

officer to be sent to take local command there. Major C. R. Templar, R.A. was selected. On arrival he collected two trucks, filled them with Canadian troops and went up towards Wong Nei Chong Gap.

101. At 1600 hours 21st December a telegram was received from the Military Attache, Chungking, that the main Chinese attack could not start before 1st January but "it was hoped that" twenty bombers would operate at once against Japanese aerodromes.

102. The question of the women and children at Repulse Bay Hotel now arose. It was difficult to give a satisfactory answer but I decided that the safest course would be to leave them there for the night. The situation was extremely "fluid," both in this area and the Little Hong Kong area.

103. After dark enemy landing craft operating near the R.N. Yard were fired on from pill boxes and passed West down the harbour, but no actual landing was attempted. Strong Police patrols were sent out in the Central and Western Districts for special reconnaissance to confirm this.

104. (a) During the day 21st December The Royal Rifles of Canada had been trying to force their way north-eastwards as planned—one company and carriers, with No 1 Company Volunteer Machine Gunners in support, up the Tytam Road; a second Company directed across country on to Bridge Hill. These companies made a great effort, in spite of handicaps, but by the late afternoon could get no further forward than Red Hill-Bridge Hill, owing to considerable resistance by the enemy. Volunteer machine-gunners (Nos 1 and 2 Companies) rendered valuable forward support on this occasion.

(b) At 2030 hours 21st December Major C. R. Templar reported an unsuccessful attack on Wong Nei Chong Gap and that there were still about one hundred R.A.S.C. and R.A.O.C. on "The Ridge," with fifty Canadians in Altamira House. Further, that sixty to seventy Canadians were in Repulse Bay Hotel, round which sniping was continuing.

105. At about midnight a cable was received from the War Office emphasising the need to destroy all oil installations. This was carried out by artillery fire on the next day (22nd). The Texaco tanks at Tsun Wan Wai, the Shell tanks at Tai Kok Tsui (next to Cosmopolitan Dock), and the R.N. tanks a mile to the South thereof, were all set well alight, but the Socony tanks\* at Laichikok could not be shelled as they were close to the hospital establishment in the women's prison.

106. (a) In the evening (21st December) the decision was taken to evacuate "The Ridge," and at about 2230 hours 8 officers and 120 other ranks left, trying at the same time to clear the catchwater in a southerly direction. This, however, failed under enemy machine gun fire. They sheltered for the night in "Overbays", a private house on the edge of Deepwater Bay.

\* A demolition scheme had been fully prepared, but the area was over-run too quickly on the morning of 11th December. Luckily this Depot was only half full.

(b) During the evening some Japanese managed to penetrate into the Repulse Bay Hotel but were evicted by prompt action initiated by Major Templar.

107. Night 21/22nd December. Enemy launches kept the North shore defences on the alert, but there were no attempted landings. Sniping occurred from houses round the Race Course and also in Victoria. The civil population observed the curfew well.

108. In the morning the enemy opened heavy fire from Middle Spur and resumed operations on the high ground North of the Repulse Bay Hotel, and at 1000 hours he was reported in possession of two large houses overlooking Deepwater Bay. At 1030 hours 22nd December I placed Stanley Garrison under the direct orders of Brigadier Wallis. By now the intention of linking up East Infantry Brigade with West Infantry Brigade by moving westwards had perforce to be abandoned.

It may be noted that at this time the 3.7-in. Howitzers at Stanley had only 45 rounds left in all. This was supplemented later when the provisioning of Stanley garrison was carried out by motor torpedo boats from Aberdeen.

In the meantime the enemy had cut off the water supply in Stanley by the capture of the Tytam Reservoir area machinery. For the forces in the Repulse area there was now only two days' supply of food and water. The evacuation of the civilians was still quite impracticable either by road or by water though I went into the question most carefully.

109. (a) 1030 hours 22nd December—Commander West Infantry Brigade reported that the Canadian troops in the Mount Cameron area were being heavily dive-bombed and mortared. They had no tools with which to dig in (although the rocky ground made this in any case almost impossible), no 3-in. mortars or bombs, there was no shelter, and there was nothing to do except stick it out with small arms fire from behind the rocks. These conditions applied in general to the subsequent fighting on the important high ground there.

Morale now had been seriously affected by the feeling that it was futile to continue resistance with insufficient equipment, with insufficient mobile artillery support, and without both air support and air observation.

(b) At this time, too, 2, Royal Scots were being heavily mortared from the ground near Jardines Lookout. The enemy seemed to have no difficulty in keeping up his ammunition supply across country from North Shore: and evidence was afterwards forthcoming that local Chinese were forcibly impressed as carriers. Much of the Japanese mortar ammunition, too, was of a much lighter nature than the British: one variety was 95 per cent. H.E., thus causing great moral effect, particularly valuable on un-seasoned troops in the opening phases of battle. The Japanese handling of mortars was extremely good. They were very quick into action; were quickly ranged, and accurate concentrations were put down at short notice at ranges of 1,500 yards.

(c) By the early afternoon 22nd December the enemy was consolidating his positions on the northern lower slopes of Mount Nicholson within one hundred yards of the 2 Royal Scots forward defended localities.