

Company HQ and to time his withdrawal so that the last troops left the Tytam Gap area at 1300 hours.

At 1145 hours 19th December his HQ there closed down.

There was the possibility of carrying out offensive operations from the area of Red Hill and the Tytam Reservoirs and connecting up with Wong Nei Chong Gap when cleared. This would involve capture of the important features Mount Butler and Jardines Lookout. The enemy, so far as could be ascertained, was distributed in small groups on that line of high ground and it seemed to me doubtful if their total strength on the island was more than two battalions. It was realised that the alternative might be necessary, viz.: to operate via Repulse Bay area in order to link up with West Infantry Brigade. Shortly after noon a message was received from the Officer Commanding 2 Royal Scots that one company in a counter-attack had reached a point 200 yards northwards of Wong Nei Chong Gap shelters, where they were holding out with only thirteen effectives left. At this time the 3.7-in. Howitzer section at the Gauge Basin was engaging the enemy over open sights, which it continued to do until small arms fire prevented the service of the guns. One gun was brought away.

69. At 1100 hours I ordered Lt.-Colonel G. R. Kidd to counter attack with two companies ("A"* and "D"† Companies) in an easterly direction from Leighton Hill to link up with "D" Company 5/7 Rajput Regt. and enable it to withdraw for more active employment. At the same time such an attack would cut in at the enemy's rear, thus limiting his exploitation and obstructing further landings and movements in and from the North Point area.

70. At 1130 hours 19th December I was visited by H.E. The Governor and C.-in-C. who stressed the importance of fighting it out to the end however bad the military outlook might be. Every day gained was a direct help to the Empire war effort.

71. At 1300 hours a force of R.A.S.C. and details collected in the Pokfulam area, seventy strong, was moved to Bennets Hill to take up an emergency defensive position in case further exploitation by the enemy was attempted: then to move forward to the close support of the Winnipeg Grenadiers at Wong Nei Chong Gap.

At 1330 hours I issued orders for a general advance eastwards at 1500 hours to reach as a first objective Middle Spur—Wong Nei Chong Reservoir—Clementis Ride and then to join up with the objective reached by the 2/14 Punjab Regiment's counter attack already referred to in para. 69. The 2/14 Punjab Regt. was to co-operate by exploiting Northwards to relieve the "Hughesiliers"‡ and others in the Power Station. The central axis of attack was to be Middle Gap—Wong Nei Chong Reservoir—Gauge Basin. 2 Royal Scots were to include Jardines Lookout. Only eight field guns were available to support this advance.

* The "University Company" less a proportion of pillbox crews. total 45.

† Kennedy Road—China Fleet Club Company

‡ It was afterwards ascertained that these orders did not reach Colonel Kidd and the two companies which at this time were still operating in the area East of Tai Hang. The spur was captured and occupied for some time but no trace of "D" Company 5/7 Rajput Regt. could be found.

At about 1630 hours 19th December 1 Middlesex Regt. reported that Leighton Hill was being heavily shelled, that "B" Company 5/7 Rajput Regt. was forward on their right and that Major Kampta Prasad's "B" Company 2/14 Punjab Regt. was further to the right.* R.A. reported enemy in the Police Station at Wong Nei Chong Gap, on the ridge just to the North, and moving South of Wong Nei Chong Reservoir. From other reports it became clear that the general advance had not been successful and that the enemy was in greater strength than had been believed.

72. (a) At 1820 hours it became necessary to withdraw the crew from pillbox 53 at Causeway Bay (North East end) as it was isolated much in advance of the general line. The pillbox itself had been destroyed, the officer had been killed, and 50 per cent. of the crew had become casualties.

(b) Enemy transport vessels were still crossing the harbour and artillery action was taken.

73. (a) At 1900 hours the R.A.S.C. personnel at the transport pool at Repulse Bay were ordered to hold on to and defend their transport area and not to withdraw.

(b) At 2000 hours the party of R.A.S.C. moved forward from Bennets Hill. Its numbers had now been increased to about 150. The party, being unable to reach Wong Nei Chong Gap, joined the R.A.O.C. party at the Ridge.

(c) At 2000 hours 19th December it was reported that some of No. 3 Company HKVDC who had been surrounded in Jardines Lookout pillboxes, had managed to escape, after fighting all day, to the Blue Pool area. They were ordered to join 1 Middlesex Regt. at Leighton Hill which they did at 0800 hours next morning.

(d) At 2100 hours heavy mortar bombardment of the China Fleet Club area took place.

74. Just before midnight 19-20th December the Commissioner of Police reported that reliable secret information pointed to the likelihood of enemy landings in the Central District and Kennedy Town, and that Police patrols had been sent out. All military units concerned were warned.

75. The troops had now been in action eleven days with no respite. Owing to the shortage of hot food and sleep, and the impossibility of providing reliefs because of the lack of troops, signs of strain were beginning to appear.

My A.A. resources were now very reduced—luckily only three raids of any intensity were carried out by the enemy during the day of the 19th, but the last raid on Stanley was very severe. Two Bofors guns were still in action but were powerless to prevent the enemy bombing selected targets. His bombing throughout was confined to day bombing and my A.A. searchlight detachments were never employed in their true role.

76. At 0135 hours the armoured cars of HKVDC at Wong Nei Chong Gap reported that they were in difficulties and had arranged for help from 2 Royal Scots, who had two companies in the close vicinity. In the meantime the Hong Kong Regt., HKSRA, reported that the enemy had been cleared from Wong Nei Chong Police Station.

* This was the company referred to in para. 63 (s). It was confirmed later that this company had earlier in the morning reached its objective successfully.