

## "SINGAPORE IS IMPREGNABLE"

### Fifteen Years of Work on a Fortress

ONE of the chief defences of Singapore is the fact that it has no enemy within several thousand miles. That fact does not allow the scale of its defences to be reduced in any way, but it does mean that a completely unexpected attack — a bolt from the blue—is highly improbable, if not impossible. And it also means that the difficulties of an attacker are very great, says a naval correspondent of the London "Observer."

Attacks on defended bases have in the past often been delivered from across an ocean; many examples in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries in the American Continent will occur to all. But military expeditions to-day are very much less self-supporting than they were in the days of Vernon or Wolfe. Whether naval or military they need a constant service of supply, and to maintain such a service over a distance of 3,000 miles is a tremendous tax on resources of even a first-class maritime Power.

### Large Calibre Guns

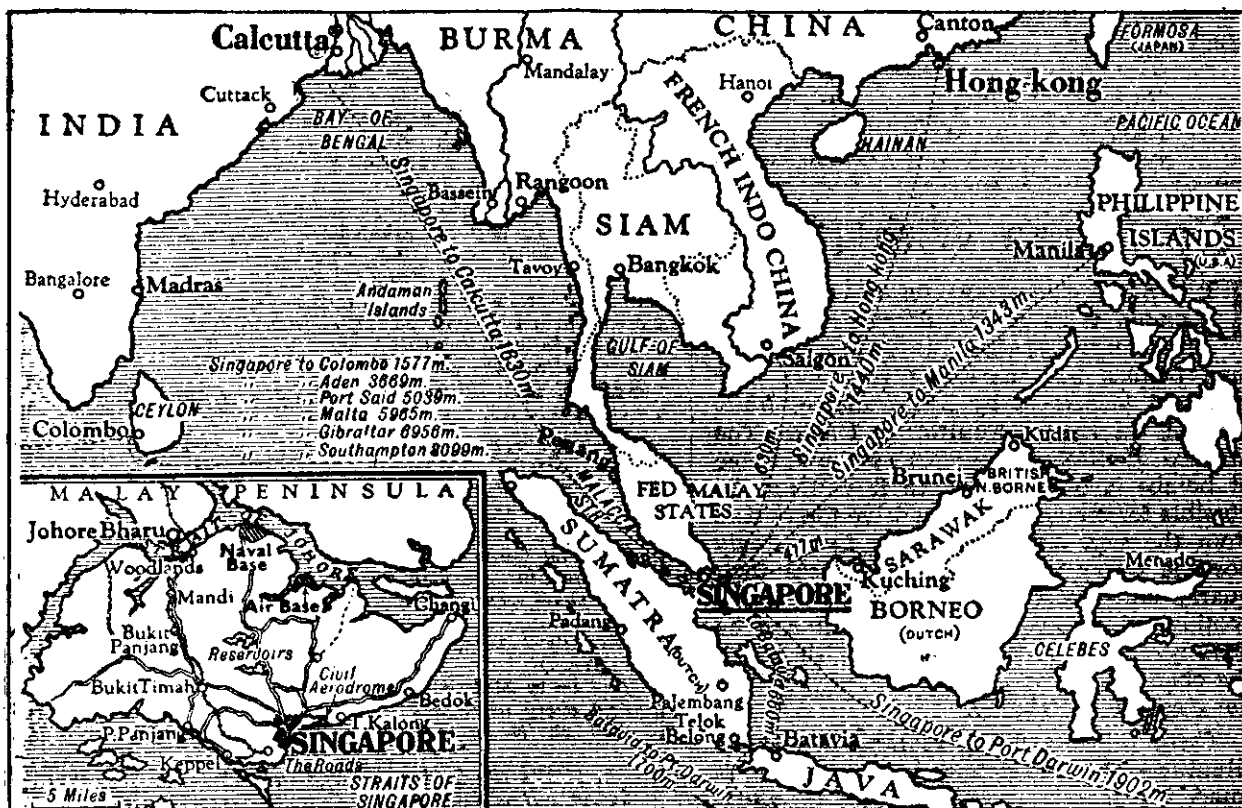
There have been defences at Singapore for a century past; but it was only when, in 1923, the establishment there of a modern naval base was undertaken that it became necessary to raise the scale of the defences to that of a first-class fortress, able to hold its own in the face of attacks of any magnitude.

This entailed the installation, it is understood, of guns of the heaviest calibre, capable of making it impossible even for heavily armoured ships-of-war to approach close enough to support by their gunfire any attempt at the capture of the island.

No details of these guns, of course, have been made public, but they have often been described in articles, in both British and American periodicals, by writers who profess to have some inside information about them. Most of them describe the biggest guns as being of large calibre.

Other guns of varying calibres are said to be mounted at various places, and there is no doubt that, whatever their actual calibre, Singapore is as strongly defended as any island fortress in the world.

The defences have been developed gradually over a period of fifteen years, during which the naval dockyard has been under construction. They include not only guns covering the seaward approaches, but also an adequate garrison of both military and air units.



### The R.A.F.

Besides the highly developed civil air port close to Singapore city, there is the Royal Air Force base on the north side of the island, facing the Johore Strait, not far from the naval base itself.

Four years ago it was stated that the Service population at Singapore, including the men of the naval base, Air Force and the garrison numbered, with their dependants, some 12,000. It is probably considerably larger now.

The increase of the garrison has, of course, necessitated the provision of barracks to house it. The chief of these are the Gillman barracks, near the city overlooking Keppel Harbour, and the Changi Barracks at the eastern end of the island.

These are of modern design and provide every comfort such as is necessary to make life in a tropical island tolerable, even possible, for a European garrison. For that purpose, too, elaborate sanitary and anti-malaria arrangements have been necessary to provide for the health of the men, and the transformation of a tropical swamp into a healthy garrison station has been a very remarkable achievement.

### Combined Exercises

Every year, for some years past, elaborate combined exercises have taken place at Singapore in which all three services have taken part. In these, the garrison at its existing strength has represented the Army; the Air Forces stationed at Singapore on some occasions have been reinforced from India, or from even farther away; for the period

of the exercises of the Navy, the ships of both the East Indies and China Fleets have taken part, some of them usually playing the part of an enemy attacking the colony.

In August last year and during the first two months of the war, Singapore, like the rest of the world, was hard at work bringing its defences up to a state of complete readiness. Additional defence works were erected, various activities were undertaken along the water front, and local volunteer services were embodied and exercised in their wartime duties of minesweeping, local patrols, and the like.

This activity slackened off at the end of October, when it appeared that there was little probability at the moment of the war spreading to that part of the world. But they were resumed a few months ago when tension appeared to be increasing in the Far East.

### No Bathing Here!

A communique issued in July informed the inhabitants at Singapore that further defence works were being put in hand and that it would be necessary for several of the shark-proof bathing centres on the south coast of the island — an amenity very welcome to Europeans living in the tropics — to be replaced by barbed wire entanglements, which would preclude their use by the public for bathing.

There must, of course, have been many more preparations than those of which public notice was thus given, and it may be taken now for granted that the defences of Singapore make it as nearly impregnable to attack as any fortress in the world.

### INDEX

American Presidency .....	10	New U.S. Song Hit .....	9
Aunt Daisy .....	37-38	Programmes:	
DX Notes .....	47	Commercial .....	41-46
Editorial .....	4	National .....	20-33
Empire in Egypt .....	2	Overseas .....	47
Extracts from Talks .....	5	Puzzles .....	15
Films .....	17	Radio & War Effort .....	18
Friedman the Man .....	12	Singapore is Impregnable ....	3
In the Programmes .....	7	Things to Come .....	6
It Can Happen Anywhere ....	8	War Diary .....	2-3
Lessons in Morse .....	18	Women .....	34-36
Letters .....	4	Words and Music .....	19
Listeners .....	14	Your Garden .....	36
London Under Fire .....	13	ZB News .....	39-40
Movie Camera-man .....	16		