

subject of bombardment, both from the air and by artillery, the main target being the naval dockyard.

123. During the night the 12th-13th December, troops were withdrawn from Devil's Peak, our last post on the mainland. Coast defence guns were now used landwards for counter-battery work against the Japanese. It was noted that the evacuation of Kowloon had considerably disturbed the morale of the Hong Kong civil population, and defeatist elements came to the fore. It became necessary to organise rice distribution. The Japanese Commander-in-Chief demanded the surrender of Hong Kong, which was refused.

During the 14th December the Japanese shelling of the island increased in severity, and several of our gunposts were hit, as a result of which some Chinese gunners deserted. The enemy was now enjoying the use of Devil's Peak as an observation post. On the same day Aberdeen was bombed from high-level, and the generating station was hit, though not put out of action. Considerable trouble was still being experienced with the civil population, the police were unable to prevent robbery by armed gangs in the A.R.P. tunnels, and rice distribution was a difficulty. Propaganda was accordingly circulated about the proximity of a Chinese advance to relieve Hong Kong; the Chungking Government's representative was most helpful in maintaining order.

During the night of the 14th-15th December, the Japanese continued their systematic shelling, and gathered together a collection of small craft in Kowloon Bay. The Thracian entered the Bay and sank two river steamers, while a special agent succeeded in blowing up a third ship. The Thracian, however, in view of damage, had to be beached and dismantled the following day.

On the 16th December, Aberdeen was heavily bombed, eight times in all, with resulting loss of one Motor Torpedo Boat and damage to the dock. Most of our Auxiliary Patrolling Vessels were now useless in view of desertion by Chinese crews. The enemy landed parties on Lamma Island, and started concentrations of troops on the mainland at Customs Pass and Waterloo Road, but these were dispersed by our artillery. During the night of the 16th-17th mortar fire damaged some of our machine guns along the water-front.

On the 17th December, Hong Kong Island was twice raided by fourteen Army light bombers, coinciding with heavy bombardment by artillery. After this raid the Japanese again came across with proposals of surrender, which were rejected.

124. The night of the 17th-18th was very quiet, but on the 18th decisive events took place. The North face of the Island was subjected to continuous artillery, mortar and dive-bombing attack, some of our infantry defence posts being struck three or four times. Hospitals were badly hit and much damage was done to water mains, roads, cables and signal communications, also rice stores. Stanley and Murray Barracks were bombed in two raids by nine and six bombers, roughly 100 bombs being dropped—the largest number to that date. Much of the transport of the 2nd Battalion Royal Scots was destroyed, and C Battery Plotting Room O was demolished by a direct hit. The civil Government centre

was also dive-bombed. It was following this intense activity that, after dusk, the Japanese effected landings at Quarry Bay and at Lyemun in the north-eastern corner of the island.

The following day the Japanese infiltrated over the hill to the Wong Nei Cheong and Tytam Gaps with pack artillery and mortars. Our artillery from the Collinson and D'Aguilar areas (east and south-east of the Island) were successfully withdrawn to Stanley (south of the Island), but were compelled to destroy their heavy guns and equipment. Our line ran now from Stanley Mound northwards, Stanley Mound itself being held by one battalion of Canadians, two companies of Indian infantry and some miscellaneous artillery and machine guns.

During the afternoon of the 19th a counter-attack was attempted, with the help of motor torpedo boats, to regain possession of Mount Parker and Mount Butler, but broke down through heavy enemy shelling, failure of inter-communications and the exhaustion of our troops. Our motor torpedo boats were successful in destroying landing craft in Kowloon Bay, but two were lost in the operations.

125. On the 20th our line was still roughly North from Stanley Mound. A communiqué was again issued to inspire civilian morale with belief in near relief by Chinese forces. By the 21st the enemy was attacking strongly across Mount Nicholson through Middle Gap, and our troops were suffering greatly from exhaustion, the wet and cold of the night-time, and isolation from food and ammunition stores. Counter-attacks on the enemy rear by the Royal Rifles of Canada came to nought, and Winnipeg Grenadiers were also unsuccessful in an effort to retake Wong Nei Cheong Gap. The enemy still paid attention from the air to the Dockyard area, and practically all Naval personnel were now ashore and took their place in the land fighting. Japanese naval forces blockading the Island consisted of two cruisers, two destroyers and two torpedo boats.

It was during the 21st that the "Resist to the end" message from the Prime Minister was received, followed by instructions from the Admiralty to wreck all oil installations and storages.

The 22nd December witnessed a fresh enemy landing on the north-east coast of the Island. Part of our force was now cut off in Stanley, while various remnants were still holding out in isolated positions. The Japanese were now virtually surrounding Victoria, where a great deal of damage had been inflicted by bombing and shelling. Oil installations were destroyed, but it was found impossible to do so at Lai Chi Kok, since a large hospital would have been endangered. A telegram was received from the Admiralty giving the full text of Mr. Churchill's message, but also leaving to the Governor the discretion of surrender when resistance could no longer be usefully continued.

126. By the 23rd December the principal reservoirs were in the hands of the enemy, and the connections of those that remained under our control were damaged through shell-fire. Great efforts were made to effect repairs, but, in the absence of any substantial success in this direction, only one day's supply of water remained to the beleaguered city. Food stores, too, were greatly depleted. Our troops had become more or less exhausted, though Royal Marines managed to recapture ground on Mount