

At 0400 hours 20th December 2 Royal Scots estimated the enemy to be one battalion strong in the vicinity of Jardines Lookout.

North of Wong Nei Chong Gap the situation was as before, viz., a company of 2/14 Punjab Regt. then "B" Company 5/7 Rajput Regt. then 1 Middlesex Regt. on Leighton Hill.

At 0715 hours the Officer Commanding the Winnipeg Grenadiers reported that he was withdrawing troops from the Mount Nicholson area, as two companies* were distributed in many small units and needed reorganising for further employment, especially as they were much mixed up with 2 Royal Scots. He proposed to reorganise on the line held on the day before, viz., Middle Gap, thence South West to Cable Hill.

At 0745 hours it was learnt that the enemy had occupied the large garage at the Repulse Bay Hotel.

At 0800 hours 20th December the Royal Artillery reported two companies 2 Royal Scots digging in on North East slopes of Mount Nicholson.

The Commissioner of Police now reported that a party of enemy had discarded their uniform and had collected in houses in Happy Valley for, he thought, fifth column work. He proposed to round them up.

At about 1000 hours the Officer Commanding 1 Middlesex Regt. reported that the crews of pill boxes 12, 13, and 15, which had been withdrawn to stiffen up the landward defences, were opposing an enemy advance on to Bennets Hill and that the enemy on Brick Hill were moving on Aberdeen. He reported that all pill boxes from Deepwater Bay to Repulse Bay were intact. The Officer Commanding the Winnipeg Grenadiers was authorised to withdraw his platoon from Aberdeen Island to assist in the main defensive positions.

77. At about 1000 hours 20th December orders were issued to 2/14 Punjab Regt. to send a company ("A" Company) to operate through Aberdeen and along Island Road to clear the enemy (estimated at thirty strong) from the Repulse Bay Hotel garage and to relieve the personnel there.

78. *Repulse Bay Hotel*—At about 0930 hours Lt. Grounds, 1 Middlesex Regt., rang up on a civil telephone and reported that the Japanese had surrounded the Hotel. He was ordered to put the women and children on the lowest floor space and to make them lie down, to organise the defence himself and to take full charge with Lt. Tresidder, R.A.S.C., to assist. With him were two or three Royal Navy personnel†, and his own Middlesex machine gunners. Lt. Grounds did excellently until he was unfortunately killed whilst organising an attack on the isolated Hotel garage with the object of driving out a strong enemy party and rescuing HKVDC officers and others imprisoned there.

The area round the Hotel was not finally cleared till the afternoon, "A" Company Royal Rifles of Canada having arrived from the direction of Stone Hill and co-operating in the action. The enemy lost one officer and 25 men killed.

* One company had lost one platoon in a counter attack.

† These R.N. personnel had been manning the mine control station at Chung Am Kok.

At about 1100 hours 20th December a message was received that "A" Company 2/14 Punjab Regt. had reached Aberdeen and was moving towards Shouson Hill, but during the day they could make no progress, as the enemy were in strength around that position, and the company itself numbered under thirty.

79. At 1200 hours Fortress R.E. were reorganised into three sections—two covering Wanchai Gap, the third in reserve. They were ordered to support the Winnipeg Grenadiers in every way possible.

A Japanese monoplane flying over Stanley was hit, was obviously in trouble, lost height and was last seen low behind Lamma Island, and not re-appearing, may be presumed to be a casualty, giving a total of five enemy aircraft shot down during the battle.

80. At 1300 hours the Chinese crew deserted the A.A. searchlight on Aberdeen Island. The five remaining British other ranks temporarily joined the nearest infantry unit.

81.—(i) During the morning several eye witnesses stated that Chinese planes had bombed Kowloon.

(ii) Admiral Chan reported that General Yu Han Mou had wirelessed that 60,000 troops were at Sham Chun on the frontier and were about to attack.*

82. During the midday period 20th December the enemy continued pouring troops and material across the harbour in every type of craft. The North Point area and other likely points were accordingly engaged by our artillery.

In the morning Colonel H. B. Rose, M.C., Commanding HKVDC, was nominated as Commander West Brigade. Its role remained as heretofore—to clear the enemy from Wong Nei Chong Gap and to establish itself on the A.A. position on Stanley Gap high ground.

1400-1500 hours. The enemy were active behind the Repulse Bay Hotel, at Shouson and Bennets Hill, and along the road between Tytam Reservoir and the Gauge Basin. An enemy battery and two platoons deployed near Stanley Mound.

During the day Brigadier Wallis from his HQ at Stone Hill was continuously forward along the Repulse Bay Road endeavouring with Lieut.-Colonel W. J. Home to force a way either West via Middle Spur or North via the gap to join up with the West Infantry Brigade. It was not known till later that the attempts were unsuccessful owing to the strength of the enemy.

At about 1700 hours the enemy was reported to have surrounded the civilian food stores (Little Hong Kong) and to be attacking again at Wong Nei Chong Gap, driving out a company of 2 Royal Scots and some Winnipeg Grenadiers. Some of the enemy moved up towards the high ground, Mount Nicholson.†

* The following message was issued to all units—
"There are indications that Chinese forces are advancing towards the frontier to our aid. All ranks must therefore hold their positions at all costs and look forward to only a few more days of strain."

† Nevertheless later in the evening this company of Royal Scots moved forward from the northern end of Mount Nicholson and occupied a position on the right of "B" Company 2/14 Punjab Regt.—q.v. paras 71 and 76.