

mountaineer may faithfully record his knowledge of mountains with which he has made friends, though that is not all his experience. But a mountaineering journal is a record of the moods of mountains and how they have affected men. I shall therefore be content to let my record be that, and shall keep the other and more personal parts of the memory for my own possession.

## TRAVELS IN JAPANESE-OCCUPIED MALAYA<sup>1</sup>

BY F. SPENCER CHAPMAN

*Being the substance of a lecture delivered before the Alpine Club,  
December 8, 1947.*

**I**N August 1941 I found myself posted to Singapore as second in command, and later in command, of a small school of guerilla warfare. After specialising in the fieldcraft and equipment side of commando work, I reached Malaya after a year in Australia, where I had been sent with Mike Calvert—later one of Wingate's column commanders—to start commandos in that country and in New Zealand.

One of the primary objects of the military department to which I was attached was to organise left-behind parties (I prefer the name stay-behind parties : it sounds less abandoned) of Europeans and Asiatics in various parts of the Far East which we thought might be overrun by the Japanese. Unfortunately this belief did not seem to be shared by those in command and, as far as Malaya was concerned, we were not allowed to make preparations of any sort until December 8, on which night, it will be remembered, Singapore was bombed by the Japanese. Only then were we allowed to carry on with the plan which had been put up to Malayan Command some months previously ; and we were allowed to start training the young Chinese Communists at Singapore. Having handed over the school to another, I went up to the advance headquarters of the 3rd Indian Corps at Kuala Lumpur primarily to organise raiding parties behind the Japanese lines which were by then—December 20—already a third of the way down Perak.

The first thing to be done was to have a look at the enemy—for already rumour had it that the Jap was something phenomenal as a jungle fighter. Accordingly with two companions I crossed the Perak river at Parit and spent four days behind the lines watching the Jap cycle-troops and staff cars pouring along the roads towards the river. This reconnaissance more than ever convinced me of the vulnerability of the advancing Japanese forces to guerilla attacks, and I put up a last-minute plan for a few small British stay-behind parties to enter the

<sup>1</sup> The text of this article has already been published in the *Geographical Journal*, with whose courteous permission it is here reproduced.

jungle at once as far forward as they could get. It was too late now to organise mixed parties—as originally planned—officered by planters and tin-miners from the Volunteers who knew the languages and customs of the country and manned by Malays, Chinese, and Indians ; but I knew that a considerable number of Chinese Communists who had been trained at our school at Singapore were being put into the jungle and well supplied with arms and demolitions as a nucleus for resistance groups, and I hoped that we might get in touch with them if the peninsula was overrun for any length of time. (In those days no one ever spoke of the possibility of Singapore itself falling.)

The plan was that a number of small self-contained parties should be installed across the line Kuala Kubu–Kuala Lipis, a distance of only fifty miles as the hornbill flies, but a belt in which all the land routes down the peninsula are constricted ; the main west coast road and railway (farther west the swamps of the Bernam river prevent all land movement) ; the east coast railway which comes down from Siam and Kota Bahru to join the other line at Gemas, and the east coast road from Kuantan which picks up the Kuala Lipis road at Benta and crosses the Main Range by the Gap or the Ginting Sempah or continues down the east side of the mountains to Karak (where it picks up the Temerloh road) and Kuala Pilah.

The Japs were already approaching Slim River when, in the first few days of 1942, I rushed round Kuala Lumpur trying to collect suitable personnel and choosing and packing up stores which were already being packed up for evacuation. In all about fifty British officers comprised the stay-behind parties under my command, but of these only a handful were under my control owing to difficulties of communication. Indeed, so short were we of equipment that we had only one transmission set—at my headquarters—and the only way I could have communicated with the other parties was by sending a signal to Singapore whence it would be transmitted as an after-news announcement for them to pick up on their ordinary receiving sets.

There were three parties more or less under my control ; my headquarters a few miles north of Tanjong Malim, consisting of four planter-Volunteers, a Sapper officer, a Chinese wireless operator, and myself ; a party of fire officers—mostly tin-miners—and a Malay at Kampong Dong on the Raub-Benta road, and a party of five officers at Sungei Gow between Bentong and Karak. Each party was supplied with several lorryloads of provisions, ammunition, and demolition stores, and there was an extra supply-dump near Tras which was more or less equidistant from the three camps and was to serve as a rendezvous in case any of the parties were in trouble.

Four of my own party—Vanrenan, Hembry, Graham, and Ah Lam—took the stores up to the jungle edge at Tanjong Malim on January 5, 1942, while I remained at Kuala Lumpur to get the other hideouts provisioned, intending to join them at Tanjong Malim on January 7 with Harvey and Sartin, the other two members of my party, who were still hiding the reserve dump in the jungle at Sungei Sempam

near Tras. On January 6 I went down with my first attack of fever. Next day I sent a despatch rider up to Vanrenan at Tanjong Malim to say that I might be a day late—for I had persuaded an M.O. to let me carry out my plan on condition that I lay up in the jungle until my temperature, which was then 103 degrees, had returned to normal. But the messenger returned to say that the Japs had broken through at Slim River and our forces had already withdrawn from Tanjong Malim, blowing the bridge behind them, so that he could not deliver my message.

On January 8, having persuaded the Sappers not to blow the bridges until the car that took me in had returned, I joined Harvey and Sartin at Sungei Sempam. My plan was that as soon as I was fit enough to travel we should cross the Main Range and join Vanrenan's party at Tanjong Malim.

It was another ten days before I was fit enough to travel. The distance from camp to camp was only 16 miles, though we had to climb to 5000 feet to cross the Main Range; and footpaths running in from each side—according to the map—reduced this distance to ten. Surely, I thought, even if we have to cut every step of the way with our jungle knives, we can at least cover 2 miles per day. Accordingly, carrying a week's food to be on the safe side, we left our camp near Sungei Sempan on January 18 and set off for Tanjong Malim.

But we had reckoned without the Malayan jungle and it was to be twelve days before we reached our destination. In the first place the map, though excellent, was fifteen years out of date and the footpaths no longer existed. The going was worse than I had believed possible. We were continually climbing mountain-sides so steep that we had to haul ourselves up by roots and saplings and lower ourselves down the other side with rattan lines, and the only 'level' places were valleys full of enormous boulders covered with a treacherous layer of creepers and moss. Direction finding in the jungle is surely more difficult than anywhere else in the world. I had carefully worked out a route on the 1-inch map, but as soon as we attempted to walk on a certain bearing we would inevitably be driven off our course by a mountain torrent which we could not cross until we had found a tree-fall bridge, by impenetrable bamboo or thorn thickets, by steep rocky outcrops, swamps, and fallen trees. Moreover, in the dense jungle which limited visibility to about 50 yards there was no object on which to march, so that we had to watch the compass continually; and even if a landslide or fallen tree provided a loophole through which we could obtain a view, we merely saw one blue tree-covered hill behind another fading into the distance, and there was no way of identifying any one of these monotonous features with the myriad mountains shown on the map.

Although we had cut our loads down to a minimum, concentrated rations had not been available in Malaya and we had had to take tinned food and an emergency ration of sugar, oatmeal, and biscuit. We carried no tent or blankets or even sweaters; but on the other hand,

as we might need them on the other side, we had to take Tommy-guns, grenades, and pistols. Our loads were thus about 25 lb. each and Tommy-guns, though excellent for gangsters to use from high-powered cars in the streets of Chicago, are certainly the most awkward things in the world to carry in thick jungle.

It rained—if one can use so mild a word—almost continuously and one of the worst results of this was that our matches, in spite of elaborate precautions, soon disintegrated so that we could no longer cook our meals, dry our clothes, keep ourselves warm at night, or, worst of all, keep at bay the voracious insects of the jungle. I had always imagined it was warm in the tropical jungle, but at night, though we made leaf shelters and wore all our clothes, we shook with cold beneath our sodden groundsheets, and in the mornings our faces would be so swollen with the bites of mosquitoes and sand-flies that we had to bathe them in cold water before we could even open our eyes. Worst of all were the leeches; every night we had to remove some dozens of these revolting bloated creatures from the most tender parts of our bodies, and apart from the irritation of the bites, the loss of blood was considerable.

We had eaten up the heavy tinned food in the first few days and now we found that the rain had melted most of the sugar and reduced the biscuit to sodden pulp. For the last week of the journey our daily ration was two spoonfuls of raw oatmeal each. Our hands and faces were a network of cuts and scratches and our bodies covered with sores from leech bites or the abrasion of sodden clothes which were by now in rags. I had not the faintest idea where we were and even began to doubt the compass—always the last resort of incompetent travellers—and to fear that we were really moving north or south along the axis of the Main Range. For this reason, if for no other, there seemed little point in turning back and anyway we hoped against hope that our friends were still waiting for us on the other side.

On the eleventh day, on the summit of a high ridge, we found traces of a small path running westward and next day it led us down to the head of the pipe-line on the Bernam river—miraculously the very spot for which we had been making—and we soon fell in with some friendly Malays who took us down to their *kampong* and gave us a wonderful meal of rice and curry. That night we reached the jungle hideout where we hoped that Vanrenan's party would still be living; but, alas, we were disappointed and our miserable journey had been in vain.

By questioning the Chinese, we were gradually able to piece together what had happened. After I had left the others they had started, with the help of some Chinese coolies, to carry the stores back into the jungle. Suddenly one evening, a man came running up the side road to say that the Japs were just coming, and both Chinese and white men took refuge in the jungle. Next morning when Vanrenan returned, he found that every single case had been looted by the coolies—his weapons, demolitions, food, even the wireless. There he was, apparently deserted by his leader—for I had failed to keep the rendezvous

—without stores and equipment, and with the Japs already pouring down the main road through Tanjong Malim. His only course was to take to the jungle and try to catch up with the retreating British forces.<sup>2</sup>

At first it looked as if we had no other course but to follow their example, but that night—it was now January 30—we made a surprise raid on the coolie lines and managed to recover most of the military stores though the food had already been devoured. We then had to persuade the leader of the Chinese to maintain us in our jungle hideout in order that we could operate against the Japanese.

For the next fortnight, until February 14, we operated almost every night against the Japanese who were rushing men and equipment, by night and day, down the road and railway towards Singapore. In that time the three of us managed to wreck seven trains, to cut the railway in about sixty places including demolishing fifteen bridges, and to damage or destroy some forty motor vehicles; we also killed or wounded between five and fifteen hundred Japs. One of our chief troubles was that we never had time to stop and count, but had to rely on Chinese reports to assess results; but after the surrender, when I returned to Malaya as a Civil Affairs Officer, I was able to substantiate these figures by questioning Malays and Chinese who had been forced to work for the Japanese, and I also discovered—and this was perhaps our most valuable achievement—that the Japs, being under the impression that there were two hundred Australians operating in the jungle, had stopped two thousand front-line troops at Tanjong Malim especially to hunt us down.

Before we started operations I made a map enlargement of the area and we soon got to know every footpath and short cut within our target area; but we made a point of never operating within five miles of our valley, so as to protect the Chinese on whom we depended. This made great demands upon us, especially as our limiting factor was the amount of explosive the three of us could carry. As we dared not leave our hideout until dusk and it took all the hours of darkness to lay the charges, we soon found ourselves returning from operations in daylight and so had to disguise ourselves as Indians, using a potent mixture of potassium permanganate, iodine, coffee, and lampblack, and wearing a head-cloth, shirt, and *dhoti* like a Tamil rubber tapper. Harvey, fortunately, could speak Tamil—indeed he smelt like one too, for the dogs which barked furiously at Sartin and myself took no notice at all of him. Sometimes we would meet Japanese cycle patrols searching for us, but luckily the Japs, in spite of all their talk about equality, insisted that all other races must cover their faces and bow low on meeting a Japanese, and this we found a most convenient dispensation.

<sup>2</sup> The Chinese wireless operator went his own way and the three planters got out by boat to Sumatra and thence to Singapore. Hembry was ill but the other two, hearing that I had still intended to reach Tanjong Malim, returned just before the fall of Singapore to look for me. Unfortunately they were caught by the Japanese. A year later they managed to escape, but on being recaptured were beheaded.

On the railway we usually used pressure switches which were set off by the weight of the engine so that it would thus blow itself up while we were safely on our way home or indeed already asleep on the following day, for after a time the Japanese ceased to use the railway at night—presumably for fear of the two hundred Australians. We also placed several small charges on either side of the main demolition to be fired by delayed-action time-pencils so that breakdown gangs would be discouraged from working with too much zeal.

Things did not always work quite so simply as this. One night we were just setting a charge beneath the line when Sartin packed the pressure-switch too hard against the lower surface of the rail and set it off. Only a dud cap saved us from going up with the 10 lb. of gun-cotton. Just before dawn we were laying our last charge, consisting of the rest of our explosive, on a small girder bridge. Suddenly we heard a train approaching from the north and realised we should at last be able to see the results of one of our demolitions. But by the time we had found the pliers and the box of detonators and packed up all our gear the train was already bearing down upon us and, as we had no desire to be run over as well as blown up, we started racing down the small track beside the line. As the train—not unnaturally—seemed to be gaining on us, we dashed into the jungle, only to be immersed up to our elbows in a foul swamp where we stood immobilised, holding our Tommy-guns above the water. Suddenly there was a blinding flash followed by a shattering explosion, and bits of train and rail and—we hoped—Jap flew through the air and landed all round us. But something had gone wrong (we afterwards discovered that the approaching train had displaced one of the charges) and the train came on, clanking and hissing with escaping steam and lighting us up as it passed. It groaned to a standstill a few yards beyond us and some Japs, bristling with Tommy-guns and flashing torches in every direction, walked past in front of us to examine the wrecked bridge and to collect their companions who had been riding in the brake-van. Then the whole party and the terrified Tamil drivers abandoned the train and set off down the line while we extricated ourselves from the swamp, regretting that we had no explosive left to finish the job. As dawn was at hand we waded some distance up a stream—for the Japs were using Alsatian police-dogs to track us down—and lay up in the jungle until we thought it safe to return through the rubber estates to our camp.

As the Japs were now picketing the railway line we turned our attention to the main road, though there was not nearly a large enough force to carry out a successful ambush against M.T. However, we soon developed a technique which was fairly effective. We would choose a site where the road ran through a small cutting and stop the leading vehicle of the convoy with a home-made bomb consisting of 5 lb. of gelignite inside a bamboo. This was left in the middle of the road and set off by a pull-switch. As soon as the second and with luck the third lorry had crashed into the wreckage of the first, we would open up with our Tommy-guns, then throw a number of home-made

bombs into the medley. These consisted of a stick of gelignite inside a large section of bamboo filled with rubble off the road or railway—which meant that we did not have to carry grenades all the way from our camp. As we lay flat while the bombs exploded, we changed the magazines of our Tommy-guns, then fired another volley and raced away into the jungle or rubber along tracks we had previously reconnoitred. The whole operation only took about twenty seconds, and the Japs who, judging by the time they took to retaliate, kept all their weapons underneath the seat of the last lorry of the convoy, would then start to fire into the jungle though they could not possibly have seen any target. Then, presumably to keep up their courage, they would start plastering the jungle with rifle, machine-gun, and mortar fire until we were quite frightened by the noise as we made our way back to the camp.

As well as these operations on the road and railway, we climbed up to and cut a great many telephone wires and also destroyed a number of stationary vehicles by crawling up and attaching delayed-action magnetic bombs to their engines.

After a fortnight of this work we decided to return to our original camp near Tras. We were completely exhausted and were already beginning to relax those extra precautions on which the very life of a guerilla depends; and Sartin, the Regular, was finding this kind of warfare so irregular that he was having nightmares. Also we had used over 1000 lb. of explosive and had practically none left; and the Japs were harrying the neighbouring kampongs to such an extent that we felt to remain any longer was not fair to the Chinese who were so nobly helping us.

Accordingly, on February 15—the very day Singapore fell, but we did not discover it until afterwards—we set off by road over the Gap to Sungei Sempam. This involved a 60-mile walk, but nothing would have persuaded us to retrace our steps over the Main Range. As we left Tanjong Malim, we bade *adieu* to the Japs by setting a large charge of explosive on the railway line. Soon afterwards a train approached from the south and we had the great satisfaction of seeing it blow itself up. But the Japs, presumably imagining they had insufficient troops there to deal with the tough Australians, had sent to Kuala Kubu for reinforcements and these soon came roaring up the road in seven lorries. It was quite easy for us to take cover in the rubber beside the road, but when they returned some hours later they came upon us rather suddenly and we dashed into the side only to find ourselves impaled on a barbed-wire fence surrounding a patch of seedling rubber. We kept absolutely still however, and the lorries passed without incident though we were brilliantly floodlit by their headlights. Later the same night a convoy passed as we were walking through a deep cutting and we were nearly run over as we lay motionless in the gutter.

We slept in the Rest House at the Gap—on the principle that this would be the last place the Japs would search for us—and on the third day reached our original camp at Sungei Sempam.

We now learned that Singapore had fallen, and realising that it would be a matter of years, not months, before the Japs were expelled from Malaya, determined to get in touch with the other two parties, then cross by bicycle to the west coast and try to procure a boat in which to sail across to India or Ceylon with the north-east monsoon. After a week at the camp we were joined by Garden and Haywood, who had walked over from their camp near Karak 30 miles down the road. By this time we had procured some bicycles and I cycled down with them to their camp in order to give Chrystal, Robinson, and Quayle—the three other members of Garden's party—the option of trying to get out of the country with us or hibernating in the jungle until the British should return.

We had no misadventures on the road, though we had to cycle right through Bentong where there was a Japanese garrison. I had no difficulty in persuading Garden's party to throw in their lot with us and after securing more bicycles we returned to Sungei Sempam, thus making our numbers up to eight. We tried to contact Captain Stubbington's party up at Dong, but there was no sign of them<sup>3</sup>, so, carrying 100 lb. of provisions for the boat journey on the back of each bicycle, we set off for the coast. As a patrol of eight cyclists is too unwieldy to be safe, four of us left on the night of March 8 and the other four were to follow two nights later. The rendezvous was to be our old camp at Tanjung Malim.

Unfortunately the machines were in shocking condition and after two of them had completely broken down, Haywood and I pushed on to obtain some spare parts, leaving Chrystal and Robinson to wait in the jungle just south of Sangka Dua. At Kuala Kubu, Haywood and I were stopped by a brilliant arc lamp fixed up above the road and shining towards us, but as no sentry was in sight and there was no other way of getting our heavily laden bicycles past we decided to 'shoot the rapids,' only hoping that there was no barricade across the road in the dense shadow beyond the lamp. All went well, though a Japanese sentry jumped to his feet as we passed by and shouted '*Hudu*'—whatever that means. There was no barricade and we sped away down the road without even being shot at.

We were a little anxious as we knew there was a Jap sentry-box a mile ahead where the Gap road meets the main west coast highway, but we had already passed this danger spot on the way out and were not unduly frightened. Jap sentries are most remarkable: there are usually two of them and they seem to keep themselves awake by telling stories in a loud voice or doing arms drill—anyway you can hear them at about half a mile; if there is one man alone on duty, he invariably seems to be a chain smoker and you can see the glowing butt of his

<sup>3</sup> It was only after the Japanese surrender that I learned that this party had already deserted their camp as they had been betrayed by Malays. They tried to get down the Pahang river, but on March 17 on an island near Temerloh they were surrounded by the Japanese. Stubbington, Rand, and Darby were killed in the ensuing engagement and Elkan and Pearson, who survived the war, were taken prisoner.



cigarette at several hundred yards. If they see you, they often flash a torch at you—so that they are quite blinded if they decide to use their rifles ; and if they do shoot, it does not matter very much as they are phenomenally bad marksmen.

On this occasion we came upon the sentry before we expected to and our aged bicycles betrayed our presence from afar. The Jap shone a torch on to us ; then, seeing we were Europeans,<sup>4</sup> dropped the torch and yelling at the top of his voice fired three or four times as we pedalled frantically along the road. As soon as we were round the corner, we stopped and cut the telegraph wires in case the Japs ahead of us should be given a chance to prepare a reception party, and went on our way. We reached Tanjong Malim after lying up for a day, but were very much afraid that the second party would come to grief as the road was alive with ominous night voices.

After a few days here we managed to get in touch with some Chinese Communist guerillas whose headquarters were at Ulu Slim some 20 miles north, and they sent a party of men to contact Chrystal and Robinson who, we later discovered, had been joined by Quayle whose bicycle had also broken down. These men returned with the disquieting news that three of the second party—Garden, Harvey, and Sartin—had been caught by the Japs, but as there was no definite news and this neighbourhood was most unsafe, Haywood and I went by mountainous jungle paths to join the Chinese guerillas at Slim, where Chrystal, Robinson, and Quayle joined us in early April.

By now we had missed the north-east monsoon and had to reconcile ourselves to remaining in the country for at least another year. There was still no news of the other three so, leaving Chrystal, Robinson, and Quayle to run the training establishment which we had started for the Perak guerillas, Haywood and I set off to try to contact the guerilla central headquarters which was reported to be in Selangor, hoping to pick up some news of the prisoners and even to attempt a rescue as we passed through Kuala Kubu.<sup>5</sup> One of the guerilla leaders who had been at our school at Singapore had come up to the Slim camp to see me in answer to a letter I had sent to their headquarters from Tanjong Malim, and he asked us to visit his camp near Batu Caves and help to train the Selangor guerillas.

The airline distance between these two camps was only 50 miles, but we must have walked five times that distance, following remote jungle paths by day, and at night coming out and walking through the rubber and along side roads. The journey took us exactly a fortnight and we often travelled for ten or twelve hours at a stretch.

In the Batu Caves camp, as well as about seventy Chinese including

<sup>4</sup> After the surrender we gave up disguising ourselves as natives so that, if we were caught, we could pass ourselves off as honest soldiers who had been cut off and thus might be treated as prisoners of war instead of being beheaded at once as spies.

<sup>5</sup> We heard no news of them until the war was over when Garden and Sartin turned up on the Siam railway. Harvey, alas, was beheaded at the same time as Vanrenan and Graham.

a few girls, there were six British soldiers who were suffering from beri beri and were in a very poor way. They were, alas, all to die before the year was out, not of any specific disease but simply because they lacked the right mental attitude.

While we were in this camp it was attacked by the Japanese, but we had some warning as a Malay had been seen snooping round the camp and the whole party migrated during the night. I took the opportunity of lying up nearby and watching the Japs carry out this attack. Several hundred Japs, Malays, and Indians approached the camp at earliest dawn and plastered it with mortar and machine-gun fire; they then entered the camp and set the *atap* huts alight. We learned later that the lorries which brought the troops removed all the inhabitants of two Chinese kampongs who had helped the guerillas and, after being made to dig their own graves, the whole party—men, women and children—were shot or bayoneted to death.

One of the great drawbacks of living in the guerilla camps was that, as we had no wireless, we heard absolutely no news of what was happening in the rest of the world. There were rumours that Burma and Sumatra had been captured, but we did not believe things could be as bad as all that; but when the Jap newspapers said that Ceylon and Australia were about to fall, we could bear it no longer and decided to cycle over the Ginting Sempah to Haywood's old camp near Karak where we had hidden a receiving set in the jungle.

Accordingly, accompanied by three Chinese, we left Batu Caves on May 1, 1942, with a 50-mile ride ahead of us. There was a brilliant moon and on the far side of the pass we could free-wheel as fast as in daylight. The fragrance of the tropical night was particularly exhilarating after the depressing jungle camps. We passed a good many Chinese cycling in the opposite direction, but the Japs had imposed a curfew and we ignored each other's presence on the road.

As we had had some trouble with the machines, our party was straggled over several miles of road—always the danger of night cycling—and I was waiting astride my machine for one of the Chinese to catch up. Suddenly three cyclists overtook me, and as one of them came alongside I saw that he was a Malay policeman and that he had a shot-gun across his handlebars. I could easily have shot him with my revolver as he attempted to seize my handlebars, but in those days I was not thinking in terms of fighting the Malays and I merely knocked his hand away, at the same time shouting to Haywood who was waiting in front. As we pedalled at full speed down the road, the Malay shot four times and his third shot burst my back tyre and injured the calf of my left leg. I managed to hold on to Haywood, and catching up the other two Chinese, we halted as soon as we came to a patch of shadow across the road and clambered a short distance up the bank to lie in wait for the Malays. They soon came round the corner and we dropped the first one with our revolvers; but he was a very brave man and before crawling off into the jungle he had another two shots at us at point-blank range. Luckily his bicycle was undamaged and

taking that in place of my own we abandoned the remaining Chinese and continued our way. My leg was bleeding profusely, but it was only a flesh wound so we put on a first field dressing, and as I could not pedal, I held on to one of the others for the rest of the journey and shortly before dawn we reached the edge of the jungle near Haywood's old camp at Sungei Gow. As soon as it was light enough the others excavated my wound—fortunately I fainted, so did not feel the pain—and extracted a half-inch nut. Apparently the Malay had made up his own cartridges!

When at last we reached the camp, I collapsed with pneumonia and malaria, and Haywood soon fell ill too. For the next two months we were just as ill as it is possible to be without actually dying. Luckily our crises occurred at different times, so we were able to nurse each other. Apparently I was a very good patient though I do not remember much about it; indeed I was unconscious for seventeen days on end. As I recovered, Haywood got worse and worse and his uncontrollable rigors would be succeeded by fits of violent delirium. Our temperatures, which would be several degrees below normal in the morning, would be as much as 10 degrees higher by nightfall. Why we did not die I do not know, but our lives were probably saved by a Chinese *towkay* from Karak who used to keep us supplied with fresh fruit and tinned milk and a certain amount of rather weak quinine water.

About the middle of July the *towkay* appeared at our camp with two other Chinese. These were the leaders of the guerilla camp near Kampong Menchis 20 miles south of us, and they suggested that we should join their camp and in return we could give them any surplus arms and explosives we had and also set up a school to train the Pahang guerillas. This seemed an excellent idea, but whereas I was already recovering my strength and putting on some of the four or five stones I had lost, Haywood was still unable to walk and looked quite ghastly with bloodless lips and hollow cheeks. But they soon agreed to carry both of us, if necessary, to the road, then to provide a car to take us down the road to Menchis. They assured us that this was absolutely safe as the Japanese had not once used this road at night since the fall of Singapore five months previously.

Next day a stretcher party arrived and Haywood was carried down to the road. I found I could easily walk at this slow speed and on the second day we reached a Chinese rubber estate just south of Karak where we found a small Morris 8 awaiting us. All our personal gear was strapped on to the carrier; Haywood and I and a Chinese squeezed into the back, three more sat in front, and two armed with Tommy-guns stood on the running-boards. Soon we were rushing along the main road in a tunnel of light which showed the tall elephant grass and behind it patches of rubber alternating with virgin jungle. This easy progress through the fragrant tropical night was particularly satisfactory after our recent vicissitudes, and we lay back against the cushions to enjoy it.

Suddenly we saw the headlights of an approaching car. This could mean only one thing. We discovered later that one of the Chinese who had visited our camp—not a guerilla—had informed the Japs at Bentong what we were up to and they, having abandoned an ambush farther down the road, were even now returning to Bentong. Had we started half an hour later, we should have missed them.

One of the Chinese shouted excitedly, 'Japun! Japun!' I suppose we ought to have stopped at once or driven off the road into the jungle and then abandoned the car, but I did not think of that till afterwards and our driver seemed mesmerised by the oncoming lights. I remembered that Haywood could hardly walk, much less run, so I told him to get out of the car the moment we stopped and lie in the ditch; I would try to create a diversion, and then he might crawl away—the sort of stupid thing one thinks of on the spur of the moment. Soon we stopped violently to avoid crashing into the lorry which had pulled across the road, and with a yell of triumph the Japs started leaping out on to the road. The Chinese burst out of the Morris and started to run into some half-cleared land on the left of the road. I got out last, clutching two grenades from which Haywood had already pulled out the pins. I then hurled the grenades into the crowded lorry and crawled beneath the Morris to take cover as they burst. (After the surrender I heard that there were forty-two Japs in the lorry, of which my grenades killed eight and wounded many more.) As the Japs were already lining the edge of the road between me and my companions, I had to make for the rubber on the right of the road and in so doing had to run across the path of the Jap headlights; thus I not only received the full attention of the Japs but was in the line of fire of the Chinese who had opened up from the clearing on the other side of the road. A bullet passed right through my forearm—luckily missing both bones—and another cut the cartilage where my left ear joins my head and grazed my cheek bone. Oddly enough I was not aware of the arm wound until some time later when I found it would not work, but thinking I had been shot right through the head and must soon lose consciousness I hastily scratched a hole in the ground and buried my diaries and intelligence summaries which I carried in the pouches of my web equipment.

By now the noise of battle was deafening and the night was lit up with bursts of flame. The Japs were firing with rifle, Tommy-gun, machine-gun, and mortar, and somebody was shouting at the top of his voice. I tried to work my way round so as to cross the road and rejoin my friends, as I was afraid that once Haywood reached the thick jungle beyond the clearing I should have the greatest difficulty in finding him again. Also I was not sure how long I myself could carry on without help. Suddenly a mortar bomb burst beside me and I was thrown violently against a tree. Once again I was surprised to find myself still alive—and apparently in one piece—and soon afterwards I ran across the road and through the clearing beyond until I saw the flash of a Tommy-gun in front of me. This turned out to be one of

the Chinese, luckily the only one who could speak any English. He had had the end of one thumb shot off but was otherwise unhurt. He told me that Haywood had fallen at the very beginning of the engagement and that he had lost touch with all the others, who had probably run out of ammunition by now. As the Japs seemed to be systematically raking the ground with mortar fire, we crawled down a dry ditch and eventually met the road again some way to the south of the battle. The Japs were still firing furiously; indeed they continued to do so until we were out of hearing.

We put a first field dressing on my arm and tucked it into the braces of my webbing out of the way. My clothes were soaked with blood and I was suffering from acute dysentery, but I felt that as long as we kept on the smooth level road I could go on putting one foot in front of the other indefinitely. My companion said we still had 14 miles to go to Kampong Menchis, but once there we could probably lie up for a few days in a Chinese house at the edge of the jungle.

We had gone a short distance when we were suddenly halted at a barricade across the road. These were Chinese police working for the Japs, but luckily the guerillas had a gentleman's agreement with them and we were not stopped, though we had to turn back and make our way round the post through a maze of vegetable gardens and paddy fields. Here we lost ourselves and were delayed about an hour so that it was already dawn as we skulked past the police station at Menchis and made our way through the rubber to a Chinese house at the edge of the jungle. Here I had a bath and was provided with a coolie's baggy trousers and jacket. After a large meal of rice with morsels of pork and salt-fish, I was given a little bed close under the *atap* roof and fell asleep hoping to stay there for some time.

After about an hour however, I was woken up to be told that the Japs were already searching the village and we must set out at once for the guerilla camp. Normally this was a three hours' walk—about three miles on the map—but in my exhausted state I found it almost impossible to keep going and as soon as we came to a hill I just had not the strength to walk up it and had to be helped along. The journey took about nine hours and I reached the camp in a state of collapse. The survivors of the motor car party straggled into the camp for the next few days, but two of the Chinese had lost their lives in the engagement and I heard quite definitely that Haywood had been shot through the chest and had died at once.

It was on July 13, 1942, that I joined the Pahang guerillas. I was to stay with them for more than a year and in that time, save for one week, I was to see no other white man. No. 6 Independent Anti-Japanese Regiment—to give the full title of the West Pahang guerillas—was one of the last to be formed, and whereas the other five groups (No. 1 in Selangor; No. 2, Negri Sembilan; No. 3, North Johore; No. 4, South Johore; No. 5, Perak) had all been built up round the nucleus of men and weapons put in by my department at Singapore, this group had grown up on its own since the fall of Singapore. Consequently

they were not so well armed as the others and were singularly lacking in military knowledge. Indeed the Chinese, though incredibly brave, are surely the most unmilitary nation in the world. It was with the utmost difficulty that we could teach some of the recruits to march in step, and many of them were constitutionally incapable of closing one eye in order to sight a rifle. Nor have I ever met men with so little regard for the normal principles of safety. On the other hand, they showed remarkable fortitude in living year after year away from their families in these jungle camps, subsisting on extremely poor food, suffering from horrible jungle ulcers and fevers, and often being attacked by Japanese columns who were infinitely better armed and trained.

Although the guerillas were organised by the old Malayan Communist Party, they were by no means all Communists; indeed many of them, mostly rubber-tappers, tin-mining coolies, and vegetable gardeners, had just taken to the jungle to 'have a crack' at the Jap. Thus it was that when they found themselves subjected to strict discipline and were not allowed—for security reasons—to return to their kampongs, many of them deserted and even turned informer. Central headquarters was a nebulous but all powerful body which I tried unsuccessfully to contact for over a year, and each group had its own headquarters which controlled the four or five patrols in its area. The Menchis patrol consisted of about a hundred men and six or seven girls, organised into a headquarters and sections of twelve men as well as runners, cooks, propaganda workers, etc. The girls were prepared to fight—like their sisters in the 8th Route Army in China—but as there were never enough weapons to go round, they spent their time nursing the sick, helping in the kitchen, or teaching Mandarin—the *lingua-franca* of the camps. An enormous amount of energy was put into political propaganda both in and outside the camps, and the greatest attraction for many of the men was that they received a free education. The discipline of the camps was magnificent—though it was that of Boy Scouts rather than soldiers—and the standards of honesty and morality were extraordinarily high.

I was an honorary member of headquarters and got on extremely well with them, especially as I resolutely refused ever to discuss politics. My job was to give military instruction and to help with the propaganda—to assure them that the British would come back sooner or later and meanwhile they must husband their resources and prepare for the time when they could actively assist the invading army. I even published a paper called *Truth: a Newspaper for all English-speaking Malaysians*. This was duplicated in the camp press and distributed widely outside; but in one issue I published an article on India which smacked too much of imperialism, and that was the end of *Truth*.

The wound in my arm completely recovered after one of the girls had applied a dressing of herbs, and for a whole year I was perfectly fit and used to go out hunting daily. Indeed the amount of fresh meat that I produced—deer, pig, and above all monkey—was probably my

greatest contribution to the life of the camp for we were usually very short of food. The camps were usually in the hills, three or four hours' walk—though probably only as many miles in a straight line—from the nearest Chinese kampong where rice and vegetables were grown for the guerillas, but as soon as anyone was missing from the camp or there was any trouble outside, we would have to migrate to another area and establish our food lines anew. For this reason the Menchis patrol moved five times during the year and eventually settled down in the hills near Mentakab. When things were going well we lived on rice, usually diluted with sweet-potato or tapioca, and a variety of vegetables cooked in coconut oil and salt, and an occasional meal of salt-fish, fowls, or pork ; but after an attack or alarm we had to make do with tapioca and various jungle leaves. Fish were plentiful in the jungle and at certain times we used to poison them with *tuba* root or catch them by an ingenious Chinese method of damming up and draining whole sections of the river.

As long as I was well, my chief trouble was lack of reading material. I also suffered from an acute sense of frustration. In the first place, on any previous expedition I had always made collections for the British Museum or Kew ; but here, as I had no previous knowledge of Malayan flora or fauna, I had no idea whether an insect or bird that I saw was one of the commonest species or new to science. I did indeed make collections of insects and plants, and filled several notebooks with observations of the jungle birds, but somehow these always fell into the hands of the Japs. Again, although the guerilla leaders were only too glad that I should train their junior commanders, yet, being Communists, they were not at all keen to take a British officer into their confidence and as I was entirely dependent on them I was virtually their prisoner. Then the Jap, as I had proved, was a perfect target for guerillas, yet I not only had to restrain myself but had to teach the Chinese patience too. Another difficulty was the lack of information about what was happening in the rest of the world. We had no wireless sets in the camps and the Jap news, though I could discount most of it as propaganda, was unspeakably depressing. According to the English papers published by the Japs, Burma had fallen within a month (this I did not believe, though of course it was true) ; the Netherlands East Indies and Philippines had gone ; Australia had surrendered (this I did believe, but fortunately it turned out not to be true) ; the Japs had taken all China ; they had landed in Ceylon, and most of India had been evacuated ; the Germans had broken through the Caucasus, and the British Government had been bombed out and had gone to Canada. So when it came to planning an escape from Malaya, where was there left to go ? I had amassed a vast amount of information about conditions in Malaya which I knew would be of enormous value if only I could get it to the right quarters, but with my ignorance of the customs and languages of the country—though I had learnt to speak kampong Malay—it was essential that I should get in touch with other Europeans before I could make any plans to escape.

I had occasionally had letters from the three of my original party up in Perak and I heard that Pat Noone, the ethnologist, was also with them ; but the Chinese said it was out of the question for me to attempt to rejoin them.

Then, when I was on a visit of instruction to the neighbouring guerilla patrol near Triang, I had a letter from two Europeans at Palong in north Johore. These men were living in a bandit camp there, and as the guerillas wished to 'convert' these men—and at the same time get some of their weapons—I was allowed to go south and visit them. The normal route from Triang to Palong took three weeks and traversed the Tasek Bera, a Malay infested swamp which was quite unsafe for me. Accordingly I worked out my own route from a small-scale map which was all we had and eventually got there on New Year's Day 1943.

In the bandit camp I found Cotterill and Tyson, two old Malayan hands who had originally been left behind with a wireless set at Sungei Lembing to report on the advance of the Japanese. Unfortunately Tyson died of pneumonia while I was there, and Cotterill was not interested in my escape plans. I had hoped that from here I might be able to get in touch with some Europeans who were rumoured to be living in south Johore, but as the bandits had no communications to the south I returned to Triang and then to Mentakab.

Here I received a letter from Mr. Baker, late manager of P.C.C.L. tin mines, who, with his sister Nona Baker, was living in the jungle near Sungei Lembing. But the messengers had taken three months over the journey and it was impossible for me to return with them.

In the middle of June 1943 I accepted an invitation to go and instruct the guerillas in Negri Sembilan, and my secret hope was that I should be able to proceed from there to Johore. Unfortunately these guerillas, whose camps were near Titi and Pertang, had raided some of the smaller police stations and had even ambushed a force of puppet Malay and Indian troops. As a result of this the Japanese carried out a series of most determined raids against these camps which unfortunately coincided with my visit. As I approached the headquarters camp with guides, I was shot at by a jittery sentry under the impression that I was a Sikh, and in the nine days that I stayed with the Negri guerillas we were attacked seven times by the Japs, for the jungle here is too small for safety and columns of Japs with Indian and Malay troops approached both from east and west. We tried to escape southward and join the guerillas at Bahau, but finding that impossible the whole patrol eventually migrated northwards and joined up with the Pahang guerillas. While we were on the run, we had practically no food except tapioca supplied by the aborigines, and as I was again suffering from severe malaria after a year's immunity from any sort of sickness except jungle ulcers, I was only too glad when we rejoined my original friends near Menchis.

It was early in September 1943 that I was given a vague message by the leader of the Pahang guerillas saying that somebody wanted to see



me in the north of Perak and that I should go up to the guerilla headquarters near the Cameron Highlands as soon as I was fit enough to travel. As there was some talk of the guerillas there having got some new kind of small Tommy-gun (obviously the Sten-gun) I guessed that at last communications had been established with India.

It took me over a month to reach Slim, as I had frequent attacks of malaria and found the greatest difficulty in climbing uphill—this was also probably due to two years of low diet—and when I got there I went down with blackwater fever and was extremely ill for two months. At last, on Christmas Day 1943, when I had been in the jungle exactly two years, I reached a camp near Bidor and met two Englishmen and some Chinese who had got into Malaya by submarine from Ceylon.

These men were Davis of the Malayan Police and Broome<sup>6</sup> of the Malayan Civil Service, both fluent Chinese speakers. They belonged to Force 136 which had taken over the military establishment with which the three of us had been connected at Singapore. As representatives of S.E.A.C., they had been sent to try to contact any resistance groups still active in Malaya and incidentally to discover the fate of the stay-behind parties. I handed over my 'command' to Davis and it was due to his and Broome's skill and energy rather than to my abortive efforts that such good relations were soon established with the Chinese guerillas, who now became known as A.J.U.F. (the Anti-Japanese Union and Forces) and later M.P.A.J.A. (the Malayan People's Anti-Japanese Army).

Davis, Broome, and I were later joined by Quayle who, it will be remembered, had stayed with the Perak guerillas. Robinson had died of fever in September 1943 and Chrystal had crossed the Main Range and was living with non-Communist guerillas near Gua Musang, Noone had also left the Perak camps and was reported to be living with the Sakai, the aborigines of the Malayan jungle, on whom he was an expert.

A few days after my arrival at Davis's camp near Bidor, a representative arrived from guerilla headquarters and the terms of co-operation were arranged. The guerillas were to help S.E.A.C. against the Japanese until peace and order had been established, and in return British liaison officers were to train and arm them in their jungle camps. There were now three things for us to do: to establish wireless communication with our headquarters at Colombo; to bring in more men and supplies; and to arrange for one or more of our party to get out of the country by submarine and make a detailed report. And, of course, the last two of these depended on the first.

In the various submarine sorties, Davis and Broome had brought in at least four wireless sets of one sort or another and these had been hidden on the west coast where they had landed. When they had made their way through the wide coastal plain to the mountains, the Japs were already after them and they had been unable to carry any

<sup>6</sup> Later Colonel J. L. H. Davis, C.B.E., D.S.O., and Colonel R. N. Broome, M.C.

wireless gear with them ; and it was many months before the Chinese, who were singularly inefficient when it came to getting a job done, were able to bring any of this equipment up from the coast to our camp. When at last a set did arrive, it was found to be sodden with water and useless, and a second set was irreparably damaged. Then in May 1944 the Japs attacked our camp, and though there was no loss of life, all our batteries and a generator were captured. Thus, for one reason or another, it was not until November 5, 1944, that we were even able to receive the ordinary broadcasts, and it was February 1945 before we were able to generate enough power to transmit—and it still seems a minor miracle to me that after eighteen months' silence we were picked up by our headquarters in Ceylon. During this time, though we were still living with the guerillas, we were extremely short of food and all in turn suffered from jungle ulcers, dysentery, and intermittent attacks of malaria and other fevers. Worst of all was the sense of frustration in not being able to carry out our side of the bargain with the guerillas, and we were afraid that the war would be over before we could help them or strike a blow ourselves at the enemy.

In April 1944, when a succession of submarine rendezvous had failed and we were still without wireless, I determined to go in search of Noone, the ethnologist I have already mentioned, who was reported to be living with the Sakai in the north of Perak. In this area we were right in the Sakai country and they were, as always, most helpful. The Japs, with typical stupidity, had antagonised them by their barbarous and bullying methods, but the guerillas, on the other hand, had won their trust. In the days when the Japs had cut our food-lines we depended very much on the Sakai, who brought us large quantities of tapioca roots and sweet-potatoes and always had free access to the camps.

On this journey I travelled with one Chinese, and instead of following the guerilla route through the rubber and skirting the jungle edge, we went through Sakai country from Jor on the Cameron Highlands road right over the mountains to Kampong Jalong near Sungei Siput. All the way the Sakai acted as guides and we stayed in their houses at night and watched them trapping fish in the rivers and shooting squirrels and birds with their blow-pipes and poisoned arrows. The Sakai, like most really primitive people, are delightful companions, and once again I wished I were a trained ethnologist so that my journey would be of some scientific value.

At Jalong we had to come down from the mountains in order to follow the route up the Korbu river, and here we fell in with some Chinese. These men appeared to be friendly, though they took the precaution of confiscating our weapons, but I gradually realised that we were prisoners. When I discovered that they had dealings with the Japs as well as with the Communist guerillas, I came to the conclusion that we were probably being sold to the highest bidder : they were, indeed, nothing but a gang of bandits. They agreed to let my Chinese go, so I sent him back to our camp with a letter to Davis, and

at midnight on May 10, 1944, I managed to escape by doping my guards' coffee with morphia. (In those days we always carried a lethal dose in case we were captured by the Japs and knew we were going to be tortured.)

All that night I travelled barefooted so that the bandits could not track me and next day I passed Larek tin mine and crossed the watershed to the Sungei Chemor. I was trying to take a short cut to the route by which we had come and, failing that, I was searching for Sakai who could act as guides. At the end of a long day's travelling, I was wading down the Chemor river—often the easiest way of progress in thick jungle—when I saw to my delight two Sakai washing themselves in the river. As they are timid folk I waited until I was quite near, then hailed them in my best Malay. Suddenly, to my utter consternation, people appeared in every direction—and I realised I had walked right into the middle of a Japanese camp. Following their usual custom the Japs had captured some Sakai and were forcing them to reveal the whereabouts of the guerillas.

I was soon surrounded by a mob of the little yellow men—there were about a hundred Japs and twice as many Indian troops—and one of them hit me over the head with a rifle, but luckily the stock broke and it did not hurt. Then the officer in charge took me aside and started asking questions. I had a good deal to explain away and was particularly worried because in my rucksack was a diary. Luckily anything of security was written in Eskimo, but I had mentioned some Sakai by name and was most anxious not to get them into trouble. I explained that I *had* been working with the Chinese guerillas, but that when I found they were all Communists I had quarrelled with them and gone off to live with the Sakai. I told them how nice it was to be among civilised people again and that I should be only too glad to go back to Ipoh with them and tell them anything they wanted to know about the wicked Communists. I then managed to roll my diary up inside a handkerchief, transfer it under the eyes of the Japs into my pocket, and later throw it into the fire inside a faggot of bamboo with which I had lit my pipe.

That night I slept in the middle of a row of twenty Japanese beneath a canvas lean-to shelter. They made no attempt to tie my hands, but we were packed so closely that I could not turn over without touching the officers on either side of me. There was a brilliant bamboo fire a short distance away, and three sentries kept guard.

In the early hours of the morning I managed to loosen the awning behind my head. I then packed my blanket sleeping-bag with bits of equipment belonging to my companions, pushing a pair of boots well into the corners to resemble my feet. At the same time I edged further and further back. When none of the guards was actually looking at me, I gave a tremendous heave at the canvas and managed to force myself out into the night.

I crashed through a bamboo thicket, raced along a fallen tree, and slithered some distance down the river. Then I stopped to listen.

There was not a sound from the Japs ; probably they were listening too. I could make out enough stars to keep direction and went as far as I could that night. My intention was to return by the Sungei Chemor to the Larek mine and then to pick up my old track, but next day was cloudy and having no compass I somehow crossed over into the wrong valley and lost my way. For six days I wandered in the jungle, travelling hard during the daylight hours and lying up in a shelter of wild banana leaves at night. I had absolutely nothing to eat, but there was always plenty of water to drink and curiously enough I did not lose strength, though I became strangely light-headed as if the top of my skull were a foot higher than normal. I went barefooted so that the Japs could not track me, but I seemed to be wandering in circles and several times ran into their patrols though on each occasion I managed to see them before they saw me.

As I was unsuccessful in finding any Sakai, for they had all fled into the mountains, I determined to go to the edge of the jungle and get help from the first Chinese I should meet. I did this, but unfortunately at that time the Japanese were carrying out one of their organised massacres in the kampongs of this area and the Chinese, though they gave me a little rice and salt, were unable to help me further. After that I returned to the Japanese camp from which I had escaped and followed their track right over the mountains to the neighbourhood of Jalong. From here I got on to my outward track, but had no sooner set off home than I went down with malaria and for two weeks I lay terribly sick in an empty Sakai house. A Jap patrol actually entered this house while I was there and set it alight, but I had prepared a bolt hole and managed to crawl away into the jungle.

At last I was fit enough to travel again, but being still unable to retrace my path I had to go out once more and get help from the Chinese. This time I got in touch with the guerillas and after spending a month recovering from fever in one of their small camps at the edge of the jungle near Ipoh, I was at last fit enough to travel and returned to Davis's camp at the end of July 1944 after an absence of three and a half months.<sup>7</sup>

In the first two years after the fall of Singapore, with the exception of the ancient and vulnerable Catalina seaplane, there was no aircraft available in the Far Eastern theatre of war which was capable of flying from our nearest base (in India or Ceylon) to Malaya, dropping its load of stores or 'bodies,' and returning. That was why Davis and Broome had had to come in by submarine and even then only Dutch submarines had been available. But by the beginning of 1945 the new Mark 2 Liberator had reached India and once we had established wireless communication with Ceylon it was a fairly easy matter to arrange a 'drop.' On the last day of February 1945 two Liberators flew over and dropped four 'bodies' and a vast amount of stores on the level tin-mining area at the jungle edge outside our camp. Unfortunately I was recovering from a severe attack of tick-typhus at this time

<sup>7</sup> Nothing, I am sorry to say, has since been heard of Pat Noone.

and had to stay in camp, thus missing a most exciting moment as the little white mushrooms floated down in the still moonlight. We had to mobilise a hundred guerillas and as many Sakai to carry the stores up to our camp.

After this there was a revolutionary improvement in our health and it was wonderful to have books to read and to hear authentic news of what was happening in the rest of the world. Davis again met the representative of guerilla headquarters and the terms of co-operation were reaffirmed now that we could at last substantiate our promises.

The next task was for Broome and me to get to the coast and to keep a rendezvous with a submarine at Emerald Bay, Pulau Pangkor Laut. We left our camp at the end of April 1945 and crossed the plains to the Perak river, where the guerillas had arranged for a sampan. We then slipped past Bagan Datoh in broad daylight and made our way across the open sea to our rendezvous. The submarine picked us up according to schedule and on May 17 we landed at Trincomalee. I had been out of circulation for three years and four months and had been officially reported 'missing, believed killed.'

I found that the organisation which had started in such a small way before the fall of Singapore had now grown to enormous proportions. In Malaya alone, Liberators were daily dropping liaison officers and stores to the guerillas. By the time the surrender came there were fifty wireless sets sending out information night and day from the Malayan jungle, more than three hundred men had been dropped in, and a vast amount of weapons and stores. There were three thousand five hundred guerillas fully armed and trained and as many more trained as reserves. Yet every time a Liberator went to Johore, for instance, the flight there and back was equal to a crossing and a half of the Atlantic, and if the dropping zone was not identified the 'plane had to jettison its precious cargo in order to be able to return safely to its base.

I myself managed to find an excuse to return to Malaya. In the Pahang area that I knew so well our liaison officers were not getting enough co-operation from the guerillas and, as I personally knew all the leaders concerned, I felt that I could straighten the matter out. I had never done my parachute course, but it is obviously so unpleasant to drop through a hole in the bottom of a 'plane that it seemed to me there was no point in doing it more often than necessary, so on August 26, 1945, I did my first 'drop' near Raub and joined the Force 136 officers who were already there. We emerged from the jungle some months before the occupying troops arrived and had some difficulty in persuading the Japs that the war really was over.

Often in the small hours of the night I find myself wondering why I am still alive—I feel sure that some of you are now asking the same question—and the answer to that is in some ways the main justification for reading a paper of this sort to the Alpine Club. On Gino Watkins's second Greenland expedition our motto was: 'There is nothing either good or bad but thinking makes it so.' And that,

I am sure, is the answer. It is the mental attitude that matters and the knowledge of what the human frame can stand. There is one school of thought—that of the six British soldiers of whom I have already spoken—who see the jungle full of innumerable visible and invisible horrors—scorpions, snakes, and centipedes, deadly fevers, ferocious wild animals, and hostile natives. Then there is another, who think that the jungle is teeming with game, fish, and edible roots and fungi, and that bunches of bananas and pineapples drop into one's lap. Both these viewpoints are equally false; but the jungle does provide unlimited fresh water and cover where Englishmen as well as Japs may hide. It is the attitude of mind that is all important: the jungle itself is neutral—though admittedly it is an armed neutrality.

---

## GIBBON'S APPRECIATION OF MOUNTAINS

BY G. R. DE BEER, F.R.S.

**I**N that remarkable reconstitution of the catalogue<sup>1</sup> of Gibbon's library which Mr. Geoffrey Keynes has so successfully made, there is a plate reproducing a facsimile of a note in Gibbon's handwriting in which my eye alighted on the words 'mont Blanc'. In the whole of Gibbon's work, I was aware of only one other reference to the mountain, which is to be found in his *Journal*<sup>2</sup> when at Lausanne for April 3, 1764, where he commented on de La Condamine's estimate of the height of Mont Blanc, published in the *Mémoires de l'Académie des Sciences* for 1757.

On my asking Mr. Keynes if he knew when Gibbon had written the note reproduced in his book, he immediately lent me the original manuscript with characteristic generosity. The transcription of this manuscript note forms the subject of the present study, which is published by Mr. Keynes' kind permission.

The manuscript was purchased by Mr. Henry Long at Lausanne in June 1831 at the time of the sale of Dr. Frédéric Scholl's portion of Gibbon's library. It may have been inserted in a book.

As to the date at which it was written, all that can be said is that the latest of the works to which it refers, Christian Gottlieb Heyne's *P. Virgilius Maro varietate Lectionis et perpetua adnotatione illustrata*, Lipsiae, was first published in 1787. The other work referred to in the note, the French edition of William Coxe's Letters: *Lettres sur*

<sup>1</sup> *Edward Gibbon's Library*. A catalogue of his books. Jonathan Cape, London, 1940.

<sup>2</sup> *Journal de Gibbon à Lausanne*, publié par Georges Bonnard. Lausanne, 1945.