

I had at no time contemplated the serious use of obsolete 100 m.p.h. aircraft which would have been shot down immediately by modern fighters, but in any case by this time only one machine was fit to operate. Demolitions there were practically completed, and were finished later by No. 1 Company HKVDC allotted for aerodrome ground and air defence (together with 4 Bren carriers). This company under Captain A. H. Penn performed its duties very well. The aerodrome was left obstructed by using concrete sections of drains, railings from the "surrounds" and derelict M.T. Enemy air activity was spasmodic, but our first A.A. success, confirmed from three sources, was recorded; an enemy plane over Causeway Bay was hit and fell into the sea in Tide Cove.

23. By now the special warning system was in operation and proved most satisfactory. The arrival of enemy aircraft was forecast and known to within a couple of minutes.

An intense shelling of Stonecutters Island began during the day. At first the fire was inaccurate but later became extremely accurate and the attack was also taken up from the air. Much damage was caused by 5.9 in. fire in particular, one round landing between the two 60 pounders which had been moved over to Stonecutters a week previously for firing in enfilade down the Taipo Road, which they had been doing very successfully during the past thirty-six hours.

During the day a fair amount of movement seawards was observed—Japanese torpedo boats, minesweepers and one destroyer. Later three more destroyers and a cruiser were observed.

H.M.S. "Cicala" had been covering the left flank of the 2 Royal Scots on the Castle Peak Road during the last three days, and on this day (10th December) discovered a Japanese working party clearing demolitions at Brothers Point. Fire was opened with 6 in. guns and direct hits obtained. Several Japanese attacks from the air were beaten off but eventually the ship received a direct hit which necessitated docking for repair.

At 1742 hours the last of the Eastern Telegraph Company cables between Hong Kong and the outside world was cut by enemy action. Orders were now issued to put in hand, starting with a "Priority A" group, the laying by Royal Engineers of anti-personnel minefields on beaches, etc., on the southern shores of the island.

24. 10th / 11th December.—Intermittent shelling of both mainland and island continued throughout the night, and before dawn the Bowen Road Hospital was hit four times. The first air raid of the day took place at 0800 hours.

25. 11th December.—On the mainland at dawn the enemy opened up mortar fire and then attacked the left flank of the 2 Royal Scots\*, driving them back in disorder and exposing the junction of the Castle Peak and Taipo Roads, thus seriously endangering the withdrawal of all the troops based on the Taipo Road (2/14 Punjab Regt., one company 5/7

Rajput Regt., troop 4.5 in. Howitzers, troop 3.7 in. Howitzers). The situation was critical but the company of the 1 Winnipeg Grenadiers and the Bren carriers from Kai Tak aerodrome defences were moved into position covering the gap.

At midday 11th December I ordered withdrawal from the mainland under cover of darkness—except for 5/7 Rajput Regt. detailed under the scheme of defence for occupation of Devils Peak Peninsula. The withdrawal called for a difficult operation by the 2/14 Punjab Regt.—a move by night across the whole front, along the line of the passes (Kowloon Pass, Shatin Pass, Grasscutters Pass) and down the Devils Peak Peninsula—a move not practised beforehand. Brigade Headquarters, 2 Royal Scots and various administrative detachments were to cross from embarkation points on the East side of Kowloon Peninsula. The West side of the Peninsula was free\* for evacuation of civilians, civil stores of the food in the Godowns, etc. The notice I could give was regrettably short but unavoidable owing to the rapidity with which the situation had deteriorated. In spite of the short notice the Royal Signals personnel successfully evacuated 49 miles of D8 cable and 20 tons of buried type cable.

26. At 1000 hours 11th December the enemy was reported to be landing on Lamma Island, and guns of Aberdeen and Jubilee Batteries were brought into action. This was followed at 1300 hours by a report that an enemy party in Chinese sampans was attempting a landing at Aberdeen Island. This was driven off by machine gun fire.

Again during the afternoon the Japanese were reported to be concentrating about one hundred junks off Lamma, which our artillery engaged.

27. *Stonecutters Island*.—Enemy bombardment of Stonecutters continued throughout the day, West Fort having forty direct hits before midday. Much material damage generally was caused, chiefly to buildings. Telephone communications were continually cut. In the afternoon, to conform to the withdrawal from the mainland, I ordered the withdrawal from this island and the destruction of guns and all immovable stores, according to a detailed plan previously prepared. This was successfully carried out.

28. During the day 11th December fifth column activities developed in Kowloon. Some of the fifth columnists were armed,† and rioting and looting occurred in the streets. A large number of launch crews and lorry and car drivers deserted, throwing a heavy handicap on the shoulders of the administrative services—civil, naval and military—particularly in view of the large and hurried evacuation for that evening and night.

Throughout the day 11th December Hong Kong was subjected to bombing and spasmodic artillery fire. The R.N. Dockyard, R.A.S.C.

\* Except that the Vehicular Ferry gave priority to all military vehicles and guns.

† At noon in Prince Edward Road an ammunition convoy of 2 Royal Scots was attacked; fifth columnists were in dark grey uniform and armed with rifles.

\* Killing both the Company Commanders concerned.