

Capt R.R.C.Carter – Malay Regiment

Reginald Rudolph Childers Carter was the son of Major and Mrs R.C.Carter of Ivy Cottage, Guildford Road, Westcott. He was born in 1909 and was educated at the Imperial Service College.

In October 1936 Reginald Carter left England to become a rubber planter in Malaya, sailing from Southampton to Singapore on the Royal Dutch Mail ship *C.Huygens*. Also on board, travelling with her father, was Dorothy Joyce Grenier who was to become his wife. It appears they met during the voyage and married sometime after their arrival in Malaya.

Reginald worked as an assistant at the Kedah Rubber Company in Bandar Bahru, Selangor, but with the threat of war looming, was on 3rd April 1941 granted a Regular Army Emergency Commission as a 2nd Lieutenant on the General List. He joined the 1st Battalion of the Malay Regiment and, after a spell in command of the bren gun carrier platoon, was promoted Captain on 1st December 1941 to be the battalion Adjutant. The regiment had been started in 1933 as an experimental company, but by 1941 comprised two battalions which, together with 2nd Bn The Loyal Regiment, formed the 1st Malaya Infantry Brigade.

On 8th December 1941 Japanese forces landed at Kota Bahru on the north-east coast to begin the invasion of Malaya. Using their superior mobility, the invaders swept down the Malay Peninsula and two months later had reached Singapore. On 13th February 1942 the Malay Regiment was ordered to defend Pasir Panjang Ridge on the western side of the city. They beat off successive attacks by the Japanese 18th Division until an attack supported by tanks penetrated the line. The Regiment was then ordered to withdraw to a new defensive position known as Bukit Chendai where they made their final stand. Next day C Company, led by Lt Adnan Saidi, faced repeated attacks until they were finally overwhelmed. The regiment lost 159 killed (including 6 British and 7 Malay officers) and many wounded.

On the following day, 15th February 1942, the Allied Forces' Commander, General Percival, surrendered and over 100,000 British, Indian and Australian troops became prisoners of war. Prime Minister Winston Churchill described it as the 'worst disaster in British military history.'

We do not know the circumstances of Reginald Carter's death. His wife Joyce sought to establish what happened to him and was given to believe he may have avoided capture to reach Sumatra, and was then evacuated with many others on the steamship *Ban Ho Guan* which sailed from Padang on 28th February but was sunk shortly afterwards by a Japanese submarine. It was not until May 1946 that there was a formal newspaper notice to the effect that Reginald Carter was 'previously reported missing now officially presumed killed in action on or shortly after 28th February 1942.' Following this official declaration Mrs Carter was able to marry Mr Douglas Fraser on 13th July 1946.

Reginald Carter is remembered on the Singapore War Memorial at Kranji which records the names of over 24,000 casualties who died in the defence of Singapore and who have no known grave.