

(b) or (c) seemed most probable in view of the short distance across, the easy support by artillery and mortars and the possible combination with Wang Ching Wei factions and others in the congested area of the town. The number of derelict craft in the area of (a) lessened the likelihood of attack there.

Any attack from the mainland might well be in combination with an attack on the South shore. My available reserves were:—

(i) 2 Royal Scots, after relief and move from North East sector to the Wanchai Gap-Filter Beds area, but temporarily unfit until they could be thoroughly rested and re-organised.

(ii) Two companies 5/7 Rajput Regt. North East sector.

(iii) One company Winnipeg Grenadiers in South West sector.

(iv) Two companies 2/14 Punjab Regt. in North West sector.

(v) "Z" Coy. 1 Middlesex Regt. including one mobile machine gun platoon.

39. A.A.—In the early afternoon 13th December our A.A. guns brought down a large seaplane which crashed into the sea about 3000 yards West of Lamma (confirmed later by the Japanese).

40 During the day the enemy artillery fire increased in intensity (up to 9-in. calibre), one 9.2-in. gun at Mount Davis was knocked out by a direct hit, and at dusk Belchers Fort was heavily shelled and set on fire. Other serious fires were started at West Point and Kennedy Town.

Fifth columnists* had been active during the day and a large number of army transport drivers deserted, some of them taking their lorries with them. Police dealt with these in due course. The civilian population showed signs of strain, and food queues in some districts became disorderly. The question of rice distribution presented a grave problem in the overcrowded quarters.

41. At 0200 hours 14th December great anxiety was caused by the speed of the fires at Belchers and Kennedy Town. The civil fire brigades had been fighting the fires for many hours and asked for military assistance. At various times three parties were accordingly sent but on each occasion were returned without any work having been performed on demolitions (a detailed series of "fire lanes" had been worked out and calculations completed before the war broke out). On the fourth occasion, however, some houses were blown down. Fires were under control by mid-day. Elements of the civil population made these disasters an occasion for disorderly conduct; fifth columnists became more active and great care was necessary in checking telephone calls. The civil police found difficulty in maintaining guards over vulnerable points, and negotiated with the Chungking Government secret societies for assistance.

42. Certain movements of enemy warships were observed during the day (14th December), steaming on far distant courses.

43. (a) There was a marked increase in the intensity and accuracy of hostile shelling on the

*Fifth columnists attacked the A A searchlight position at San Ki Wan this night

14th December. Two 4.7-in. guns at Belchers had been hit and put out of action, and one 9.2-in. at Mount Davis had its communications cut for two hours. Also at Mount Davis, one 3-in. A.A. gun was hit and permanently disabled, causing about 30 per cent. casualties to the A.A. personnel. Many Chinese gunners deserted as a result.

(b) Pak Sha Wan Battery (Chinese volunteers) came in for particular attention, being both shelled and mortared. Its Battery Command Post and all internal communications were destroyed and the Battery Commander was wounded and evacuated. The guns were reduced to independent autosight control. At this juncture owing to an imperfectly conveyed message and an error of judgment of the junior officer left in acting command, the personnel were given the option of going to Stanley. All but two Chinese left; seventeen British and Portuguese stayed. A few regular British gunners were later sent up as reinforcements.

(c) A very heavy concentration on Magazine Gap cut eight main cables involving 195 circuits, severing communications between Fortress Headquarters and all terminals to the South of that Gap. Within 20 hours the Royal Corps of Signals, working magnificently, restored all lines.

44. *Civil Population*—The civil police found their hands more than full in maintaining order in the city but had the situation generally under control except in the A.R.P. tunnels, where in certain cases armed gangs of robbers were operating. Pamphlets were dropped by the Japanese.

45. H.M.S. "Thracian" carried out an excellent operation during the night (15/16th December) making her way past Green Island, across the Japanese front on the Kowloon Peninsula, and then sinking two ferry boats at anchor full of enemy troops one thousand yards East of the Electric Power Station, Kowloon.

46. By now the new organisation of the island defences had been carried out viz.: division into two brigade areas—East Infantry Brigade (Brigadier Wallis) and West Infantry Brigade (Brigadier J. K. Lawson). The North-South dividing line approximated closely to the former dividing line between the easterly and westerly island sectors. At the northern extremity, however, it was placed further East to increase the front held by the 2/14 Punjab Regt. now considered a safer sector owing to the "anti-boat fence" or boom which was in position from Sheung Wan to Green Island. The continuation towards Kellett Island had been prevented by the desertion of Chinese crews and there had been no opportunity of carrying the complete scheme through, i.e., a third portion constructed across to Kowloon Point.

1 Middlesex Regt. was given a small but important sector based on Leighton Hill Ridge-Causeway Bay area. No preparations, however, had been possible on the Ridge before hostilities, except a little wiring and three shell-slits, as the property was Government owned and housed many Government officials who could not be dispossessed or inconvenienced before the "precautionary period" of the Defence Scheme (which actually was never declared owing to the rapid development of full war conditions).