

where they maintained themselves all day, withdrawing by order at dusk. During the day many excellent artillery targets offered themselves and were engaged with success. The Forward Troops had fulfilled their role admirably, and had inflicted some 100 casualties to the Japanese at no real cost to themselves.

17. On the other main line of approach, viz.: Castle Peak Road, late in the evening 8th December enemy transport was seen banking up at the road bridge North of Au Tau, showing the success of the demolition there. 5.9 in. guns were seen to be tractor drawn up to the bridge and then manhandled into a village to the East. This battery fired at intervals during the next fifty-six hours on Hong Kong Island and was calculated by the Royal Artillery to be on Kam Tin aerodrome. Several shells passed over the main ridge of the island and landed near Aberdeen Reservoir; the firing was at too long a range to be taken seriously and in any case was out of range of our artillery.

At 1340 hours on 8th December a large formation of Japanese planes carried out another raid, this time on Stanley, dropping a few bombs. Little material damage was done.

18. (a) At 0600 hours 9th December I ordered Mainland Infantry Brigade to move the reserve company of 5/7 Rajput Regt. across to fill the gap East of Smugglers Pass, previously only patrolled until the direction of the main enemy thrust should be disclosed.

(b) Enemy action during the day was chiefly confined to patrol action. 2 Royal Scots had strong patrols on the tracks leading South East from the Kam Tin area which confirmed the use of Chinese guides by Japanese advanced troops. Later information from the Chinese member of "Z Force" was to the effect that these Chinese guides were drawn from the village of Tsun Wan Wai which he said was largely pro-Wang Ching Wei. "Z Force" was a band of local volunteers which had been trained beforehand for work behind the Japanese lines and was led by Mr. Kendall. Dumps of arms, supplies, medical stores, etc., had been made beforehand at three points in the new territories.

(c) It transpired at this time that the Japanese scouts and snipers were highly trained and extremely difficult to detect. Their uniform consisting of quilted material with cross stitching was particularly adapted to the insertion of twigs, grass, etc., obtained locally—thus blending perfectly with the surroundings. Others encountered later on the island had a camouflage net rolled up and carried high on the back, from which position it could be quickly drawn over head and shoulders.

(d) The demolitions on Castle Peak Road were blown successfully, except the one at the Dairy Farm, where the leads were cut by a saboteur who slipped in immediately the last sentry was withdrawn. He moved to the next demolition, close by, and was blown up and killed whilst standing on top of it.

(e) During the night 9th/10th arrangements were made with the police to evacuate the villagers from places where the front line posts ran through or too near to villages—a matter of great difficulty owing to the trip wires of anti-personnel mines which had been put out to supplement the thinly held front.

19. At 2200 hours the CNAC planes left for Free China. In one was despatched Lt.-Colonel H. O. Hughes (HKVDC) who was to act as our liaison officer with 7th Chinese Army.

20. At about 2300 hours on the night of 9th/10th December a report was received from the Company Commander 5/7 Rajput Regt. (whose company had been moved across from being reserve company in the Right battalion Sector) that he could hear enemy moving in the Shingmun Valley on his immediate front, and later the nearest 2 Royal Scots Company ("A" Company) reported hearing explosions from one of the pill boxes constituting "Shingmun Redoubt." Within the hour it was clear that Shingmun Redoubt had fallen, including the artillery observation post and the HQ of "A" Company 2 Royal Scots.

The capture by surprise of this key position, which dominated a large portion of the left flank and the importance of which had been so frequently stressed beforehand, directly and gravely affected subsequent events and prejudiced Naval, Military and Civil defence arrangements. The possibility of mounting an immediate counter attack that night was considered with Commander Mainland Brigade but was ruled out as the nearest troops were a mile away, the ground precipitous and broken, and the exact situation round the Redoubt very obscure.

At about 0315 hours an artillery concentration was put down on the area of the western portion of the Redoubt and this was heard to take toll of the enemy.

21. At midnight 9th/10th December I decided to move the reserve company of the Winnipeg Grenadiers across from Hong Kong Island. It was placed at the disposal of Brigadier Mainland Brigade and arrived at his HQ at 0400 hours. Confused fighting took place South of Shingmun Redoubt, and a further enemy advance next morning was stopped by artillery support and by the vigorous action taken by Captain H. R. Newton, commanding the 5/7 Rajput Company there. About one enemy company attacked and was driven back into Shingmun Redoubt which was then shelled by 6 in. Howitzers. Captain Newton was confident that severe casualties had been inflicted upon the enemy.

A counter attack by Captain Newton's Company was considered, but this would have caused a serious gap between the 2/14 Punjab Regt. and Shingmun, where the enemy had already made attempts to effect penetration. The enemy success, however, caused dangerous exposure of the centre ("B") and left ("C") Companies of 2 Royal Scots, and at 1530 hours I sanctioned their withdrawal from the Pineapple Road* and Texaco Peninsula positions (a mile in front now, and with an open flank) to the strong Golden Hill line which reached the sea at the Laichikok Peninsula. This withdrawal was carried out without incident at dusk—though the two companies required a certain amount of adjustment before dawn.

22. 10th December.—During that day I ordered the R.A.F. to evacuate Kai Tak aerodrome and to destroy machines and equipment.

* Running North East from Tsun Wan Wai to Pineapple Pass