

Appendix A: British Surrender of Singapore Informational Text

British Surrender of Singapore in 1942

After the fall of Bukit Chandu on 14 February 1942, the Japanese attacked Alexandra Military Hospital. They killed over 320 staff and patients. To make matters worse, the Japanese continued their attacks on the British throughout the night.

By the morning of 15 February 1942, the situation in Singapore had become difficult for the British. There was only three days' worth of food. The main reservoirs were all in the hands of the Japanese. There were also many soldiers who were dead or injured from enemy bombing. This led General Percival to hold a meeting at 9.30 a.m. at Fort Canning with his senior commanders. He suggested two options. The British can either try attack the Bukit Timah region to take back the reservoirs and food supplies, or surrender to the Japanese. After a fierce discussion, everyone present agreed that it was not possible to beat the Japanese. They felt it was better to surrender.

A group of people was selected to go to the Japanese headquarters. It consisted of a senior staff officer, the colonial secretary and an interpreter. They set off towards the Japanese carrying the British flag and a white flag to discuss the terms of the surrender. However, they returned with orders that Percival himself and his staff officers had to go to the Ford Motor Factory, where General Yamashita would lay down the terms of surrender. A further requirement was that the Japanese flag had to be displayed on the tallest building in Singapore, the Cathay Building.

Percival officially surrendered to the Japanese shortly after 5.15 pm on 15 February 1942. The surrender of the British started a period of great suffering for the people of Singapore. Till today, some believe that the British should not have surrendered Singapore to the Japanese.

Passage adapted from:

Ho, S. (2013, July 19). *Battle of Singapore*. SingaporeInfopedia.

https://eresources.nlb.gov.sg/infopedia/articles/SIP_2013-07-19_113523.html