

83. At about 1930 hours, 20th December, a counter attack, about which I had previously instructed Lieut.-Colonel J. L. R. Sutcliffe and planned for 1900 hours, was launched by a company of Winnipeg Grenadiers from Wanchai Gap via Blacks Link to achieve the objects set out in para. 82 above, and to collect considerable numbers of wounded known to be at Wong Nei Chong Gap. Artillery support had been arranged but nothing was achieved, nor was the preliminary clearing of Mount Nicholson effected.

84. (a) Major C. Manners (retired R.A.) telephoned at about 1900 hours from Repulse Bay Hotel reporting that Canadian troops had arrived.

(b) At 1930 hours East Infantry Brigade was ordered to hold Repulse Bay Hotel at all costs, and Major Young, Royal Rifles of Canada, the Company Commander there, was ordered direct from Fortress HQ to pay particular attention to strong patrolling that night. The company was 140 strong.

85. At 2000 hours, 20th December, the Senior Naval Officer Aberdeen reported that "A" Company 2/14 Punjab Regt. was still tied to the ground North of Brick Hill and that Major C. R. Boxer had been wounded—making the third General Staff Officer wounded in that locality that day. It was apparent that there was little chance of getting through to Repulse Bay from the Aberdeen side. (It was afterwards established that "A" Company 2/14 Punjab Regt., only 25 strong, had tried every method of clearing the enemy from the strong pocket in which they were established with at least one machine gun and a light mortar.)

86. Serious fires were now reported in the Central District of Victoria and the Civil Fire Brigade asked for the assistance of troops which under the circumstances I was unable to provide.

87. (a) At 2230 hours I discussed the situation with Brigadier Wallis. A special reconnaissance patrol under Lieut. Bompas, R.A., had located two companies of enemy infantry working their way towards Repulse Bay Hotel, along the catchment from the East, during the afternoon. The road from Stanley to Repulse Bay was overlooked from the high ground Violet Hill and Middle Spur, with two hundred enemy in position, making the road unsafe. The Canadians could not get to Wong Nei Chong Gap by the routes tried this day. Brigadier Wallis considered the enemy to be in too great strength in the Hotel area to be turned out without proper artillery support, now a matter of great difficulty. He believed the enemy were not so strong in the Gauge Basin area and that another plan should be tried, but it was pouring with rain, visibility very bad, the men tired out and they had had little food. I ordered him

(i) to hold what he had got,

(ii) to press on to Wong Nei Chong Gap via Gauge Basin and

(iii) to use Bren carriers boldly in reconnaissance.

(b) By midnight 20th-21st December two 3.7-in. Howitzers had been positioned near Stanley Prison with an observation post on the hill behind, i.e., to the South. These, together

with one 18 pounder from a Beach Defence role (which had to be man-handled and could only fire over open sights from road locations), were the only remaining field pieces in East Infantry Brigade Commander's hands.

(c) Later Commander East Infantry Brigade said that the earliest his attack could be staged was 0900 hours. Contributing factors were.—

(i) lack of transport and administrative facilities and

(ii) delay caused by a virtual breakdown of unit communications. He was unable to help in the last mentioned item, for the Brigade reserve of signals equipment had already been used to replace this unit's signal equipment, lost on the previous night's positions.

88. The company of 2 Royal Scots—see footnote to para. 82—was driven back in the early morning, exposing the flank of "B" Company 2/14 Punjab Regt.

89. Commander West Infantry Brigade arranged for a fresh attack at 0700 hours by the Winnipeg Grenadiers to recapture Wong Nei Chong Gap. "C" Company of that regiment was in position at 0300 hours at Middle Gap, though they reported that they had encountered a party of enemy whilst moving up, and had suffered a few casualties. The attack did not succeed.

90. At about 0700 hours 21st December Major Manners (see para. 84 (a)) rang up again from Repulse Bay Hotel. He said the defences appeared to be quite inadequate, and with the women and children in the Hotel helpless, he viewed the situation with extreme pessimism.

At 0725 hours Major Young at Repulse Bay Hotel was ordered to organise two strong patrols, to reconnoitre Westwards from the Hotel and to clear up the situation at the junction of Island Road with the road to Hong Kong, where some troops who were coming down from "The Ridge" Advance Ordnance Depot had been ambushed over-night.

At 0800 hours a review of the situation was received from Lt. Tresidder at Repulse Bay Hotel:—

Enemy estimated 450 strong on Stanley Mound and over-looking Repulse Bay with H.Q. at Wong Nei Chong Gap: they had three machine guns and a heavy mortar; they had British and Chinese prisoners with them; some of the enemy were Koreans.

91. At about 0600 hours 1 Middlesex Regt. reported enemy attacking near pillbox 14 and on Brick Hill. H.M.S. "Cicala" (gunboat) was ordered to assist land operations in the Deepwater Bay area. Valuable close co-operation resulted.

This ship entered the bay and shelled enemy mortars and artillery, scoring hits. Unfortunately strong air action developed against her, and having been badly holed she withdrew and sank later in the Lamma channel.

92. Meanwhile (see para. 85) "A" Company of 2/14 Punjab Regt. had still made no head way and I ordered a senior officer to be sent at once from the battalion in Victoria. Lt.-Colonel Kidd elected to go himself and collected a few naval ratings in Aberdeen en route, but he was most regrettably killed when putting his own men in to the attack on Shouson Hill in order to clear that area. The