

At noon 18th December the Braemar beach defence gun position (para. 60) was shelled, received several direct hits, and the two 18 pounders destroyed beyond repair.

Further air raids occurred from 1500 hours onwards and the Saiwan artillery observation post was dive bombed and also shelled.

Between 1700 and 1800 hours a party of about two hundred enemy was seen working down from Haiwan to Devil's Peak pier and were engaged by our artillery. Just before and after dusk an extremely heavy bombardment by artillery and mortars on Lyemun Peninsula was carried out.

At night fall it was reported that the North Point fixed beam (across to Kowloon Point) could not function owing to the intensity of the heat and the dense smoke arising from the burning Anglo-Persian Company's oil installations. This fire continued for days and was a severe handicap to observed fire.

63. *Landing on Hong Kong Island*—(a) At 1900 hours 18th December three armoured cars of the HKVDC were sent to Tytam Gap to be a mobile reserve in the hands of the Commander East Infantry Brigade at his HQ there, and two other cars remained in hand at Leighton Hill close to 1 Middlesex HQ.

(b) At 1930 hours a report was received that the Saiwan A.A. position and Old Redoubt had been under heavy shell fire (9-in. Howitzer) for half an hour, that the whole fort was badly damaged and that the structure would not stand up to further shelling.

(c) At 2000 hours pillboxes 41 and 42 (Shaukiwan) and also the narrow 2 Royal Scots front at Bowrington were bombarded.

(d) At 2130 hours the Officer Commanding 5/7 Rajput Regt. reported difficulty in getting in touch with the Lyemun fixed beam and asked for illumination in area Quarry Bay-Aldrich Bay. The Braemar A.A. searchlight was ordered to come down on to a shore defence role but (not known till later) the telephone lines to its position were knocked out by shell fire and the motor cyclist despatch rider sent in lieu was badly wounded and never got through. The communications to the fixed beam at Lyemun had been giving difficulty throughout the evening, owing to breaks from shell fire, and Captain C. E. Otway, R.E., had finally been sent to take personal charge there.

At about 2130 hours 18th December the Officer Commanding 5/7 Rajput Regt. moved a reserve company from the area South of his HQ\* to a forward area closer to him. The remaining company (B) in battalion reserve was in the Tai Hang Road area, but communications to it had again been cut. Verrey lights were seen going up from North Point and Lyemun, and shelling and machine gun fire was heard in considerable volume along the North shore water front and in the area of the Electric Power Station and the Anglo-Persian Company installation.†

(e) It was learnt later that at 2200 hours Captain Otway observed sampans lighting smoke flares in the harbour, and motor boats and small craft plying between Devils Peak and Lyemun pier. His light was twice attacked

by an enemy patrol with hand grenades and after beating off a third attack he left the light exposed, locked the doors, and at about 2330 hours withdrew his six men through the Japanese lines to join the nearest infantry in the defence of the Saiwan 6-in. Howitzer position in Lyemun Gap. When he left, the Japanese were shooting straight down the beam with an "Infantry gun," 50 per cent. of the shots hitting the concrete surround of the light.

(f) The landing of the enemy between Lyemun and North Point appears to have been simultaneous, for at 2200 hours night 18th-19th December pillbox N. 4 at Taikoo was reported in the hands of the enemy and a little later 5/7 Rajput Regt. was overheard reporting the occupation of the Sugar Factory by the enemy.

At 2205 hours 1 Middlesex Regt was ordered to send a mobile machine gun platoon to North Point to form a defensive flank from pillbox 49 (Power Station) to join up with the 5/7 Rajput Company in that area ("D" Company). An armoured car was also sent. Defensive artillery fire was promptly put down on Taikoo Dockyard and the Sugar Factory, and the Commanding Officer of 5/7 Rajput Regt. on the spot reported that the results were most effective.

(g) At 2242 hours pillbox 55 crew in Causeway Bay reported that the alternative position in which they were located was being shelled and also sniped at from their right flank.

(h) At 2330 hours Brigadier Wallis reported that the Officer Commanding 5/7 Rajput Regt. was still at Taikoo HQ and that on the other flank the intention was to recapture Saiwan Redoubt with the bayonet. The 6-in. Howitzer Section on Mount Parker was still in action.

(i) At midnight 18-19th December, B. Company (battalion reserve) of the 5/7 Rajput Regt. was now moving to the area of pillbox 53, a machine gun platoon of 1 Middlesex Regt. was in area of pillbox 50 and one platoon of B Company 5/7 Rajput Regt was still holding out in North Point area. The Power Station itself was held by a force known as the "Hughesliers", under the Hon. Major J. J. Paterson, which was formed before the outbreak of war from men of 55 and over who felt the call to duty though they themselves were outside the terms of the Compulsory Service Act. It contained many prominent men of considerable standing in the colony and their role was the prevention of sabotage to the electric plant. It was reinforced about the 16th December by 45 Hong Kong Electric Company employees (HKVDC), China Light and Power Company employees, from Kowloon (numbering 30) plus two officers and seven other "Free French." The two officers were Captains Egan and Jacosta. This force was instrumental in holding the Power Station this night and fought in the streets next day until the late afternoon, when the house-to-house fighting and mopping up by the Japanese caused their surrender by encirclement, except for a few who escaped.

The delay the force imposed was very valuable to me.

(j) Just after midnight it was reported that the armoured car sent to reconnoitre towards the Power Station had been knocked out by a mobile anti-tank gun.\* It is clear from reports since made that at that time the Japanese

\* Near the Police Station, Braemar.

† It was subsequently ascertained that the Saiwan A.A. position was heavily shelled at 2145 hours and Japanese troops rushed it at 2200 hours.

\* Lieut Carruthers was the sole survivor (HKVDC)