

(f) Japanese fifth column activities would be encountered, though no actual proof of such organisations existed. The proximity of Formosa, with its mixed population of Japanese and Chinese Formosans, and Canton, furnished the enemy with admirable intelligence bases.

11. About 1st November a Japanese deserter came across the frontier and gave himself up at a civil police post. He gave a certain amount of detail about the Japanese forces, which definitely indicated preparations for the concentration of troops North of the frontier, and the presence of large calibre-artillery, indicating that of a Corps.

12. From Tokyo, ambassadorial cablegrams did not indicate immediate impending hostilities, in fact the telegrams from there were extremely moderately phrased in comparison with those of June, 1940. Consular reports also were not particularly disturbing.

13. Such intercepts of enemy aircraft movements as were received during the weeks previous to hostilities showed no abnormal activity. Intercepts from other sources showed normality.

PART III.

14. During the early days of December as the situation progressively deteriorated so were more and more troops deployed, until on the evening of 7th December all were in their battle positions. By evening very definite reports were received of concentrations of Japanese forces in the villages bordering the frontier. The company of 2/14 Punjab Regt at Fanling had been in position for some days with constant watch maintained from the frontier observation posts.

At 0445 hours 8th December intelligence sources reported hearing on a Tokyo broadcast code instructions to their nationals that war with Great Britain and U.S.A. was imminent at any moment. His Excellency the Governor was immediately warned and the message was passed on to all concerned. The frontier company (Major Gray, 2/14 Punjab Regt.) was telephoned and orders were issued for the forward demolitions to be blown, i.e., to the East and North of Fanling. Subsequent events showed that all these forward demolitions were blown successfully.

By 0645 hours the garrison had been informed that the British Empire and Japan were at war.

Command HQ had moved into the underground Battle HQ.

At 0800 hours Japanese aircraft dive attacked Kai Tak aerodrome (down to 60 feet, showing first class standard) and destroyed and damaged the following grounded planes:—

R.A.F.—3 destroyed, 1 seriously damaged and 1 slightly damaged.

Civil—1 Clipper and 7 others (D.C. 23 Condors, etc.).

Shamshuipo barracks were also attacked and bombed but very few casualties were caused, owing to full deployment.

By 0900 hours Fortress Engineers and administrative services were on the move to their dispersal areas in accordance with plans.

Japanese machines on to Kai Tak and over Kowloon numbered respectively 36 Fighters and 12 Bombers. During the day subversive pamphlets, addressed mainly to Indian troops, were dropped. They were poorly drawn up and carried no weight either with British or Indian troops.

15 *Action of Forward Troops on the Taipo Road, commanded by Major G. E. Gray, 2/14 Punjab Regt.*

At 0800 hours 8th December the Japanese began bridging at Lo Wu and our observation posts reported hundreds of Japanese crossing into Laffans Plain. This was later estimated to be a battalion and it seems fairly certain that a two battalion front was adopted—the other battalion going later straight down the Taipo Road. The tactics were almost invariably to push a strong body up the nearest hill and round a flank directly any line of approach was found to be blocked. The threat of a battalion moving round his right flank was a constant menace, and necessitated Major Gray's decision to make sure of the big demolitions No. 731 and R 94 one mile North of Taipo and not to attempt any real delaying action forward of this. It was thus 1500 hours when the first enemy attacks developed in this area and were beaten off by fire. Outflanking movements developed immediately, necessitating withdrawal to South of the causeway, Taipo.

A platoon had been posted wide on the West flank as left flank guard. A Japanese detachment headed by three women (Chinese) attacked here at 1830 hours. All were shot.

At 1930 hours the mechanised portion of Forward Troops, composed of two armoured cars and four Bren carriers, co-operated most effectively in ambushing a Japanese platoon in close formation. It was virtually wiped out by machine gun and light automatic fire from one hundred yards range. The enemy never relaxed his pressure during the bright moonlight night. It was obvious that his small columns, using cross country tracks, were led by guides who knew the ground intimately, thus enabling the attack to develop quicker than had been thought possible, especially as this was combined with a high standard of night training. I was subsequently informed by a Japanese Staff officer (Major Nishiyama) that a month had been spent on concentrated night training for the attack on Hong Kong. At midnight Forward Troops withdrew to Taipo Mei where an important demolition was duly blown, followed by another withdrawal an hour later to Fo Tan Valley, this being necessitated by small parties of the enemy having reached positions on the road behind the Forward Troops' dispositions.

16. By 0330 hours 9th December all demolitions were successfully blown except one at Taipo where Japanese forward patrols were extremely quick in following up and cutting the leads to the abutments after the withdrawal of the final covering party. The safety fuze used for the piers, however, had burned too far for interruption and these piers were successfully destroyed.

At dawn Forward Troops were on Monastery Ridge just forward of the Gindrunkers Line,