carriers, are considered likely."
- Japan might also send out armed merchant cruisers to operate as commerce raiders

9th December

- Guam
 - Japanese planes continue to fly over the island all day bombing and strafing indiscriminately.
- Wake Island
 - Twenty seven twin engined bombers again attack the Island at midday. Lieutenant Kliever and Tech Sgt Hamilton flying two of the three Wildcats then operational, shoot down a bomber and anti-aircraft shoot down another and damage several more. The bombing destroys the naval radio and hits the hospital killing four marines, several corpsmen and fifty five civilians. Major Deveraux guessing that the next enemy target would be Battery E has it moved 600 yards to the East and North.
- Papua New Guinea
 - An unidentified twin-engine aircraft is reported as making three runs over Rabaul at 10 a.m. (At the same time another aircraft, circled over Kavieng, 182 miles from Rabaul on the north-west tip of New Ireland.)
- Gilbert Islands
 - The Japanese land on Tarawa in the Gilbert Islands group and establish a garrison there.

9th December

- **Philippines**
- A bombing attack on Nichols Field at 03.00 on 9 December hits a hangar, damaging several planes and destroying one. A flight of 6 fighters is sent up to intercept. Darkness and dust on the field hinder the takeoff, 2Lt Lodin becomes disoriented and crashes into a parked aircraft. The other fighters are unable to make the interception in the dark.
- The first scramble of the morning from Clark results in two fighters colliding. 2Lt Clark's aircraft goes out of control and crashes into one of the damaged but repairable B17s. Both fighters and the bomber are written off and Clark is killed.
- Additional anti aircraft equipment is available in the Philippine Ordnance Depot. 500 officers and men of the 200th Coast Artillery Regiment are set to assemble, install and man it.
- Six B17s take off from Del Monte at 07.30 on the 9th and reconnoitre an area where unidentified shipping had been reported, without finding any enemy activity, then land at Clark Field at 14.30. The planes then take off almost immediately and remain in the air until after dark to avoid attack on the ground.
- During the afternoon, seven additional B17s are dispatched from Del Monte to San Marcelino. A relatively respectable striking force has thus been brought into position for a planned attack on Formosa or resistance to invasion attempts.
- Through the first two days of hostilities reports both from the warning net and from patrol planes reveal the confused and nervous state into which the defences had been thrown.

9th December

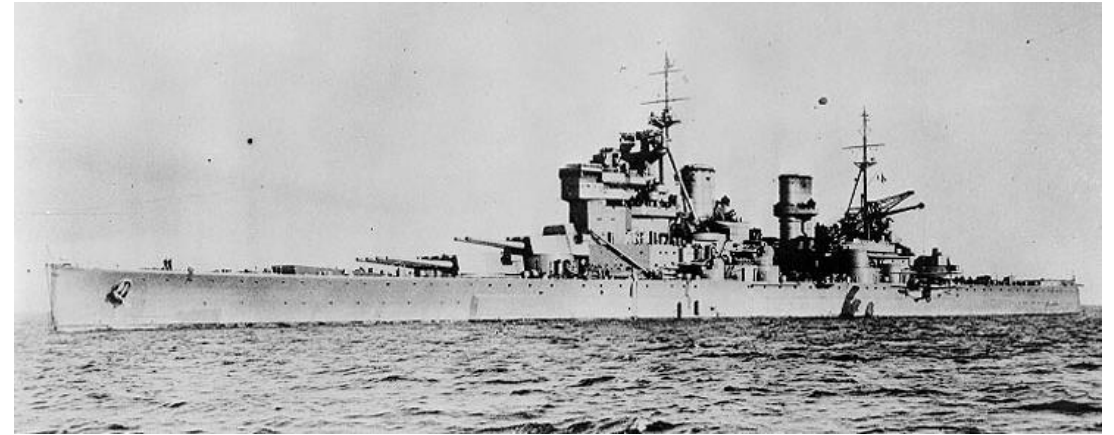
- **Hong Kong**
- Japanese troops continued the assault during the night and by morning had forced forward units back to the Gin Drinkers' Line. This line, ten and a half miles long, occupied a commanding position. The line was held by the 5/7th Rajput on the right the 2/14th Punjab in the centre, and the 2/Royal Scots on the left.
- On the island were a machine-gun battalion (1/Middlesex) for beach defence, the Winnipeg Grenadiers in the south-west and the Royal Rifles of Canada in the south-east.
 - A previous decision not to reinforce Hong Kong had been reversed, and in October the Canadian Government had agreed to send a brigade headquarters and two battalions there. These disembarked on 16th November, bringing the number of battalions in the garrison to six.
 - The Grenadiers had been mobilised since 1st September 1939 and the Rifles since 8th July 1940; but 448 new volunteers had recently been drafted to the battalions, including 120 who had received less than the sixteen weeks' training normally given to Canadian troops before they were sent overseas.
 - War had broken out before their carriers and trucks, dispatched later than the troops, reached Hong Kong.
 - Both the British and Indian battalions had lost some of their most experienced officers and men by transfer to service elsewhere.
 - The artillery on the island was manned largely by Indians and volunteers; some of the guns dated from the 1914-18 war, and were towed by hired vehicles driven by Chinese civilians.
- During the day the Japanese only engaged in patrol activity, but near midnight they surprised the defenders of Shing Mun Redoubt, a key position largely dominating the left sector of the Gin Drinkers' Line, and captured it, including a Scots company headquarters.

9th December

- **Bangkok**
- The Thai Minister for Foreign Affairs informed the British Minister on 9th December that his government had signed, under duress, an agreement with Japan allowing passage of Japanese troops across Thailand.
- **Burma**
- During the early morning Japanese fighters strafed the airfield at Victoria Point, at the Southern tip of Burma. This airfield was a crucial link in the chain of airfields along which fighter reinforcements could reach Malaya from the West.
- A P40 of the AVG fitted locally with a twenty inch camera, escorted by two other P40s, carried out a photo recce of Don Muang airfield in Bangkok. Photos showed 50 fighters and almost as many bombers in neat lines.

9th December

- **South China Sea**
- The fleet rounded the Anambas Islands at daybreak on the 9th. During the morning it proceeded north under low overcast with frequent rainstorms.
- During the day Phillips signalled to his force.
 - “My object is to surprise and sink transports and enemy warships before air attack can develop. Objective chosen will depend on air reconnaissance. Intend to arrive objective after sunrise tomorrow 10th.”
- At about 5.00 pm Vampire reported an unconfirmed sighting of an enemy aircraft.
- At 6.45 p.m. the sky cleared and the fleet was shadowed by at least three aircraft.
- At about 7 pm the Fleet were 300 miles east of Singora, and Phillips altered course to west and increased speed to 26 knots.



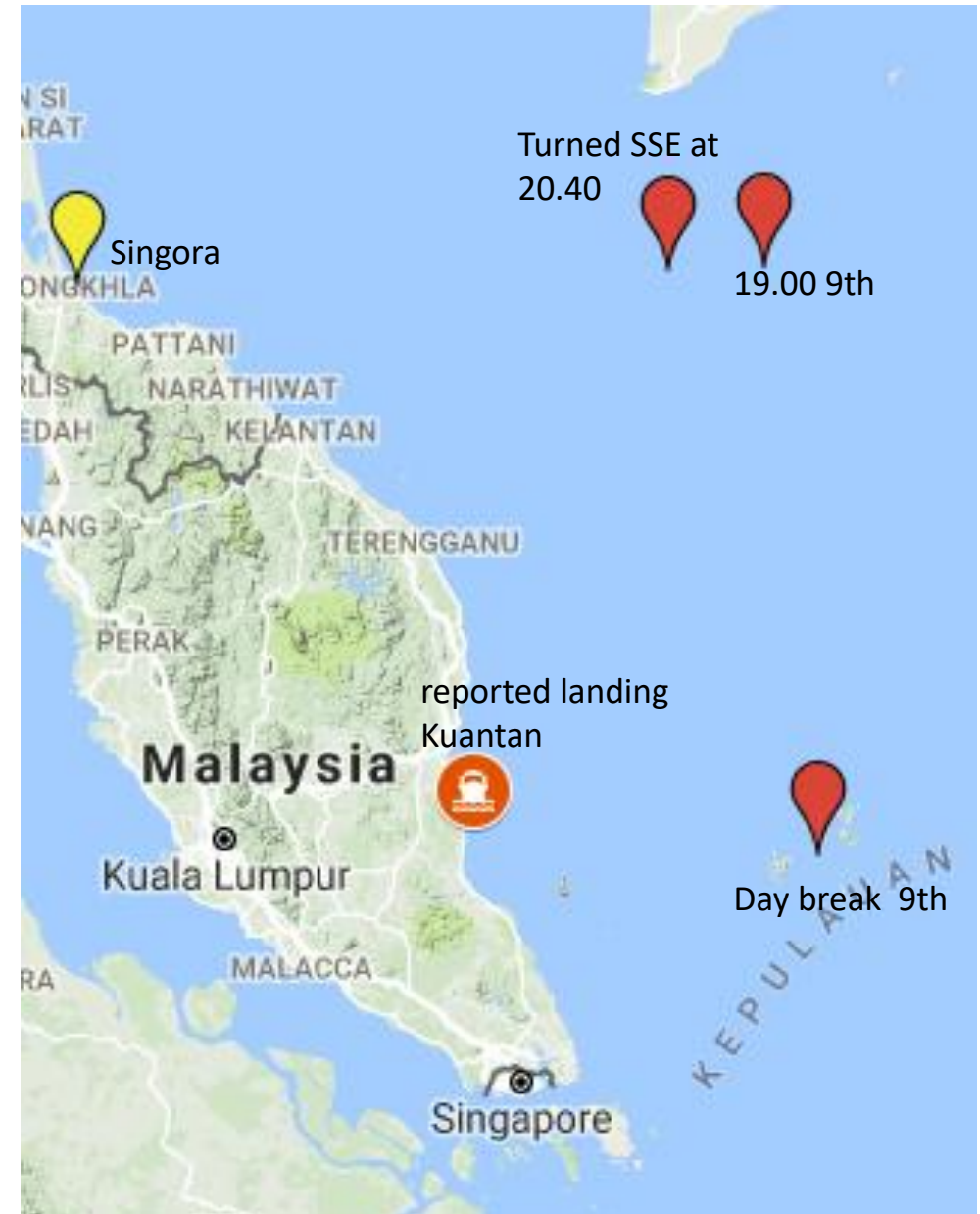
HMS Prince of Wales



HMS Repulse

9th December

- Phillips had decided that, in the absence of fighter cover, surprise was essential. The shadowing of the fleet indicated that surprise was lost and, after a discussion with his staff, he decided to abandon the operation.
 - Speed was reduced to 20 knots; Tenedos was detached to return to Singapore independently, and to signal to Singapore at 8 a.m. the following morning that the force would be off the Anambas Islands on its return passage not earlier than 6 a.m. on the 11th.
 - At 8.40 p.m. course was altered to S.S.E. towards the Anambas Islands.
- Soon after this a signal from Palliser told Phillips
 - that the Kota Bharu aerodrome was in enemy hands and that all northern Malayan aerodromes were becoming untenable due to bombing;
 - that Brooke-Popham "hints he is considering concentrating all air efforts on the defence of the Singapore area"; and
 - that "enemy bombers on South Indo-China aerodromes are in force and undisturbed... They could attack you in five hours after sighting.
 - Two carriers may be in Saigon area."
- Shortly before midnight Phillips received a signal from Palliser:
 - "Enemy reported landing Kuantan, latitude 3°50N."



9th December

- **Air**
- Japanese aircraft continued the attacks on the airfields in North West Malaya. The attacks on Kota Bharu continuing even after Japanese troops were in possession.
- Early in the morning 62 squadron left Alor Star flying its seven remaining Blenheims to Butterworth.
- At Kuantan the ground staff had been working under extremely difficult conditions. The airfield was absolutely pitch dark and orders had been issued not to show a light. The rain still fell in heavy showers and some of the aircraft, dispersed hundreds of yards apart, simply could not be found. Then one of the old tanker towing tractors broke down and it was necessary to load trucks with drums and use a hand pump, a slow and exhausting business. In a few minutes the trucks were immovably bogged; one tractor had to do the whole job; scouting parties couldn't find their way back to the tractor, or didn't want to.
- In the morning Air Headquarters, anxious about the concentration of aircraft at Kuantan, which lacked any form of AA defence, ordered that all but 12 Vildebeestes and the 13 Hudsons of the two Australian squadrons should return at once to Singapore.
- In the early part of the day 3 Hudsons from No. 8 Squadron at Kuantan made a parallel track search to seaward but within sight of the coast. One pilot, Flight Lieutenant Arnold, reported a convoy which he listed as 2 cruisers, 7 destroyers and 3 transports.
- Six torpedo carrying Vildebeests were sent off from Kuantan immediately in response to the convoy sighting. But failed to find the convoy despite three hours searching.

9th December

- Before a Hudson strike could be launched nine Japanese twin engined bombers bombed the airfield from 5,000 feet. The attackers completed four bombing runs then swept the airfield with gunfire from 200 feet which was "even worse than the bombing".
- One pilot who had been having a shower was seen crouching down with nothing on but his tin hat. He had rushed out with a white towel but felt this was too conspicuous so discarded it.
- Three aircraft were destroyed on the ground and two were damaged, but there were no casualties. Buildings and supplies were destroyed. However, petrol, oil, bombs and torpedoes sufficient for offensive operations for several weeks remained untouched.
- The raid was reported to Air Headquarters. The reply was interpreted by some to mean that all airworthy aircraft were to be flown to Singapore, and by others that Kuantan was to be evacuated entirely. Henderson, commanding 8 Sqn, understood that the aircraft were to leave, and while he was organising their departure the evacuation rumour spread so rapidly that most of the squadron and station headquarters ground staff appropriated what transport they could find and set off along the road to Jerantut, 100 miles away.

9th December

- When the air force group from Kota Bharu was moving south Wing Commander Davis arranged to detach a party of airmen from the train at Jerantut and take them to Kuantan to assist in operations from that base.
- When only a few miles from Kuantan, Davis and his party met the ground staff from Kuantan, including R.A.A.F. ground staff, travelling in the opposite direction in a variety of vehicles. These men reported that Kuantan was being evacuated. Since they had no officer in charge of them, Wing Commander Davis took control and, with his own party, returned to the railway and entrained them for Singapore.
- At about 4 p.m. the 7 airworthy Hudsons took off with the remaining members of No. 8 Squadron, and flew to Sembawang on Singapore.

9th December

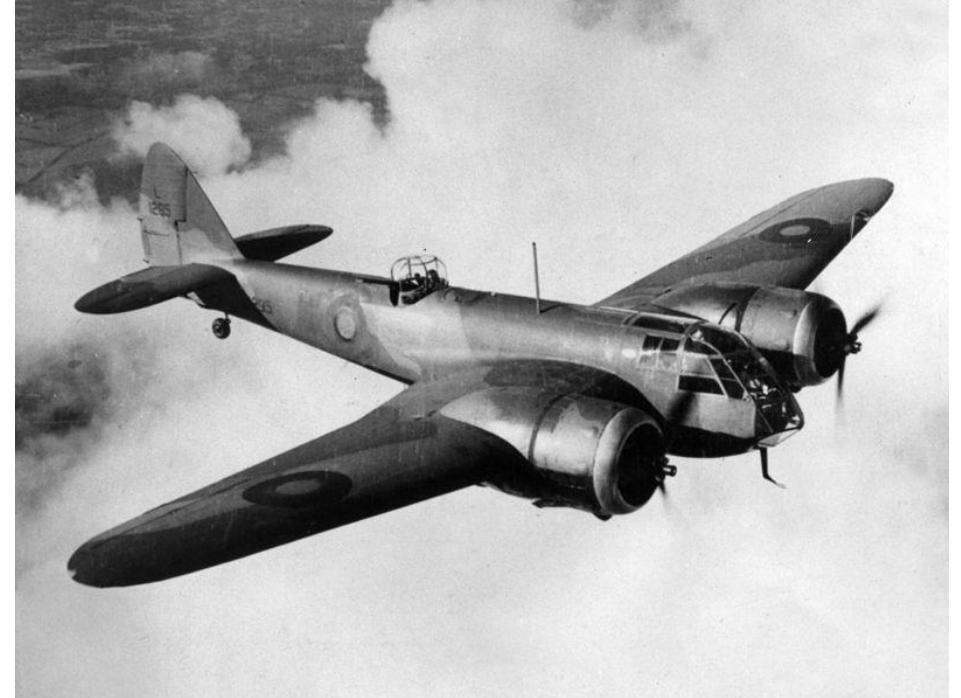
- Until it received replacement aircraft, No. 21 Squadron, at Butterworth, was limited to tactical reconnaissance. Flying Officers Sheppard and Sproule took off at 10.40, in the squadron's only two serviceable buffaloes.
 - When about 12 miles across the Thai border they observed a group of between 12 and 15 tanks at Ban Sadao. As the Buffalo pilots dived to attack the tanks there was no anti-aircraft fire, nor any enemy aircraft.
 - Near Jitra they found an enemy motor transport column which they attacked leaving four trucks blazing and several others damaged.
- The civilian airfield at Penang, defended by a single Lewis gun, was attacked at grass top height by about 15 fighters. LAC Fraser manning the Lewis gun believed he had scored hits on one attacker, which reportedly crashed into the sea.



Brewster Buffalo

9th December

- Because of the threat of further attacks on Butterworth 34 squadron had flown its serviceable Blenheims down to Tengah where they were pooled with 60 squadron. The combined squadron then mustering 18 Blenheims.
- At 12.45 six of these aircraft were ordered to bomb Singora airfield. They met heavy fighter opposition and three of the Blenheims were shot down.
 - One crew survived the crash and were captured,
 - one crew survived the crash and reached friendly forces.
 - Flt Lt Dobson's aircraft was also shot down, the navigator and gunner both being killed, Dobson survived the crash but was beheaded by his captors.
- The remaining three Blenheims flew to Butterworth to refuel. There was no clear observation of the result of the bombing but the crews claimed they had scored hits on a congested airfield.
- Another attack on Singora was ordered to be made by all three surviving Blenheims of Nos. 34/60 squadron and three from 62 Squadron from Butterworth.



Bristol Blenheim Mk 1

9th December

- Two more 21 Squadron Buffaloes had now been made serviceable and all four Buffaloes flown by Flight Lieutenants McKenny, Williams and White and Flying Officer Montefiore were directed by Norgroup to rendezvous with the Blenheims assigned to attack Singora.
- About 15.30 the Buffaloes took off from Butterworth and circled the airfield waiting for the Blenheims.
- After about an hour they were jumped by Japanese fighters escorting a raid by 27 Japanese bombers. The Japanese made high level bombing attacks, followed by low level machine-gunning.
- Williams and McKenny climbed straight for the enemy formation until several Zeros broke away and dived on them, the leader firing on McKenny who fired back until his aircraft burst into flames and he was forced to bale out and parachute into the sea.
- Williams was attacked by 3 enemy fighters. With his guns jamming he had no choice but to dive away. After making one attempt to land and being forced by the speed of his approach to "go round again", he succeeded in landing and leaped from the cockpit into a trench as his pursuers swept the runway with their gunfire.
- Flying Officer Montefiore, after firing at a Zero which was claimed as destroyed, also baled out when his aircraft was shot down. He landed unhurt in a palm tree and, "borrowing" a native's bicycle, made his way back to the squadron.
- Flight Lieutenant White, fought until his aircraft was riddled by bullets and then made a forced landing on Penang Island. Unhurt, he too made his way back to Butterworth.
- McKenny had come down in the sea with his face severely burned. He managed to reach and cling to a native fish trap from which he was rescued by an elderly English naval officer who put off from the island in a launch.

9th December

- The raid had hit just as the Blenheims were preparing to take-off. The Japanese caught all the Blenheims but one on the ground and they were all put out of action.
- Squadron Leader Scarf of No. 62 Squadron, who succeeded in taking off, circled the airfield until it was obvious that no other aircraft were airborne. He then turned north to attack Singora.
- The Blenheim was subjected to repeated enemy fighter attacks and concentrated anti-aircraft fire but Scarf held his course and dropped his bombs on the target.
- He was severely wounded in the back and left arm, but retained control of the aircraft, now damaged by enemy fire and, choosing the closest airfield of Alor Star, made a crash landing there without injury to his crew.
- Scarf died of his wounds that evening in the Alor Star hospital where his wife, Elizabeth, was a nurse.
- After these operations, Air Headquarters ruled that daylight bombing of land targets must cease until fighter escort could be provided.



Squadron Leader Scarf (left) with 62
squadron CO Wing Commander Duncan.

9th December

- Butterworth station had been severely damaged, chiefly by fire, and the explosion of delayed-action bombs added to the confusion.
- That evening Norgroup ordered the withdrawal of No. 21 Squadron to Ipoh. No. 62 Bomber Squadron's two serviceable Blenheims moved to Taiping and only No. 27 Squadron, which now had no aircraft serviceable, remained.
- The servicing party of No. 21 Squadron, which had been left at Sungei Patani, on being told by the army that the enemy was approaching, withdrew to Butterworth.
- Six Blenheims that were unserviceable but capable of flight were sent to Singapore for repair.
- At Sungei Patani, 200,000 gallons of fuel were left behind.

9th December

- **Singapore**
- In the morning, the four promised Dutch squadrons reached Singapore—three bomber units with a total of 22 Glenn Martin bombers and one fighter squadron with 9 Buffaloes.
- But the Dutch bomber crews had not been trained for night flying. One squadron of 9 aircraft was therefore sent back to the Netherlands East Indies for the needed training, and the other squadrons were to be sent back in succession. This was necessary because the Glenn Martins were slower than the R.A.F. Blenheims and had no better protective armament.
- Qantas Empire Airways crews were continuing to operate their flying-boats on the shuttle service between Singapore and Karachi on behalf of British Overseas Airways Corporation.



Dutch Glenn Martin Bombers

9th December

- **Eastern Malaya**
- On the Kota Bharu front Brigadier Key's troops had been withdrawn from the forward positions with difficulty in darkness and heavy rain. Contact with some units was lost, some men were swept away while crossing a flooded river and others were left behind.
- The brigade was in its new position, however, by dawn on 9th December. A dawn attack by the enemy on the right flank of the position was accompanied by heavy fire, and further infiltration followed.
- European women and children and the Sultan of Kelantan and his household having been evacuated from the town, Key decided that the Kota Bharu position was unsuitable for defence and ordered a general withdrawal southward. The brigade pulled back during the night of the 9th to Chondong, on the way to the road and rail junction at Kuala Krai.
- **Western Malaya**
- Krohcol continued to advance towards the "Ledge". Transported by two sections of the 2/3rd Australian Reserve Motor Transport Company, Krohcol had got within five miles of The Ledge when the leading company, advancing on foot, came under fire.
- Japanese tanks then appeared, followed by truck-loads of troops, and then more tanks. One of the Punjab companies was trapped, and another temporarily cut off; but the Indians fought on.
- The 5/14th Punjab and the 10th Mountain Battery, arrived meanwhile at Kroh and took up a supporting position north of Betong.



Japanese light tank

9th December

- **Washington**
- The losses at Pearl Harbour forced the Navy to change the warplan to adopt a temporary defensive role,
 - to retain what America held in the Pacific as a base for future offensives and
 - to secure communications along the lines Panama-Samoa-Fiji-New Zealand; and
 - West Coast-Pearl Harbour-Fiji-New Caledonia-Australia.
- There was no question of using the depleted Pacific Fleet to defend Guam or the Philippines.
- Admiral Stark also ordered the return to the Pacific of the aircraft carrier Yorktown together with three battleships, a destroyer squadron and three squadrons of patrol bombers.
- Saratoga, about to enter San Diego when the war began, was ordered to proceed to Pearl Harbour at once and sailed on the 8th carrying with her marine fighter squadron 221 (18 Brewster Buffaloes with full personnel and equipment) to reinforce Wake Island, as well as her own aircraft group.



Admiral Stark
Chief of Naval Operations

9th December



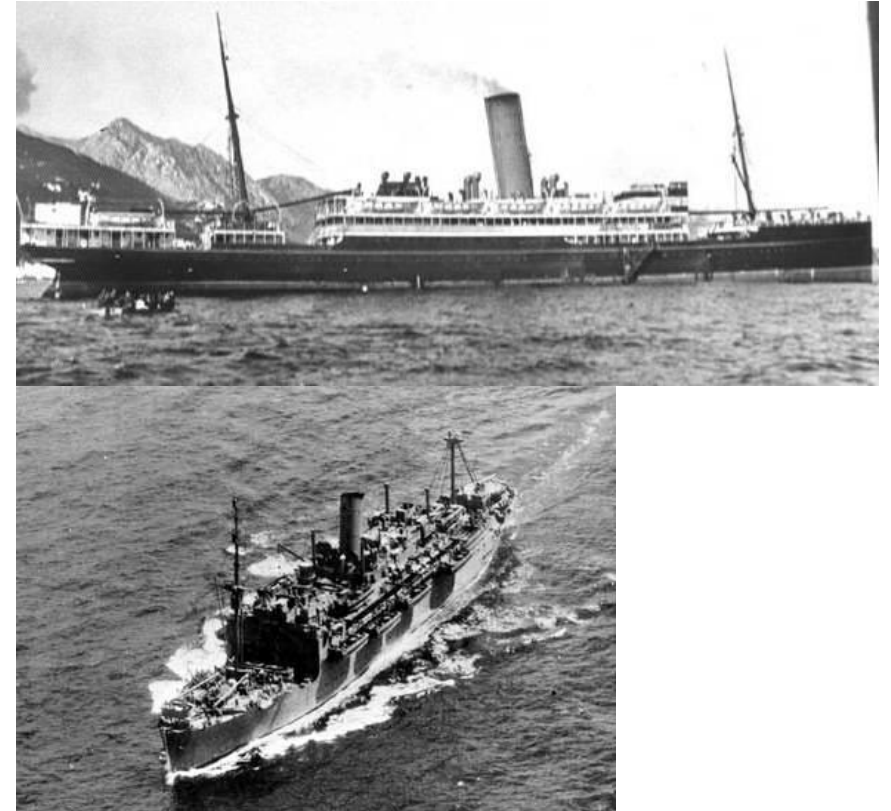
10th December

- **Western Pacific**

- Before dawn Japanese troops landed on Guam. About 700 came ashore at Agana beach and advanced rapidly on the Plaza, where the majority of the Insular force guard was stationed with a few marines and sailors. The invaders were twice driven back with rifle and machine gun fire, the defenders losing 17 men in this engagement. At 05.45 after 25 minutes fighting and receiving reports of other enemy landings, amounting to 5,000 men, the Governor decided to surrender the island.
- The Japanese landed on and occupied Butaritari island, part of Makin Atoll, in the Gilbert Islands.
- Wake Island was again bombed by 27 twin engined bombers, which first concentrated on battery E's empty emplacements then strafing Wilkes Island. They blew up a construction dump of 125 tons of dynamite.
 - This set off all ready ammunition in near by batteries and damaged the guns of batteries F & L.
 - Only one marine was killed with four wounded in this attack.
 - Two bombers were shot down by Captain Elrod.

10th December

- **Australia**
- "Sparrow" Force sailed from Darwin in the early morning with a 1,402 troops in Zealandia and Westralia.
- Insistence on making a stand at Rabaul led to the transfer of No. 24 Squadron's Wirraways to that base.
- One flight left Townsville on 10th December for Horn Island. On the next stage—300 miles to Port Moresby—they were escorted by a Catalina. From there the route lay through Lae to Gasmata and on to Rabaul.
- A small store of 100-octane fuel had been placed at Gasmata a year earlier but there were no proper refuelling facilities. A native "bucket line"—with tins taking the place of buckets—was organised so that the aircraft tanks could be filled from 44-gallon drums.
- **Hong Kong**
- In response to the loss of the redoubt a company of the Winnipeg Grenadiers was brought from the island to strengthen the mainland forces.
- A Japanese attack from the Redoubt next morning was halted by artillery and a Rajput company which had been moved into a gap on the right of the Scots;
- but the centre and left companies of the Scots had become dangerously exposed, and they were withdrawn late in the afternoon to an inner line.
- Shelling and air attacks were carried out by the enemy during the day.



SS Zealandia (top) had carried Australian troops in WW1. HMAS Westralia was an Armed Merchant Cruiser.

10th December

- **Philippines**
- Shortly after dawn reconnaissance aircraft spotted two invasion convoys approaching Northern Luzon.
- Ten B-17's and the P-40E's of the 17th Pursuit Squadron and the P-35s of the 34th were prepared for an early mission.
- A part of the Japanese force, which had attacked Batan Island on the 8th moved on to Camiguin Island on the 10th and established a seaplane base.
- An invasion force in six troop transports, escorted by a cruiser with destroyers and other small naval vessels, anchored off Aparri, on the north-eastern tip of Luzon, and started landing troops at daybreak on the 10th December.
- An invasion force in six transports escorted by a cruiser with destroyers, anti-submarine vessels and minesweepers reached Vigan, on the north-west coast of Luzon.
- At 06.00 five B17s led by Major Combs, took off from Clark Field for Vigan. Before reaching the target area the B17s were joined by 11 P40s of the 17th Squadron. The B-17s targeted transports already engaged in unloading troops and supplies.
- Two bomb runs were carried out by four bombers from an altitude of 12,000 and 12,500 feet.
- The fifth B-17, piloted by Lt. Elliott Vandevanter, swept in first at 10,000 and then at 7,000 feet.
- The B-17's succeeded in scoring a number of hits.
- Though antiaircraft fire remained fierce, after the bombing, the P-40's came down for a strafing attack on the ships and on the Japanese who had already reached shore. The P40s also encountered a formation of twin engined Japanese bombers. Two P40s failed to return, one bomber was claimed destroyed.
- Meanwhile, the slower P-35's of the 34th Squadron had arrived on the scene of action. 16 aircraft had set out but eight had dropped out due to engine problems. These planes had neither armor protection nor leak-proof tanks, but they too "strafed and restrafted the invaders." As Lt. Marrett, squadron commander, led his flight in "one final strafing dive," one of the transports exploded, destroying Marrett and his plane. Another P-35 was lost, but the pilot escaped.
- These attacks sank a minesweeper and so damaged two transports that they had to be beached.

10th December

- The five B17s of the 14th Bomb Squadron had been delayed by the necessity of flying from San Marcelino to Clark for refuelling and bomb-loading, and then had been further delayed by a warning of approaching Japanese planes. Finally, five B17s took off individually.
- Three of them attacked the enemy beachhead at Vigan.
- The first to arrive over the target, made several runs at 25,000 feet against what was mistakenly thought to be an aircraft carrier.
 - Mechanical trouble with the bomb racks and antiaircraft fire interfered with the bombing, and it took approximately forty-five minutes to drop eight 600-lb. bombs.
 - No hits were observed.
- The second made two bomb runs from 12,500 feet.
 - On the first, four 300-lb. bombs were directed against a cruiser or destroyer without effect.
 - One direct hit on a transport was claimed from the three bombs dropped during the second run.
- The third had been allowed time to load only one 600-lb. bomb when he was ordered off Clark Field for the security of his plane. He proceeded to Vigan, however, and dropped his bomb in the water near the transports.

10th December

- After 17 PS returned to Clark from their attack on the Vigan invasion force their P40Es were turned over to 20 PS who mounted another strafing attack.
- 20 PS had been equipped with P40 Bs and their lack of experience on the heavier E model may have contributed to take off and landing accidents which destroyed two aircraft with one pilot being killed.
- Unreliable guns limited the effectiveness of the strafing attack.



P40 B

10th December

- The two remaining B-17s took off from Clark Field at approximately 09.30 to attack the Japanese landing near Aparri.
- Lt. Schaetzel in making a run over several transports at 25,000 feet, apparently scored a hit.
 - The B-17, pounded by anti-aircraft fire and under attack by enemy pursuit, was severely damaged, but no one in the bomber was injured and Schaetzel succeeded in reaching San Marcelino.
- Despite this attack and heavy weather, which forced the transports to shift 20 miles to the east to sheltered waters to complete unloading, the landing force was in possession of Aparri airfield by 13.40 on the 10th.
- Capt. Colin Kelly in the fifth 14 sqd B17 had been directed to locate and attack an aircraft carrier previously reported off the northern Luzon coast.
 - After a search of the target area he found no sign of a carrier, spotted a large Japanese warship which the aircrew took for a battleship and the bombardier released the entire load of three 600-lb. bombs from 22,000 feet.
 - The bombs scored near misses and to Kelly's crew it appeared that one of them had struck squarely amidship.
 - When the B-17 left the area, the warship appeared to be stopped with black smoke pouring from it.
- As Kelly's plane neared the field, two enemy fighters attacked from the rear and below.
 - Bullets riddled the bomber. The commander's dome flew off, the instrument panel seemed to disintegrate, a machine-gun burst penetrated the left rear gunner's post killing T/Sgt. Delehanty, the low pressure oxygen tanks in the radio compartment exploded, and the empty bomb bay burst into flames.
 - When the flames spread, Kelly ordered the crew to bail out.
 - The rest of the crew bailed out and reached the ground safely but Kelly's body was found near the wreckage of his plane.

10th December

- At 11.30 five of Patwing 10's PBYs set off, each armed with four 500 lb bombs, to make a high level attack on the invasion forces. They claimed a hit on the stern of a battleship. One of the PBYs was damaged by AA fire.
- On returning to Mindanao, Lt Montgomery's B17 was unable to find Del Monte airfield due to the weather closing in, and when fuel ran out he had to ditch in the sea off Zamboanga.
- About 12.30 p.m. on 10th December a large force of enemy bombers escorted by an estimated 100 fighters was seen approaching Cavite and Nichols Field.
 - All the American pursuits were ordered to scramble but many had not been refuelled or rearmed after the earlier attacks on the invasion forces.
 - There was some interception by American fighters which cost the enemy several of their escort but the bombers, in three formations of 27 aircraft, swept on undisturbed. American pilots fought and flew until shot down or forced down with empty tanks.
 - Eleven P40s failed to return but only three pilots were killed.
 - Gun problems again limited the effectiveness of the Pursuits.
- Capt Jesus Villamor led a flight of three fixed undercarriage P26s of the Philippine Air Force against the bombers raiding Zablán. They achieved no successes but suffered no casualties



P26 of the Philippine Air Force

10th December

- At Del Carmen the 34PS was caught on the ground after their attack on the invasion force in the morning.
 - 12 P-35's were destroyed and 6 damaged by strafing zeros.
 - Fuel bowzers and oil tanks were also destroyed, putting Del Carmen out of commission.
- Nichols Field received a rain of bombs that destroyed the main hangar, the air depot, fuel tanks, and several aircraft on the ground.
- Four torpedo armed PBYS of Patwing 10, preparing to take off for another attack on the invasion forces, were caught by the strafing zeros.
 - Two were forced down, one being a write off.
 - The other taxied 12 miles back to base and was repaired.
- Over the Navy Yard at Cavite, for two hours or more, some 54 planes flew back and forth at a leisurely tempo, at 20,000 feet beyond the range of the three inch anti-aircraft guns, bombing at will.
 - It was accurate bombing. The power plant, industrial facilities, and supply depots were completely ruined.
 - The submarine Sea Lion was sunk and other naval craft damaged and
 - a stock of 230 torpedoes had been destroyed.
- At the end of the day the Far East Airforce was reduced to 22 P40s, 18 B17s and 8 P35s. The navy still had 24 PBYS.
- Working almost continuously for thirty-six hours, 500 men transferred from Coast Artillery, had put together and completed installation of twelve 3-inch AA guns, 3 directors and height-finders, 5 AA searchlight units, and twelve 37-mm AA guns, which had been in the Philippine Ordnance Depot.

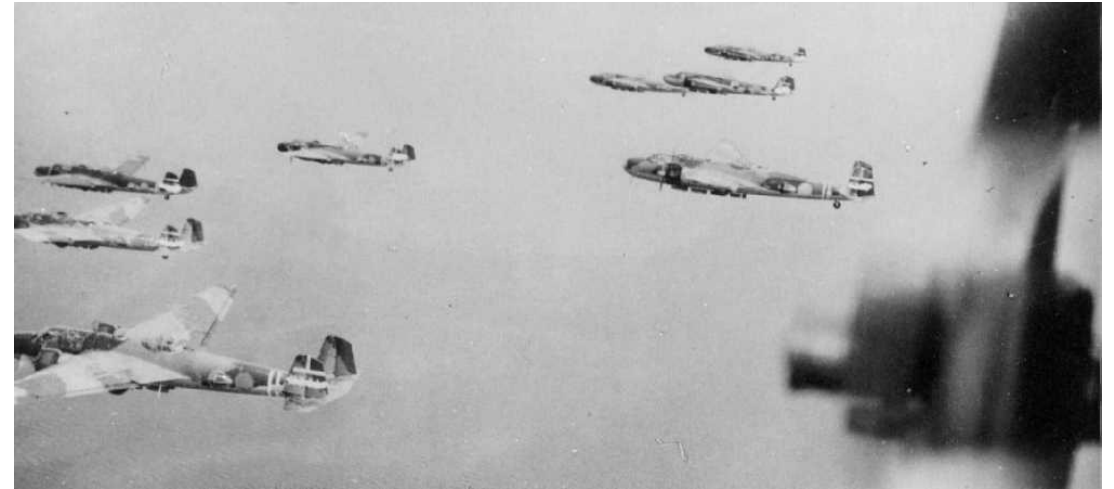
10th December

- **South China Sea**
- At 00.45 Philips, about an hour after Palliser's signal, altered course towards Kuantan, increased speed to 25 knots, and told the fleet that he was going in to attack the new landing force reported at Kuantan.
- Reconnaissance Hudsons reached Kuantan at dawn and reported to Air Headquarters that there was no evidence of the enemy's presence and no sign of battle.
- As the fleet approached the coast at dawn a small tug with four barges was sighted and passed. Between 06.30 and 07.00 an enemy reconnaissance aircraft appeared. At 08.00 the fleet reached the expected invasion force position, but sighted nothing unusual.
- The two big ships catapulted reconnaissance aircraft, and Express, sent inshore to make a close investigation, returned to report everything quiet.
- At 9.30 a.m. course was altered to E. by N., and the fleet proceeded at 20 knots to investigate the tug and barges sighted earlier.
- About 10 a.m. Tenedos, about 140 miles to the southward of the fleet was found by a Japanese C5M reconnaissance aircraft and bombed, first by the C5M and then by nine twin engine bombers but was not significantly damaged. Tenedos reported the attack to Phillips.

10th December

- **South China Sea**

- Shortly after 10 a.m., aircraft were detected by the fleet and Phillips ordered 1st degree of anti-aircraft readiness. Enemy bombers were first sighted at 11 a.m., the initial attack being by nine twin engine bombers which came in from ahead "at..15,000 feet" in close formation which they held "with complete disregard for anti-aircraft fire". The attack was concentrated on Repulse, which suffered one direct hit and straddling near misses, but sustained no major damage.
- The next attack, about twenty minutes after the initial bombing attack, was by two formations of nine twin engine torpedo aircraft. They skimmed 200 feet above the sea into all the AA fire the ships could put up, steadied to drop their weapons and flew directly over the battleship strafing its decks.
- Repulse successfully evaded the torpedoes (Captain Tennant estimated that she combed as many as twelve tracks), but Prince of Wales was hit on the port side right aft. Both port propeller shafts were stopped, reducing her speed considerably; the steering gear was affected; some machinery rooms were flooded; and she took a list to port, with increased trim aft so that the port side of her quarter - deck was soon awash.



G3M Type 96 Attack Bombers
Allied reporting name "Nell"

10th December

- **South China Sea**
- A third attack was by high-level bombers, and was survived by both ships with apparently no direct hits. At this time Captain Tennant, unaware if the Commander-in-Chief had reported the attack (he had not done so) made the emergency report "Enemy aircraft bombing" to Singapore at 11.18, and closed Prince of Wales to see if he could help in any way.
- Shortly after this another seven torpedo bombers attacked, and Repulse was hit amidships but continued to manoeuvre at about 25 knots.
- Buffaloes of No. 453 Squadron were standing by to give air cover to the fleet should they be returning to Singapore. In response to Captain Tennant's message, received about midday, ten fighters took off at 12.15 for the scene of the attack 165 miles away. A pair of 243 sqd Buffaloes were also dispatched on receipt of Tennant's message.

10th December

- **South China Sea**

- At about 12.20 "torpedo bomber aircraft seemed to appear from several directions" and attacked both big ships. In quick succession Repulse was hit aft and put out of control with a jammed rudder, though steaming at over 20 knots; and then struck by at least three torpedoes, two on the port side, and one on the starboard. She listed heavily to port, and at 12.33 rolled over and sank.
- Prince of Wales, some five miles distant, was also hit by three torpedoes, one at the stem, one aft, and one amidships on the starboard side. She righted from her port list, but settled appreciably.
- When Repulse capsized, Phillips ordered Vampire and Electra to pick up survivors. As Vampire was approaching the survivors a high-level bombing formation was observed coming over Prince of Wales. Prince of Wales fought back with her remaining anti-aircraft batteries. She was straddled by this salvo of bombs and sustained one hit on the catapult deck while "near misses may have caused further damage". Express, went alongside the stricken ship to take off survivors and remained there until the last possible moment. She sank "at 1.15 p.m., in position 3°38'N, 104°281'E."
- The bombers made off and made no attempt to attack the destroyers.
- The two 243 sqd Buffaloes reached the scene just before PoW sank. 453 squadron arrived only in time to witness the rescue operations of the destroyers.

10th December

Admiral Phillips

- **South China Sea**
- Four Japanese bombers had been shot down by the ships' anti-aircraft guns.
- 796 men (including Captain Tennant) and a war correspondent from Repulse and 1,285 men from PoW were saved by the destroyers.
- Admiral Phillips, and his Flag Captain, Captain Leach, went down with the ship. 327 of the crew of Prince of Wales and 513 from Repulse lost their lives.
- Admiral Layton (who had handed over to Admiral Phillips the British naval command in the Far East) was on board ship in Singapore to return to England. He returned ashore, and was directed to carry out the duties of CinC, Eastern Fleet, until the fate of Phillips was known.
- As the destroyers returned to Singapore with the survivors they met a flotilla of destroyers, HMS Stronghold and USS Alden, Edsall, Edwards and Whipple, which had been ordered out from Singapore in response to Force Z's call for assistance.
- HMS Exeter reached Singapore to join the Eastern Fleet.
- When the survivors disembarked at Singapore Air Vice-Marshal Pulford, on meeting Captain Tennant, was greatly distressed and exclaimed, "My God, I hope you don't blame me for this. I had no idea where you were."

Melbourne

In the evening of Wednesday news of the loss of Prince of Wales and Repulse reached Navy Office, first in a Tokyo broadcast, followed by an announcement in the British broadcast news. Following so rapidly on the publicity fanfare announcing the arrival of the ships only a week earlier, it came as a shock.



10th December

- **Western Malaya**
- **Jitra Line**
- Confronted by a Japanese advance-guard south of the frontier early on 10th December, the outposts of the 11th Indian division gradually withdrew, seeking to delay the enemy as it did so. The division commander told the Brigade Commander that, to gain time for preparation of the main positions, he must hold the approach to Jitra till 12th December, and assigned reinforcements to assist him. The forward troops were concentrated round Changlun and Asun.
- The foremost troops on the Koding road were withdrawn to Koding, carrying out demolitions along the railway as they went.
 - This move amounted to evacuation of the British forces from Perlis. The Sultan of Perlis protested that it constituted a violation of Britain's treaty with the State.
- **Air**
- The effect of the smoke and the sound of explosions from demolitions at Alor Star airfield on the morale of troops forward of the airfield was so serious that orders were given that in future petrol and oil were to be allowed to run to waste rather than be fired when airfields had to be evacuated.
- During the withdrawals there was some defective discipline amongst the ground parties of 21 RAAF and 27 RAF squadrons.
- Penang airfield was raided again.
- A.H.Q. had given up all hope of using Kuantan airfield again. Orders came through to save as much as possible and get out as soon as possible.

10th December

- **NEI**

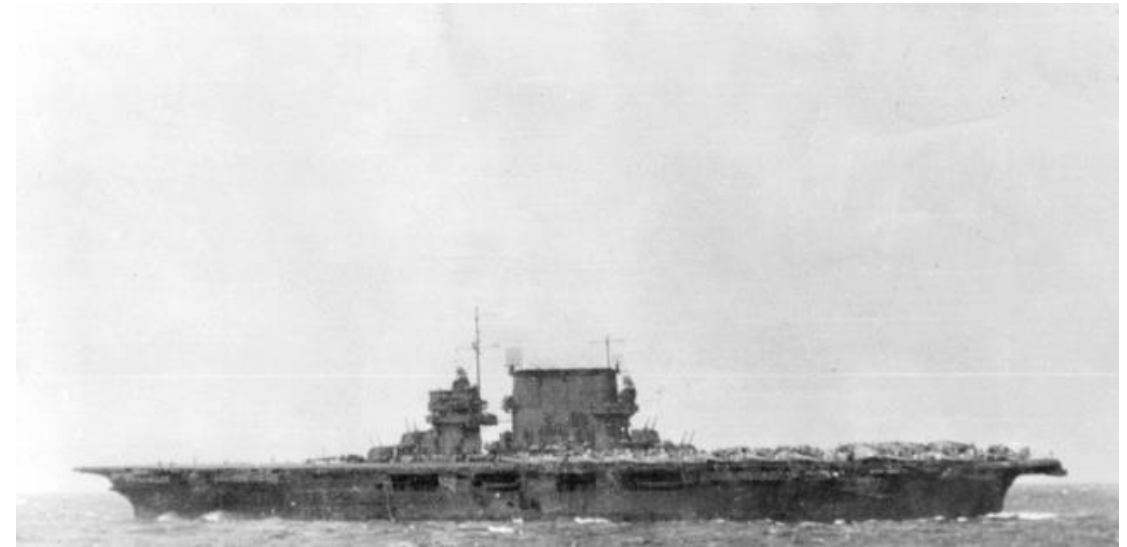
- Arriving in Java, Task force 5 established their operational base at Surabaya. Purnell met Admiral Helfrich at Batavia, and was urged by the Dutch CinC to establish his base there. Purnell told him that a major operation of the task force would be the escort of American transports through Torres Strait and that Darwin had been selected as the main base.
- The first air strike by an Australian squadron in the Netherlands East Indies against an enemy land target was made by No. 13 Squadron's two flights at Laha. The target was Tobi Island, the westernmost point in the Japanese mandated islands. Reconnaissance had indicated that the Japanese were developing the island as a submarine base and there was the added probability that the enemy might use it as a base for air attacks against Allied shipping.
- At 5.45 a.m. six Hudsons took off. Almost immediately the leading aircraft, piloted by the squadron commander, Wing Commander McDonald, crashed into the sea. There were no survivors. Flight Lieutenant Dunne then led the other five Hudsons which flew on to the target and attacked with bombs and gunfire from about 800 feet. An administrative building and storehouses in the wharf area were damaged, the aircraft remaining over the target for about a quarter of an hour without any opposition.

- **London**

- On 5 December Churchill had contemplated offering 10 RAF squadrons to Russia, to operate on the southern flank of the Russian armies. However, on 10 December, while the British Foreign Secretary, Anthony Eden, was on a mission to Moscow, Churchill told him of the "urgent necessity to reinforce Malaya with aircraft from the Middle East", and asked him to withhold the offer.

10th December

- **Eastern Pacific**
- Enterprise left Pearl again before dawn (9th Hawaii) to hunt submarines to the Northward of the islands.
- Admiral Kimmel, CincPac, stated "we do know that Guam has fallen, Wake is under attack, some of the Gilbert Islands have been occupied, and enemy submarines are operating eastward from Oahu". Kimmel visualised that probable enemy action in the Pacific would be raids by fast striking forces on Oahu and Midway and on the Aleutians; raids on Wake Island "with possible landing attempts"; and raids on commerce by submarines and cruisers or armed merchant cruisers.
- Plans (based on Kimmel's appreciation) were made for the three carrier groups operating from Pearl to intercept enemy raids and support other bases.
- The relief of Wake, the main mission, was given to a task force built around Saratoga, flying the flag of Rear Admiral Fitch. It had to be Saratoga because she was bringing the marine fighters to reinforce Wake. Seaplane tender Tangier at Pearl Harbour, loaded with supplies, ammunition and equipment for the beleaguered marines, awaited the arrival of Saratoga.
- The Lexington group (TF11) was to make a diversionary raid on Jaluit in the hope of pinning down enemy forces in the Marshalls and inflicting destruction.
- The Enterprise group (TF8) was to fuel in Pearl after the others had left and operate to the west to cover Oahu and if necessary support the main strike.



USS Saratoga

The only cruisers available to operate with Saratoga were CruDiv 3 commanded by Rear Admiral Fletcher. Fletcher had no experience with aircraft carriers, while Fitch was the most experienced carrier admiral in the navy, but Fletcher's marginal seniority over Fitch resulted in his appointment as commander of the taskforce. Fletcher's cruisers reached Pearl on the 10th but he could not set off until Saratoga arrived and refuelled.

10th December



11th December

- **Wake Island**

- Shortly after midnight marine lookouts reported blinking lights to the southward. By the light of a moon which rose before dawn ships were seen closing Peacock Point.
- The Japanese force consisted of three light cruisers and six destroyers escorting four transports. At 05.00 just as day was breaking they commenced a bombardment and started loading troops into landing craft four miles off the beach. Major Deveraux withheld fire until 06.15 when a cruiser and three destroyers had closed to 4,500 yards. Then Battery A of 5 inch coast defence guns, commanded by Lieutenant Barninger opened fire and scored three hits on the leading cruiser which turned away and limped over the horizon.
- Battery L of 5inch guns on Wilkes Island, commanded by Lieutenant McAlister then opened fire. Selecting the leading ship of three destroyers Battery L fired three two gun salvos so accurately that the target blew up, broke in two and sank immediately. This result was achieved despite the loss of the battery's rangefinder in the dynamite explosion. After the crew had been recalled from their celebrations by Platoon Sergeant Bedell's bellowed reminder that this wasn't a ball game, Battery L went on to score a hit on another destroyer and a transport, which retired behind a smoke screen.
- The other three destroyers commenced a north south run to the West of Wilkes and Peale Island. They were engaged by Battery B's 5 inch guns which scored one hit on the leading ship. The enemy replied hitting all around the battery and severing fire control communications. The battery shifted fire to another destroyer and all three retired.
- Four Wildcats now attacked the retreating ships strafing and dropping little 100 pound bombs from jury rigged bomb releases then returning to rearm and attacking again. Damaging hits were scored on two cruisers and a transport. Captain Elrod then made an attack on a destroyer but was badly shot up. He just managed to land his plane burning and broken on the beach. Another Wildcat was just pushing over for another attack on the destroyer, when it blew up and sank.
- At 7 a.m. the Japanese broke off the action and retired.
- About midday there was another bombing attack by 18 twin engined bombers. Two were shot down by the remaining two wildcats and a third by anti-aircraft. 4 more flew away smoking.

11th December



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FORERUNNER: Fine. Map, Page 10.



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TWO BRITISH WARSHIPS SUNK BY JAPAN

Rush Plans Follow Navy Loss

LOSS of Prince of Wales and Repulse will result in vast re-arrangements in Australia. The Prime Minister, Mr. Curtin, indicated at Melbourne last night that emergency measures should be taken to the War Cabinet, with the aim of making it more effective and more representative of the people.

Mr. Curtin added that the loss of the warships was a "real blow" to the Government, but that the British Government was "not alone" in the loss.

The Australian Government received confirmation from the British Government that the British Government was "not alone" in the loss.

PRINCE OF WALES AND REPULSE BOMBED

More Japanese Landings In Malaya & Philippines

TWO British warships, the new 35,000 ton battleship, Prince of Wales, and the 32,000 ton battle cruiser, Repulse, were sunk off the coast of Malaya yesterday morning.

The news was first announced in a Tokio radio communique, then in a message from Singapore, and confirmed by a British Admiralty announcement.

No details are yet available, except those given by the Japanese, who stated that both warships had been sunk by air attack, east of the Malay Peninsula early in the morning.

The Japanese communique said that after having been bombed for three hours by Japanese aircraft Repulse sunk.

The Prince of Wales was directly hit by bombs, and was seen to have a heavy list to starboard. The ship tried to escape, but was hit again and sunk. Losses have not been given. Prince of Wales carried 1500 men and Repulse 1200.

Japanese troops have invaded the Philippines. More Japanese forces have landed in northern Malaya. Others are trying to land half-way between the northern border and Singapore. Hong Kong has beaten off mainland attacks.

Events in main fighting zones yesterday included: **Malaya.**—Big Japanese forces launching strong offensive in north. Swarms of Japanese planes dive-bombing aerodromes. Other Japanese forces trying to land near Kuantan, on the east coast, and meeting stiff resistance. Dutch Indian naval and air reinforcements at Singapore. Japanese reported to have air superiority over immediate battle areas. **Philippines.**—Japanese invading Luzon (main island). Landed on north coast. U.S. bombers heavily damaged Japanese warships and transports, sinking one transport. Manila heavily bombed. Further raids yesterday morning. American correspondents deny Japanese claims to have destroyed main air bases near Manila.



Major events in the Pacific war yesterday are marked by numbers on this map: 1. British battleship and battle cruiser sunk by Japanese aircraft off Malaya. 2. Several Japanese landings in Malaya. 3. Heavy fighting for air supremacy in North Malaya. 4. British forces ordered to defend Hong Kong. 5. Chinese attack Japanese occupying Hong Kong. 6. Japanese landing in Philippines. 7. Manila bombed. 8. British naval and air forces active.

CURTIN CALLS STATE PREMIERS TO CONFER ON VITAL MEASURES FOR WAR

PREMIERS of all Australian States received a summons from the Prime Minister (Mr. Curtin) late yesterday to attend a special Premier's Conference in Canberra on December 19 to discuss new measures for co-operation between Australian Governments necessitated by the Pacific war.

The Federal Government is expected immediately to introduce drastic restrictions on the use of petrol and other imported supplies, this being the result of the sinking of the British warships Prince of Wales and Repulse in the East.

The Premier's conference has been so arranged that it will be held in Canberra, but because of the Government's decision to restrict the use of petrol and other imported supplies, it has been decided that the conference should be held in Canberra, but because of the Government's decision to restrict the use of petrol and other imported supplies, it has been decided that the conference should be held in Canberra.

HONG KONG'S ATTACKERS ATTACKED

Australian Bombed Port. Japanese troops are now attacking the Japanese coast which is meeting Hong Kong.

PEOPLE TOLD TO BE READY

Warning the people to prepare against emergency before was given today, the Civil Defence Minister (Mr. Hadden) advised them to be ready for a possible attack.

Full Report: Page 8

We must kill complicity in ourselves be killed. And there is only one way it can be done! See Page 4.