

two engine test benches were found, the normal capacity for engine repairs must have been very low. No sign of any centralised production line was apparent.

398. Of characteristic orderliness in Japanese storage equipment there was none. All kinds of equipment were found mixed together in each warehouse apparently without rhyme or reason, and there appeared to be little attempt to keep any detailed record of stock and issues. It is surprising how any items were found when required, or further commitments even calculated.

399. Arms discovered tallied with the list provided by the Japanese, but there was nothing to show that this list was, in fact, definite. Judging by the aggressive attitude of the Annamese towards the French at this period, it may well have been that considerable stocks of Japanese arms had not been declared.

#### *The occupation of Hong Kong.*

400. On August 29th a strong naval force under Rear Admiral C. H. J. Harcourt, C.B., C.B.E. (Flag in H.M.S. SWIFTSURE) arrived off Hong Kong and landed a force on August 30th, being joined by Rear Admiral C. S. Daniel, C.B., C.B.E., D.S.C. (Flag in H.M.S. ANSON). The formal surrender of the Japanese at Hong Kong took place on September 16th. An air headquarters was established on September 12th.

401. One Spitfire squadron was conveyed in an aircraft carrier and the remainder of the air units, which included a Mosquito L.B. squadron, another Spitfire squadron, a Sunderland squadron, and one Dakota squadron, were flown in to Kaitak Airfield at Kowloon, on the mainland.

402. Air defence of Hong Kong, and the provision of air support for any operations which might be necessary by the ground forces involving security of the base, were the primary duties of the air forces as planned. In addition, however, Hong Kong provided a link in the chain of air communications for, and reinforcement of the British and Dominion Air Forces which would garrison Japan.

403. The "Shield" convoy, which was at sea at the conclusion of the Japanese war and, accordingly, was diverted while proceeding to Okinawa in connection with the Pacific "Tiger Force" operation, arrived in Hong Kong on September 4th with 3,400 officers and men of various R.A.F. units. A large percentage of "Shield" Force was composed of personnel of No. 5,358 Airfield Construction Wing, whose original task had been rendered redundant.

404. The variety of rehabilitation tasks undertaken by R.A.F. personnel on the occupation of Hong Kong and Kowloon on the mainland, and accomplished without any previous experience, showed that the Royal Air Force, apart from its qualities as a fighting service, could be extremely versatile in other spheres. It was gratifying to observe at Hong Kong how aircrew personnel, mainly fighter pilots, could apply themselves to ground duties varying from prison supervision to billeting and requisitioning, whereas those with greater technical knowledge, such as R.A.F. Airfield Construction Personnel, were largely responsible for the initiation and maintenance of the public services; power, light, transport, etc.

(68742)

405. In the first few days of occupation, some 18,000 Japanese forces, including many senior officers, were rounded up, disarmed, and concentrated in Shamshui Po prison, previously a concentration camp on the mainland.

406. The first commandant of what, under British occupation, became a Japanese concentration camp, was a R.A.F. squadron leader whose previous experience had been limited to operational flying. He proved himself a competent prison governor during his short term of office before handing over his duties to an Army officer.

#### *R.A.F. undertake many public services.*

407. The total neglect of civic administration by the Japanese in Hong Kong and Kowloon, except in so far as it affected themselves, was all too apparent. Transport did not exist; electric power was unreliable and the supply severely limited; public health services had been totally ignored, and the streets stank with accumulated rubbish and filth. There was, too, large scale looting by the Chinese who, until checked, literally stripped every house they entered of all furniture, fittings and every piece of wood including floor boards and window and door frames. Wood for fuel purposes, indeed, was at a premium in Hong Kong due to the absence of coal.

408. The problems of occupation which faced our forces on arrival were so numerous and varied that it was difficult to know where to make a start. Yet, at this time, when the R.A.F. personnel were busily engaged in establishing an occupation force, many important public services were undertaken with willingness.

409. To overcome the transport difficulties, every motor car available was requisitioned. This in itself involved considerable labour for R.A.F. personnel in rehabilitating and maintaining decrepit and mechanically unsound vehicles which had been left behind by the Japanese. In particular, restoration of the dock area to a standard capable of unloading the freight ships of "Shield" convoy presented big difficulties. The wharves were broken in many instances and covered with debris and dilapidated equipment. Sunken vessels in the bases were also hazards to navigation.

410. The power station at Kowloon was manned by a R.A.F. supervisory staff. While the plant did not work to full capacity, principally on account of fuel shortage, it was, nevertheless, made to function and supply all the requirements of light and power in Kowloon and the docks area. This work included the reconditioning of furnaces, boilers, and the repair of certain turbine power units.

411. In their search for wood as fuel, an R.A.F. reconnaissance party of ground personnel penetrated into the New Territories which were still occupied by the Japanese. Large stocks of wood were discovered at Tai-po and Fanling, twenty and fifteen miles respectively. An incidental on this trip was that a chit was given to the Chinese Communist Army Troops which allowed the party to cross over the border to collect a number of abandoned