

1 Middlesex Regt. came directly under command of Fortress as "Corps Troops" for defence purposes. This eased the situation for Brigadier Wallis, who had the larger half of the island to command, and for Brigadier Lawson who was unfamiliar with the ground.

During the night 14/15th December the 5/7 Rajput Regt. relieved the 2 Royal Scots in the North East sector. The latter moved later to the area Wanchai Gap-Filter Beds to refit and re-organise, but one company took over a narrow front just West of the naval hospital.

47. During the early hours 15th December a broadcast from Kowloon could be heard of European songs and music; the talks, however, were not clear. They were probably from loud speakers on vans in the streets, as the radio transmitting station in Kowloon had been destroyed before evacuation. Several traitors, with lamps of primitive design operated from a dry battery, with a small but adequate mirror, were reported signalling from the island to the mainland. When these operators were intercepted they were shot.

48. (a) There was a systematic shelling of pill boxes along the North shore during the morning 15th December: three were knocked out and one badly damaged. One had forty holes drilled right through by a high velocity gun of small calibre located on Kowloon Peninsula, firing from a concealed position inside a water front "Godown." The provision of alternative emplacements for the pill boxes of the North shore defences had already been taken up and some ten to twelve were completed. They should of course have been completed in peace time but it would have meant requisitioning valuable "Godown" and office properties, and requisitioning had not been sanctioned by Government until the proposed "Precautionary Period."

(b) By nightfall all military and civil telephone routes in the North East sector, including those to pill boxes Nos. 40 to 53 were severely interrupted. Night repair work was at once put in hand.

(c) Aberdeen Island and the A.A. positions at Lyemun (Saiwan Hill) were heavily shelled, one gun being put out of action temporarily.

(d) At noon 15th December the enemy was observed preparing sandbagged positions on the water front by the Kowloon Godowns, probably for mortars. Later, mortar fire fell in the vicinity of the R.N. Dockyard, Command H.Q., and Lower Peak Tramway Terminus.

(e) By now a "Command Observation Post" with direct lines to Fortress H.Q. was operating well from the Peak, manned by HKVDC, and also two special observation posts (pill box 69 and Kennedy Rd.) manned by 2/14 Punjab Regt.*

(f) Enemy was observed collecting small craft in Kowloon Bay—possibly for a raid; special arrangements were made to counter this viz.: a concentration was fired by 6-in. Howitzers and two craft were set alight. Orders were also issued from Fortress HQ to the A.A. searchlights at Saiwan and Braemar to cease their normal role at any time if they heard con-

tinuous machine gun fire on the North shore and to turn their lights down to illuminate the harbour.

49. At 2100 hours, 15th December, an attempted landing was reported by the Pak Sha Wan Battery (HKVDC). It was ascertained later from several sources that a very bold attempt was made by the enemy who, with small rubber boats and petrol tin rafts for equipment, swam across in fair strength—estimates varied from one to three Companies. All were shot in the water, the depleted battery (see para. 43 (b)) contributing stout defence.

50. (a) For four hours on 15th December Pinewood A.A. Battery was shelled by calibres up to 9-in. One gun was smashed irreparably and the other so badly damaged that it was out of action for the remainder of the battle. All instruments were rendered useless. Casualties to personnel were not numerous and men not hit were employed on salvage, and in an infantry role with 2/14 Punjab Regiment. We claimed two hits on enemy aircraft during the day.

(b) The general impression of Japanese artillery fire was that their gunners were extremely accurate on targets which were obviously well known from our peace time dispositions and under direct observation, but inaccurate in picking up new targets needing predicted fire, in spite of abundant air reconnaissance. About 30 per cent. of the ammunition burst defectively and of the heavier natures at times 50 per cent. failed to explode.

51. During this day (15th December) the last of the "Priority A" anti-personnel mine-fields was completed by Fortress R.E.

The morale of the civilian population remained shaky, chiefly due to rice distribution difficulties. The Chungking Government representatives had been most helpful in assisting in the maintenance of order.

52. News was received from the Chinese General Staff of the advance of Chinese forces towards Hong Kong. This fitted in with the plans which I had previously received via Chungking of the proposed attack of General Yu Han Mou's 7th Army. However, the information now was modified by the statement that effective assistance could not be available until early January. Information of intended help from Chinese forces from the North was circulated to formations and units.

53. At daybreak 16th December observation revealed no enemy movements along the mainland waterfront between Kai Tak and the Kowloon Star Ferry, but launch activity in Kowloon Bay continued.

54. Bombing and shelling by the enemy were now showing a higher standard of accuracy and increasing in intensity, being confined mainly to military objectives. The first air raid occurred at 0900 hours and lasted thirty-five minutes.

In the afternoon, 16th December, seventeen enemy planes bombed Mount Davis, which was also heavily and accurately shelled: an unexploded 9-in. shell entered the Fortress Plotting Room and damaged the instruments. A bomb dropped in Shaukiwan caused 150 civilian casualties. Shek O, Lyemun and Aberdeen were also bombed; some casualties to Royal

* The Peak Observation Post was forced to move three times, for each location quickly came under heavy and accurate artillery fire in spite of every precaution for concealment. Treachery was certain but the source could not be ascertained.