

much worse for the defending force, whose effective field of fire was reduced to a few yards. As one man later expressed it, "You couldn't see a Jap at the end of your bayonet."

LYEMUN AND SAI WAN

Tanaka's men carried out their task well. The first battalion landed on time, overrun No. 2 Platoon of the Royal Rifles, captured Lyemun Barracks and the 6 inch Howitzer Battery there, and at 2130 hours attacked the much battered 4th Battery at Pak Sha Wan. No. 1 gun was overrun, but the enemy did not press the attack. Lieut. H. T. Buxton, believing the fort to be in enemy hands, collected what men he could and withdrew towards Lyemun Barracks, hoping to join with the Canadians there. The party was ambushed and Buxton was killed. Meanwhile the sentry on No. 2 gun was reporting to Lieut. Barnett that "nothing unusual had occurred." Barnett thought otherwise and, with the nine remaining gunners, opened fire on Shaukiwan, where he guessed correctly that the enemy was landing.

For some unknown reason, the Japanese made no further attempts to capture the fort, which was completely isolated. On the morning of the 20th, Barnett's party was joined by the survivors of a platoon of 'A' Company, Rajputs, from West Fort. On the 21st, the position being hopeless, Barnett surrendered.

These men of the Tanaka Butai were tough and seasoned fighters, and, as will be seen, they were given a large share of the fighting on the island. They were also the most ruthless and were responsible for most of the atrocities committed during the fighting. At about 2230 hours they overran the 5th (AA) Battery HKVDC at Sai Wan Hill, the gunners being still unaware that a landing had taken place. Half-a-dozen were bayoneted, some thirty escaped and twenty were taken prisoner. These were tied up and kept in confinement for some hours. They were then taken out and bayoneted, and their bodies were thrown over the wall. Two Volunteers, Bdr. Martin Tso Hin-chi and Pte. Chan Yam Kwong (Medical Section) were left for dead, but managed to crawl away later.

The Salesian Mission at Shaukiwan was being used as an Advanced Dressing Station, manned by Canadian and British medical personnel, under Major S. M. Bamfill (RCAMC). When the Japanese arrived there, they first murdered two wounded officers of the Rajputs, who were being brought in by ambulance; then they confined the doctors and orderlies in one room for several hours. In the early hours of the morning of the 19th, the prisoners were taken outside, stripped, lined up along the side of the nullah and bayoneted amidst shouts of laughter from the Japanese onlookers. Three men, Major Bamfill, Dr. O. Thomas and one orderly, had miraculous escapes.

The only point that can be quoted in favour of Tanaka's butchers is that they did not harm the women; the nurses, V.A.D.s and members of St. John Ambulance; and that they were not so bestial as the men who later perpetrated the massacre at St. Stephen's Hospital.

THE HUGHESILIERS AT THE POWER STATION

Meanwhile the troops forming the first wave of the Doi and Shoji Butais were making their way on shore between North Point and the Docks. Scarcely a pill-box remained undamaged and the thin line of Rajputs, 'C' and 'D' Companies only, could not hold the massed attack. Once ashore, as has been said, Shoji's men pressed straight on inland, leaving Doi's men to do the 'mopping up'.

It was apparently Doi's men, therefore, who were responsible for the first of the atrocities on the island, when a number of members of St. John's Ambulance Brigade and A.R.P. workers were arrested and later executed, mostly by beheading.

The Japanese quickly captured the Sugar Factory, and 'C' Company was overrun, though a few section posts continued to hold out for some hours. Further west, Captain Newton with part of 'D' Company put up a strong resistance, though Newton himself was killed. At the Power Station the enemy came up against the 'Hughesiliers'. These veterans found themselves acting as front-line troops, in which role they acquitted themselves right nobly.

As a counter-attack, 'B' Company Rajputs, under Captain R. G. Course, moved in from the west side, striking towards Tai Hang, where they hoped to join up with some survivors of 'D' Company. 2/Lieut. Carruthers took an Armoured Car along King's Road in a gallant attempt to reach the Power Station; a platoon of Middlesex followed behind. The Armoured Car was knocked out by a direct hit from a mobile anti-tank gun, and Carruthers was the only man not hit. The Middlesex platoon came under the same fire and half the men were shot down. Most of the survivors managed to reach the Power Station, where they did splendid work.

At 0145 hours Major Paterson reported that the Power Station was entirely surrounded by the enemy. He was ordered to hold on as long as possible in order to assist any other units which might be resisting in the area. Also it was hoped that 'B' Company Rajputs would soon be able to strike in that direction.

'B' Company did make some considerable headway; one platoon penetrated as far as Braemar Point, and was joined there by the survivors of 'D' Company—thirty-five men, all the officers having been killed. The Rajputs could not hold their ground, however, much less move towards the Power Station, and at about 0230 hours the Company withdrew to a position north-east of Leighton Hill. Units of the Middlesex holding two pill-boxes in Causeway Bay, tried to connect up with the Power Station, but this attempt also failed.

their capture of the hill by a loud-speaker; the position was promptly shelled and a counter-attack was made by two platoons of Royal Rifles, while a platoon of No. 2 Company HKVDC was brought up from Pottinger Gap. The counter-attack failed; there was some confused fighting in and around Sai Wan, both sides feeling for each other in the dark. Further west the RA personnel from the battery at Lyeemun, which had been overrun, were assisting the gunners of the other 6 inch Howitzer Battery, below Mount Parker, to keep the enemy from overrunning that also. At one point, where the Japanese actually reached the gun position, a gunner officer staged a one-man counter-attack and drove off the enemy single-handed.

Captain Penn, OC, No. 1 Company HKVDC received word of the enemy landing at 2234 hours and, as telephone communication with Quarry Gap had been interrupted by shell-fire, went there himself. He informed the Royal Rifles Company of his intention and was told that the platoon at Boa Vista would be sent to the Gap as a reinforcement. Unfortunately the Canadians were unable to find the way in the intense darkness, and by the time they contacted the guide sent by Captain Penn, the fight in the Gap was over.

Captain Penn ordered up the L.G. section, under Sgt. F. L. Curtis, from Company H.K. Reserve, and sent it to occupy the knoll on the eastern slope of Mount Butler. Cpl. F. M. Thompson with six men manned the weapon-pits near P.B. 45 further down the slope towards Taikoo, and the remaining fifteen men were spread across the gap itself, the Vickers Guns, under Sgt. J. P. Murphy, on the right; the L.M.G.'s about 25 yards forward on the Taikoo path. In all there were two officers and 29 men. This would have been a scanty force to hold the Gap in daylight; in pitch darkness, where every circumstance favoured the attacking force, it was little more than a forlorn hope.

In view of the non-arrival of the promised reinforcement from the Canadians, Captain Penn sent back for CSM Edwards to come up from Taitam Bungalow with the HQ party, and also intended to withdraw Cpl. Thompson's party from their advanced position, but the attack came too quickly. In the Taikoo valley beneath them a few scattered Rajputs were still resisting—the remains of 'C' Company; others had retired and dispersed over Mount Parker. The enemy, despite the darkness, advanced comparatively rapidly, using the path and adjacent tracks.

By 0030 hours Cpl. Thompson's position was attacked. The defenders, badly handicapped by want of Verey flares, fired on fixed lines until the enemy rushed the position. Three men, two of them wounded, arrived back at the Gap, another made his way back over Mount Parker.

Soon after 0100 hours the attack came almost simultaneously on the knoll and the Gap. Sgt. Curtis' party had only just reached their position on the knoll and had barely time to get the gun in action

THE FIGHT AT JARDINE'S LOOK-OUT

The three battalions of Shoji's Rentai, as has been said, were moving towards Jardine's Look-Out, mainly using Sir Cecil's Ride. Major Stewart received word of the enemy landing from West Brigade at 2240 hours—nearly two hours after the landing had taken place—and asked for reinforcements. These were supplied from the HQ Company, Winnipeg Grenadiers, under Captain Bowden. Four platoons were sent up and were placed as follows:—Lieut. Macarthy's platoon was astride the Ride, immediately below the pill-boxes; Lieut. Birkett's platoon was sent to occupy the summit of Jardine's Look-Out, but as Birkett found the ascent impossible in the rain and darkness, this move was postponed until daybreak; Lieut. French's platoon was in the gap between Jardine's Look-Out and Mount Butler, where they could use the broken catchwater as a trench; and Lieut. Mitchell's platoon was in Stanley Gap. In all there were some 230 Canadians and Volunteers to hold a large area of broken and difficult ground in face of the three battalions under Shoji's command.

The enemy advance party 'bumped' the first of our posts on the Ride just before midnight. This post was held by L./Cpl. D. Hung's section, which gave the enemy a very warm reception, on the strength of which, apparently, a report was sent back to Shoji that the whole area was 'heavily fortified.' After about half-an-hour the main body of the Japanese appeared, and L./Cpl. Hung withdrew his section to the next post, known as JLO 2. There was a long and stubborn fight here. The Japanese located the position of these forward defended areas by sending 'suicide squads' in front, to make as much noise as possible and draw the fire of the post. At JLO 2 they attempted to cut the wire, but the wire-cutting party was detected and wiped out each time. Eventually the position was taken by the Japanese sending over a constant shower of hand-grenades, under cover of which some of them crawled under the wire. After that the fighting was hand-to-hand. Captain Holmes was killed; Sgt. E. Zimmern, wounded, gave the order to withdraw to JLO 3 and was killed while trying to cover his men's withdrawal. L./Cpl. E. Hing was killed at about the same time. L./Cpl. Hung with a few men retired but, being cut off from Stanley Gap, made his way into Happy Valley.

The third post, JLO 3, was not attacked, the Japanese preferring to by-pass it by going up the hillside. L./Cpl. F. R. Zimmern, finding that he could do nothing in that area, withdrew his section to Stanley Gap, where he and his men were a welcome reinforcement.

As soon as it became evident that the Japanese were in considerable strength, another request was made for reinforcements. West Brigade then ordered up 'A' Company Winnipeg Grenadiers, under Major Gresham, from Deepwater Bay; their positions around Little Hong Kong being taken over by personnel from 'Thracian'. 'A' Company unfortunately missed the way, crossed Violet Hill and

From Wongneichong Gap the Japanese started an attack up the hill towards Stanley Gap, held by Mitchell's platoon of Canadians and two sections of No. 3 Company, under Lieut. Anderson. The attack made little headway against Anderson's LMG's and Field gave valuable assistance by shooting up parties of the enemy who tried to make their way along the ridge. By 0730 hours, however, another enemy attack developed from the east side, the enemy coming along the slope above Reservoir Path. Mitchell's men had to change front to meet this threat. The Japanese were in overwhelming force and Mitchell's men were literally swamped. A few got away; Mitchell was killed, as were most of his men. Anderson was killed, Stewart was wounded and the position was overrun. Stewart, with six others, retired into the Company HQ shelter; another party, under CQMS E. C. Fincher, held out in the store-shelter—until the Japanese blew in the front with a mortar-bomb in the afternoon. Except for these, the Gap was in enemy hands by 0820 hours.

The identity of this force which came from the east and overran Stanley Gap is not clear. It seems most likely that it was the battalion which Shoji declared he sent round the east side of Jardine's Look-Out. At his trial, however, he stoutly maintained that none of his troops had attacked Stanley Gap, and that the capture of the position and the subsequent atrocities committed there, were the work of a battalion sent forward by Colonel Doi. As the court exonerated Shoji, the historian must do the same. The atrocities referred to were committed on wounded Canadians and Volunteers after the Gap was overrun. These were mishandled in various ways; one was kicked to death, others finished off with rifle butts and bayonets. The fate of the other wounded, who were left to die slowly of gangrene and thirst, was probably more unpleasant.

The further advance of the enemy south of Wongneichong Gap, which was the task of the Doi Butai, was checked by a mixed party of men of the HKRNVR, under Lieut.-Commander J. C. M. Grenham and Lieut.-Commander P. Dulley, and Indian gunners of the HKSRA, under Major Crowe. Before dealing with this phase, it will be well to continue the account of those units which were still resisting in the Jardine's Look-Out area.

Macarthy's platoon and two sections of No. 3 Company (under Cpl. J. F. C. Mackay and L./Cpl. G. E. K. Roylance) which were posted west of the Gap, were not overrun. They fell back to guard the shelters at Brigade HQ and Blue Pool Road. Captain Bowden, OC, HQ Company Grenadiers, arrived and took command, but was killed a few minutes later. At 1000 hours the Japanese took Brigade HQ and Brigadier Lawson, the Brigade Major and all personnel of Brigade HQ were killed. Macarthy's men still continued to hold the shelters on the north side of the road and the two Volunteer sections withdrew to the road-bend, to wait for the counter-attack.

wreck with all guns knocked out. Lieut. Field then moved his remaining men into the open and continued the defence with rifle and L.M.G. fire. By 1500 hours the Japanese gave up infantry attacks, contenting themselves with intensified mortar-fire. Field decided to hold the position with a few men only and sent away L./Cpl. Broadbridge with a dozen men, including five walking wounded. These got through safely and joined the Middlesex at Leighton Hill.

During the day Lieut. Field was severely wounded on four separate occasions, and the wonderful determination and fighting-spirit he showed under the circumstances was beyond all praise. At about 1800 hours he collapsed from exhaustion and loss of blood. L./Cpl. K. C. Hung had again been wounded—mortally, Cpl. Rix (Canadian) was disabled, and of the little party only Sgt. White was unwounded. Just before dark, a Japanese officer came in with a flag of truce. Sgt. White went out to meet him. The officer offered them their lives if they surrendered, and White, who was down to his last five rounds, accepted the terms.

To do them justice, the Japanese kept their word after their own fashion. The seriously wounded men were left to die; but those able to walk were spared; and those who survived the next day's march lived to reach the prison camp.

In Wongneichong Gap, Major Stewart with CSM V. H. White, Sgt. G. Winch and four OR remained in the HQ shelter. The enemy apparently decided that it would prove too expensive to "winkle them out", and made no attack on the shelter. On the night of the 22nd, having been without food for four days and running short of ammunition, they evacuated the position and made their way, in pairs, back to our lines.

Colonel Shoji stated in his war-diary that "after sixteen hours of hard fighting" his troops took their objectives. He gave his losses as "over 800". The defenders lost 160 out of 230 men engaged. Of nine officers, six were killed and two wounded.

THE ACTION OF THE MTBs

Meanwhile a very gallant attempt was being made by the Second Motor Torpedo Boat Flotilla, commanded by Lieut.-Commander G. H. Gandy, RN (retired), to attack enemy shallow-draft vessels which were ferrying troops from the mainland to the island. These were presumably the two battalions of the Divisional Reserve; the two Divisional Artillery Groups and other units.

At 0730 hours on the 19th, six Motor Torpedo Boats made a rendezvous at Green Island and were ordered to attack in pairs.

MTB's 07 (Lieut. R. W. Ashby, HKRNVR) and 09 (Lieut. Kennedy, RNVR), made a successful attack and sank one enemy landing-craft, set another on fire and forced a third to run for the

beach. On their return, 07 was hit in the engine-room by a shell and had to be towed back by 09. The second pair then went into the attack, but by this time the Japanese had stopped ferrying across the harbour. MTB 18 (Lieut. J. B. Colle, HKRNVR) received a direct hit in the conning-tower, killing the commander and the Lieutenant (Sub-Lieut. D. McGill, HKRNVR). Completely out of control and burning heavily, she crashed into the sea-wall alongside Chatham Road near the Kowloon Docks. MTB 11 (Lieut. J. C. Collingwood, RN) was hit, but managed to get back.

By now the Japanese were shelling from both sides of the harbour and Japanese aircraft were attacking the MTB's with light bombs and machine-gun fire. Under the circumstances, the other two boats were ordered not to attack, but the signal apparently never reached MTB 26 (Lieut. D. W. Wagstaff, HKRNVR), which went into the harbour and was last seen lying stopped off North Point, under heavy fire. Her captain, the Lieutenant (Sub-Lieut. J. C. Eager, HKRNVR), the Coxswain (Petty-Officer Bowden) and all hands were killed.

Our casualties in this action were almost 50 per cent of personnel engaged. Two boats were sunk; one badly damaged and one slightly damaged, and it was not thought that adequate results would accrue from any further similar attempts.

For his part in this action Lieut. R. W. Ashby was awarded the Distinguished Service Cross.

THE WITHDRAWAL FROM THE SHEK - O PENINSULA AND THE EVACUATION OF THE TAITAM VALLEY

Within little more than twelve hours from their initial landing, the Japanese had made substantial progress. Shoji's men were engaged in 'mopping-up' in the Jardine's Look-Out area, which, as we have said, occupied them for most of the day. A battalion of the Doi Butai had taken West Brigade HQ and was pressing southwards from Wongneichong Gap. In the east of the island one of Tanaka's battalions was in Taitam Valley, with nothing to oppose it except one HKSRA battery and Penn's handful; the other battalion was attacking the two companies of Royal Rifles on the east slopes of Mount Parker.

The enemy advance to Sai Wan threatened East Brigade HQ. This consequently withdrew to Stone Hill near Stanley. Brigadier Wallis also decided to withdraw the troops from the Shek-O Peninsula, which, in the event of an enemy break-through at Sai Wan, would be cut off. These troops comprised two platoons of Royal Rifles and two HKVDC units; the 1st Battery which was at Cape D'Aguiar and No. 2 (Scottish) Company which was distributed along the peninsula from Pottinger Gap to Island Bay, with HQ in Mitchell's bungalow.

Major Paterson and his men, thus isolated, made one of the finest defences of the whole battle. They held the Power Station throughout the night; and, when driven out, continued house-to-house fighting. A party of a dozen Middlesex and Volunteers held the main office building until it burned over their heads. Part of the fighting centred round a derelict omnibus in King's Road, the so-called 'Battle of the Bus'. It was here that Pte. T. E. ("Tam") Pearce told Paterson that he would as soon be killed under a bus as roasted alive inside a burning building, and "at the time there seemed to be quite a bit in what he said—not much choice either way". It was here too that after Cpl. R. P. Dunlop and Ptes. V. Sorby, Pearce and J. Roscoe had become casualties, the last man, Pte. G. E. Gahagan, drove off an enemy patrol single-handed, killing the officer and four men with five rounds.

Captain J. K. Jacosta was killed and Captain R. G. Burch wounded, but the fight continued until well into the morning of the next day, the 19th, when the enemy completed their mopping-up. A few of the Hughesiliers managed to get away; Major Paterson with the others surrendered when the ammunition was exhausted and further resistance impossible.

THE FIGHT AT QUARRY GAP

When the Hughesiliers and details of the Middlesex and Rajputs were still holding out on the North Shore, Tanaka's second battalion and all three of Shoji's battalions were advancing against our second line.

To meet this attack we had two companies of the HKVDC between Blue Pool Road and Mount Parker. On the left was No. 3 Company (Major Stewart), spread out over a wide area. No. 7 Platoon (Captain L. B. Holmes) occupied three forward posts on the Ride north of Jardine's Look-Out. Lieut. B. C. Field with Sgt. G. J. White and 18 men of No. 9 Platoon occupied the two pill-boxes on the south-eastern slope; the remainder of that platoon and No. 8 Platoon (Lieut. D. J. N. Anderson) held section posts on Blue Pool Road, Stubbs Road, Wongneichong Gap, south end of the Ride and Stanley Gap.

On the right of No. 3 Company was the whole of the Mount Butler feature undefended. Beyond that was No. 1 Company with HQ in Taitam Valley Bungalow. No. 1 Platoon (2/Lieut. B. S. Carter) was in Quarry Gap, No. 2 Platoon (Lieut. J. Redman) at Repulse Bay View, too far away to be of any immediate assistance, and No. 3 Platoon, under 2/Lieut. R. S. Edwards, with the four carriers, was patrolling the Reservoir Road. On the right of No. 1 Company was 'C' Company Royal Rifles, who were holding the eastern slope of Mount Parker, with one platoon near Boa Vista.

This latter company was in danger of having its flank turned by the enemy advance to Sai Wan Hill. The Japanese announced

before the rush swept on to them, but they inflicted considerable loss on the enemy at point-blank range, and then fought it out with bayonets. There were two survivors.

The enemy advancing up the Taikoo Path were at first believed to be some of the Rajputs retreating. Carter shouted, "Who the Hell are you? Answer or we fire," and the reply was the banzai yell, followed by a charge. The little party swept the path and adjacent hillside with Vickers and L.G. fire for ten minutes and broke up every attempt of the enemy to rush the position. The darkness, however, enabled the Japanese to crawl in close and throw grenades, and also to infiltrate through the very thin line. Captain Penn was struck on the helmet by a grenade splinter and was temporarily stunned. At about the same time the LMG's were overrun. Carter, left alone on the left side, moved to the other flank and found Sgt. Murphy, with only three men of his gun-crews left, trying to withdraw his guns, the enemy being already in his rear. Carter ordered him to put the guns out of action and fall back along the Taitam Path. As the Japanese were now through the Gap, Carter, concerned for the safety of the HKSRA battery in the valley behind, withdrew down Taitam Path with Sgt. Murphy's party and two others. Penn, on recovering, collected three more survivors, one of whom he sent back to Company HQ to bring up the CSM's party. The messenger never arrived, and Penn, after waiting for about twenty minutes, during which time he had the satisfaction of shooting a Japanese officer in the very act of sending up the success-signal, realised that the position was irretrievably lost, and withdrew to Taitam Bungalow.

In this fight No. 1 Platoon had 19 killed, wounded and missing.

Meanwhile Carter had got word to Lieut. Bompas, commanding the battery, which at once opened fire on the Gap and adjacent ground.

Tanaka's two battalions made no further movement during the night. At dawn his left or easterly battalion, which had penetrated as far as Sai Wan Hill, began to bring heavy pressure against the two companies of Royal Rifles which were holding a line from Mount Parker to Pottinger Gap, linking up with No. 5 Platoon (Scottish) HKVDC. His right battalion moved forward into Taitam Valley.

On arriving back at Taitam Bungalow, Captain Penn and 2/Lieut. Carter collected the survivors of No. 1 Platoon, the HQ party and a few Rajputs—in all, about thirty men—and disposed them to cover the bungalow and the battery.

At dawn the battery commenced shelling the enemy on the opposite slopes, below Mount Parker. This continued for some hours; the Japanese, evidently unaware how small a force was opposing them, made no attempt to advance against Penn's front, contenting themselves with long-range fire.

became so 'involved in thick undergrowth' that Major Gresham halted and waited for daylight. At dawn the company found itself facing enemy troops, presumably from Doi Butai. Major Gresham was killed and the company annihilated.

Shoji's advance troops, working to time-table, waited for dawn before advancing further. Shoji stated that he sent one battalion round either side of Jardine's Look-Out and the third assaulted the summit. This delay did us no good, since the promised reinforcement of 'A' Company Grenadiers did not materialise; and it served the enemy in good stead in one instance. Macarthy, whose platoon straddled the Ride, withdrew to his day positions a quarter of an hour before dawn, and it was just at that time that the Japanese advance troops came along the Ride. Their rubber footwear made no sound and it was impossible to see them in the darkness. Macarthy was thus 'by-passed'; at dawn three of his men joined Sgt. White's party in Pill-box 2, the remainder withdrew across the small valley to protect the Brigade HQ shelters.

Why the enemy did not attempt to rush the two pill-boxes under cover of darkness remains a mystery. They certainly knew where they were. It was an error that cost them dearly when daylight came.

At about 0630 hours, at first light, the Japanese advance party 'bumped' the section post held by L./Cpl. R. Ma's section. They did not apparently expect this and there was considerable confusion and shouting, and the main body halted, bunched on the Ride. There was just light enough for Lieut. Field to see this enemy concentration in his rear; he opened fire from P.B.1 and "the Nips caught a packet". Massed on the Ride, they were unable to deploy or take cover quickly. This broke up the first assault on Wongnei-chong Gap.

L./Cpl. Ma's section gave a good account of itself and held the attack for about a quarter of an hour. The leading enemy platoon which had advanced in close formation was almost completely "written-off" and the enemy suffered many more casualties before they eventually worked around the flank and took the position with a bayonet charge. Of the nine men in the section five were killed and three wounded.

Just before 0700 hours a company of Japanese, working up the stream-bed to avoid the fire from the pill-boxes, rushed Wongnei-chong Gap, driving back Cpl. M. S. Lau's section there. The success-signal went up, but the customary shrill yell of triumph was rudely cut short by Field who opened fire on the enemy while massed in the Gap and again scattered them with heavy losses.

Cpl. Lau, with three of his men, held the Gap until the enemy took Police-Station Knoll (now occupied by House No. 1, Repulse Bay Road). Lau, the last survivor, cut his way through to the Deepwater Bay Road and joined with 'B' Company, Middlesex.

In Mount Butler Gap, French's Canadians held out until about 0900 hours, when they were attacked from both sides. French was killed; the survivors tried to cut their way through to Taitam Valley, but very few succeeded.

On the summit of Jardine's Look-Out, Birkett's men, coming up soon after dawn, found the Japanese in great strength swarming up the northern slope, they having also apparently found the ascent impossible in darkness. A stubborn fight continued throughout the morning, the Canadians holding on gallantly against very heavy odds—according to Shoji, there was an entire battalion there. Birkett was twice hit and finally killed; his platoon sergeant, Marsh, was wounded and disabled. Eventually at about 1330 hours the survivors made their way down the west side of the hill, hoping to reach Happy Valley. Field went out from P.B. 1 and rescued a party of five, whom he brought back to his position.

The defence of the pill-boxes was a truly magnificent effort. Field had twenty of his own men with three Canadians, and this small party, completely isolated and unsupported, held the pill-boxes throughout the day, inflicted very heavy losses and occupied the attention of the greater part of Shoji's force. During the day, the Japanese were unable to make use of the Ride or to occupy Wong-neichong Gap, the slopes of Mount Nicholson or the ground to the westward down to Tai Hang Road. This would have afforded an excellent line for a counter-attack on Jardine's Look-Out, but, as Brigade HQ was in enemy hands, it was impossible to get a message through.

After the enemy took Stanley Gap, efforts were concentrated on the pill-boxes, heavy mortar-fire alternating with infantry attacks and attempts to infiltrate. All attacks were repulsed. The dead ground near the pill-boxes enabled enemy snipers to crawl in close and fire at the loop-holes, and in P.B. 1 seven out of the crew of eight were hit, but the fire of the machine-guns never slackened. L./Cpl. K. C. Hung, badly wounded, carried on pluckily throughout the day, and Pte. G. White, at a time when Lieut. Field had been wounded for the first time and was lying unconscious, set a fine example by keeping up rapid and accurate fire, though his loop-hole was the most exposed, and three men in quick succession had been hit there. Later he was wounded and the gun wrecked, but he carried on with a rifle.

The enemy made two attempts to advance along the catchwater which runs between the two pill-boxes. The first was frustrated by Lieut. Field, who went out and lobbed grenades into the catchwater; the second by L./Cpl. N. Broadbridge and Ptes. G. Jitts and T. Leonard. About midday an attack nearly succeeded, a party of Japanese getting on top of P.B. 1 and throwing grenades in through the loop-holes. This enemy party was wiped out with the help of some of the men from P.B. 2. By this time P.B. 1 was a complete

At 0400 hours No. 2 Company was told to hold itself in readiness for a counter-attack, but the order was countermanded; and at 0800 hours orders were given to retire on Stanley. At Cape D'Aguilar Captain Rees destroyed his guns and 1st Battery proceeded by road. Bdr. P. Wilson, Acting BQMS was sent back to obtain supplies but was never seen again; he presumably ran into the enemy. Captain Crozier, commanding 2nd Battery, which was at Bluff Head, mustered all available private cars and sent them out to assist in the withdrawal. Both units arrived at Stanley at about 1500 hours. The gunners, for the next few days, acted as infantry reserves by day and as coast-watchers by night. Major Forsyth with the Scottish Company occupied Sugar-Loaf Hill.

In Taitam Valley the Japanese made no attempt to attack frontally, apparently believing that they had a large force to deal with. Penn, having with great difficulty established telephone contact with East Brigade, asked for reinforcements. He was told to hold his ground as "a counter-attack was being initiated from Wongneichong area which would sweep the enemy out of Taitam Valley." In point of fact, the two companies in that area were at that moment trying desperately to hold their ground against the whole force of Shoji's attack. This is a striking example of the difficulties of the Higher Command due to the break-down of communications, and consequent absence of up-to-date information.

By 0800 hours the men of the Royal Rifles on Mount Parker were finding it difficult to hold their ground; and the 6 inch Howitzer battery below Mount Parker was in danger of being overrun.

As the morning wore on, large numbers of the enemy made their way past Penn's left flank, and the situation both of his small force and of the Battery became precarious. At 1130 hours Lieut. Bompas was ordered to put his guns out of action and withdraw to Stanley; and shortly before midday, Captain Penn was also ordered to withdraw the party in Taitam Valley and No. 2 Platoon from Repulse Bay View; 2/Lieut. Edwards with the Carriers was to remain to cover the withdrawal of the Royal Rifles from Mount Parker. By 1600 hours the withdrawal had been completed; the Royal Rifles of Canada, Nos. 1 and 2 Companies and 1st and 2nd Batteries HKVDC were concentrated in the Stanley area. Thus the whole north-eastern part of the island was in enemy hands; this area included Taitam Reservoir.

THE FIGHT AT POSTBRIDGE

From Wongneichong Gap southwards the attack was carried on by units of Colonel Doi's 228th Regiment, presumably the battalion which had overrun Stanley Gap; and these found their way barred by the defending force at Postbridge, a large house south of the Gap.

The naval contingent had arrived there by chance. During the previous night a report had been sent to Aberdeen that "a house near Wongneichong Gap was signalling to the enemy", and a naval party of ten men volunteered to investigate and went up from Cornflower Base at Deepwater Bay. The party included two senior officers, Lieut.-Commander J. C. M. Grenham and Lieut.-Commander P. Dulley. The house indicated proved to be the HQ of a HKSRA battery, commanded by Major Crowe. The party went on to search other houses, and, soon after dawn, was fired on at close range, returned the fire and withdrew to Postbridge. Here Major Crowe and Captain Atkinson collected some of their gunners.

Soon after 0800 hours the Japanese opened heavy fire on the house. Captain Airey (HKSRA) was killed and Mr. G. G. Tinson, the owner of the house, who was assisting in the defence, was mortally wounded.

Contact was made with Naval HQ and Lieut.-Commander Grenham asked that a company might be sent from Repulse Bay area along the catchwater; thus enfilading the enemy, who appeared to be mainly around the police-station knoll. This promised reinforcement never arrived. A runner was sent back to the Ridge, asking for Vickers guns and ammunition. The guns were sent—unfortunately, still in boxes and thick oil.

At 1030 hours a reinforcement was sent up from Deepwater Bay. This comprised a naval detachment from 'Thracian' and another party of the HKRNVR. The officer in charge of the party, not clearly understanding the situation around the Gap, brought his transport too far up the road and came under point-blank fire, rifle and machine-gun, from the knoll. There were a number of casualties. Most of the survivors and some of the wounded later made their way to Postbridge.

Contact was made with a battery, which opened fire on the knoll and demolished the police-station building. A number of Japanese crawled down the slopes below Mount Nicholson, using their ground-sheets as camouflage. They were betrayed by the wind, and were severely shot up.

In the early afternoon a party of Winnipeg Grenadiers came up the Deepwater Bay Road, the advance party of 'B' Company which had been sent to participate in the counter-attack on Wongneichong Gap. This diverted the enemy's attention and there was a lull in the attack on Postbridge.

THE COUNTER - ATTACK ON WONGNEICHONG GAP AND JARDINE'S LOOK - OUT

As has been said, by 1000 hours West Brigade HQ had fallen, though the shelters north of the road were still held by some of Macarthy's men. The fact that the whole Brigade staff, as well as

the personnel of HQ East Group Artillery had been killed and that Brigade telephone lines were in enemy hands may have been the reason for the delay in making a counter-attack, but it was probably the paucity of troops available for such an effort. It was impossible to withdraw any of the troops holding the shore line from Causeway Bay round to West Bay, since this would merely invite another enemy landing; and the only troops that could be spared were the Royal Scots, and part of the Punjabis and Grenadiers.

At 1100 hours Lieut.-Colonel Kidd moved 'B' and 'C' Companies, Punjabis, to the position east of Leighton Hill, to relieve pressure on the Rajputs. From there the Punjabis pushed towards Tai Hang.

It was not until 1300 hours that our counter-attack developed. The two Punjabi companies were ordered to strike north-eastwards towards the North Point Power Station. 'B' Company Rajputs, which included the survivors of 'D' Company, was to advance eastwards from Leighton Hill. 'A' and 'D' Companies Royal Scots were to attack from Middle Gap and the Filter Beds respectively, with Wongneichong Gap as their objective, and 'B' Company Winnipeg Grenadiers was to advance from Deepwater Bay and attack the Gap from the south side.

The personnel of the Field Company Engineers HKVDC at Tai Hang was formed into an infantry unit under Captain K. S. Robertson and Lieut. I. P. Tamworth, and attached to 'D' Company, Royal Scots.

Only eight field guns were available for supporting this advance.

By 1630 hours it became clear that the enemy was in much greater strength than had been anticipated. It had been estimated from visual observation that "the enemy in the Jardine's Look-Out area was about one battalion strong." As we now know, the whole of Shoji's Butai was there, together with one battalion of Doi's while both of Tanaka's battalions were by now in Taitam Valley, not far away. This constituted a force which, even allowing for casualties, was larger than our total infantry strength.

'B' Company Punjabis (Major Kumta Prasad) made considerable headway, but the Rajputs were held up. The Royal Scots attacked gamely, advancing along either side of Mount Nicholson. Unfortunately, the line of approach from Tai Hang Road to the pill-boxes, which Field had been keeping open all day, was not attempted.

It was not until after the pill-boxes had been overrun that 'D' Company Royal Scots fought past the shelters where some Canadians were still holding out and one platoon actually reached Sir Cecil's Ride, but had to fall back immediately in face of vastly superior numbers. The attempt to re-take police-station knoll failed and 'D' Company lost heavily there. Captain Pinkerton was wounded for the second time (he had previously been hit at Golden Hill);

Captain Robertson was badly wounded, as was 2/Lieut. A. H. Mackenzie, a former member of the HKVDC, commissioned to the Royal Scots. 'D' Company fell back to Mount Nicholson at 2200 hours and joined the platoon of Winnipeg Grenadiers there. Tamworth joined the Canadians in the shelters where he found Lieut.-Colonel Walker, who had been wounded earlier in the day. This party in the shelters held out for one more day, but was then forced to surrender.

On the left, or north, of our line, the two Punjabi companies fell back to a line north-west of Leighton Hill.

Throughout the remainder of the night of December 19/20, the position here remained unchanged. The two Royal Scots companies 'dug in' as best they could on the east slope of Mount Nicholson. 'B' and 'C' Companies Royal Scots were brought up on their left; then 'B' Company Rajputs; then the two Punjabi companies. Leighton Hill was held by 'Z' Company, Middlesex; this comprised some thirty-five men withdrawn from the pill-boxes along the west shore, commanded by Captain F. T. Man.

December 20th

THE EVACUATION OF POSTBRIDGE

Throughout the early hours of the night the Japanese had attacked heavily against the small force holding Postbridge, which, since the failure of the counter-attack, was now isolated. At midnight the enemy opened an intense mortar bombardment, setting fire to the house, the whole front of which was demolished. Lieut.-Commander Dulley was killed at this time, Captain Atkinson of the gunners was badly wounded and there were many casualties.

It was decided that the position was no longer tenable. Major Crowe and his men retired first. The naval party made a defensive position in rear of the house; the wounded were lowered down the fifty-foot bank, and the party retired and eventually reached Aberdeen in the early hours of the morning.

The defence of Postbridge was a very fine effort. It was unfortunate that all reserves were engaged in the counter-attack on the north side, so that the small garrison was unsupported.

THE JAPANESE ADVANCE

At dawn the Japanese had their forces disposed as follows: on the eastern side of the island was the Divisional Reserve, two battalions strong, preparing to advance southwards from Taitam Valley and Sai Wan to Stanley; Tanaka's two battalions were in the vicinity of Stanley Gap, preparing to move towards Repulse Bay; one battalion of Colonel Doi's 228th was near Wongneichong Gap, ready to advance on Deepwater Bay, the other battalion was still on the North

Shore; Colonel Shoji with 230th (three battalions) was prepared to strike westwards from the Jardine's Look-Out area, his final objective, as he says in his diary, being High West.

Of these four enemy thrusts, that of the Doi Butai towards Deepwater Bay was the first to materialise, and here the enemy came up against stiff opposition at the Ridge.

THE FIGHT AT THE RIDGE

On the previous day, after the enemy had taken Wongneichong Gap, orders were given for the evacuation of all ASC stores from Deepwater Bay to the junction of Pokfulam and Island Roads. When this was completed, the ASC personnel was formed into an infantry unit and attached to a 'mixed force', under Lieut.-Colonel Fredericks. This contingent included most of the HKVDC, ASC unit, under Major F. Flippance, with whom were Captain D. L. Strellett and Captain R. R. Davies.

This unit was first sent to Bennet's Hill in expectation of an enemy thrust in that direction; but as the attack did not materialise, a move was made at midnight, December 19/20, to the Ridge. On their way along the Repulse Bay Road, the party met the wounded naval men coming down from Postbridge. The buildings on the Ridge, five in number, formed the HQ of the RAOC and the troops in occupation comprised RAOC and RASC personnel with a few naval ratings, all under the command of Lieut.-Colonel Macpherson (RAOC).

At daylight on the 20th the Ridge came under heavy mortar fire from Wongneichong Gap and there was considerable enemy activity, though no actual infantry attack was made. Later in the day, it was decided to send the RASC men back to Shouson Hill. The advance party, under Captain Strellett, came under heavy fire as soon as they reached the main road, there were several casualties and the party made their way back to the Ridge with difficulty.

During the afternoon the enemy fire was intensified; the enemy snipers were active and at about 1600 hours an attack was launched from the hillside to the east, which was beaten off. The position remained unchanged here during the remainder of the day—the Japanese not pressing the attack but keeping up continuous fire, both mortar and rifle.

THE JAPANESE ADVANCE TO REPULSE BAY

Colonel Tanaka sent off his advance party before dawn; they moved along the catchwater, which runs along the slope of Violet Hill, and were thus able, unseen and unopposed, to reach a point directly above the Hotel. From this point they attacked. It was 0930 hours when Lieut. Grounds (Middlesex) reported that the Repulse Bay Hotel was surrounded and that the Garage was in enemy hands. Grounds had with him a platoon of 'B' Company Middlesex

and some naval ratings withdrawn from the mine-control station at Chung Am Kok, also a small party of HKRNVR from Aberdeen. The situation was critical and the only available reinforcements were from the Stanley area.

THE STANLEY FRONT

As soon as the situation at Repulse Bay was known, a Relief Force was sent from Stanley. This force had a two-fold task; to break the enemy attack against Repulse Bay Hotel and to attack towards Wongneichong Gap from the south. The attack was led by No. 6 Platoon (Scottish Company) under Lieut. D. L. Prophet, followed by No. 5 Platoon (Lieut. W. Stoker) and 'A' Company Royal Rifles, under Major Young.

Prophet's men pushed forward along the Island Road, while Stoker's platoon, working along the flank, engaged the enemy who, in considerable force, were moving down from Violet Hill towards Repulse Bay View.

Contact was made with the small garrison at the Hotel which had been since early morning fighting Tanaka's advance party. The Japanese had occupied the Garage and had with them as prisoners four naval ratings and a Middlesex private. The garage was shelled by a howitzer at Stanley View and a successful attack was launched by No. 6 Platoon HKVDC. The enemy suffered heavy casualties and withdrew and the five prisoners escaped.

The Canadians and Volunteers quickly cleared the enemy from the vicinity of the hotel and patrols were then pushed forward towards the Ridge, where Macpherson's force was holding out. A Canadian platoon occupied 'Eucliff' to provide covering-fire for a further advance. This platoon, however, came under heavy fire from the enemy on Middle Spur and suffered losses.

Colonel Tanaka, for some reason, did not press his attack, and matters remained static in this area throughout the afternoon. At nightfall the Canadian and Volunteers held Eucliff, the Hotel and the high ground east of it, while the Japanese held most of Middle Spur and the slopes of Violet Hill. Attempts to push forward and connect with the force holding the Ridge were unavailing.

On the other side of Repulse Bay there was also fighting. Japanese patrols had pushed across the hills and reached Island Road north of Deepwater Bay. This, together with the thrust at Repulse Bay, threatened to cut the island into sectors. In an attempt to clear the route from Aberdeen to Repulse Bay, some of 'A' Company Punjabis were withdrawn from the pill-boxes on the north shore and moved via Aberdeen along Island Road. This party, some forty strong, found the way blocked near Shouson Hill by a strong force of Japanese and throughout the afternoon and night a fight continued here; the Punjabis at first attacking but later, as the enemy strength increased, being forced back on the defensive.

THE NORTHERN SECTOR

West Brigade was now under the command of Colonel H. B. Rose, MC, Commandant HKVDC, in succession to Brigadier Lawson. The command of the HKVDC devolved on Lieut.-Colonel E. J. R. Mitchell, OBE.

Throughout the morning the Japanese made efforts to gain the higher ground on Mount Nicholson, held by Royal Scots and Grenadiers. By 1700 hours their efforts were partly successful and they gained a foothold on the main ridge, but the steep ascent to the summit was beyond their efforts. At 1930 hours Lieut.-Colonel Sutcliffe launched a counter-attack, sending 'C' Company Grenadiers from Wanchai Gap, via Black's Link. There was artillery support for this, but after half-an-hour's fighting the Canadians were forced to fall back, and during the early part of the night the Japanese made further progress towards the summit. Further north the Royal Scots and 'B' Company Rajputs held firmly.

The Japanese did very little attacking on this day, and possibly were resting their troops after the strenuous efforts of the previous day.

December 21st

THE RIDGE

Early in the morning, at about 0300 hours, a platoon of 'A' Company Royal Rifles from Repulse Bay area reached the Ridge and reinforced the troops there. The other platoons of 'A' Company and the two Scottish platoons were held up and soon after dawn a heavy enemy attack forced these to withdraw and the Ridge was again isolated. Throughout the day there was desultory fire on the houses.

After nightfall Lieut.-Colonel Macpherson decided to send the RAOC personnel to Repulse Bay. Fredericks was given command. A party was sent out, under CSM Hamlon (RASC) to reconnoitre a route along Middle Spur. This party had a brush with the enemy and retired to 'Overbays'.

The fate of the men who left the Ridge that night is a story of its own, and a grim one. In the dark it was impossible to keep touch; Japanese patrols were on the alert; few of the men knew the direction. A number were cut off. The remainder approached the hotel, which was by then closely invested by the enemy, and had to run the gauntlet of machine-guns as they made their final dash through the glare of a searchlight. Less than a dozen men got through.

Those who surrendered, having lost their way on the hillside, were taken, together with Hamlon's party, to 'Eucliff'. They were tied up and beaten with rifle-butts. Some hours later the prisoners were taken out to the lawn, roped together in threes, and butchered. Hamlon, shot through the face, was left for dead but contrived to crawl away; he was the only survivor.

Many days later Lieut.-Colonel Ride (HKVDC) saw the corpses of these Canadian and British soldiers piled in heaps, their hands still tied behind their backs.

The force left to hold the Ridge comprised some twenty Canadians and forty of the RASC, half of these from the HKVDC. Rations were short and there was practically no drinking water.

REPULSE BAY AREA

Major Young launched an attack northwards soon after midnight, under orders from Major Templar, RA, who had taken over command in the Repulse Bay area. The attack went well for a time and made considerable headway. A platoon of 'A' Company reached the Ridge, as has been said. Soon afterwards, however, there was a counter-attack and the Canadians and the Scottish platoons were forced back towards the Hotel. 'Eucliff' was evacuated, being too exposed to enemy fire, and the Canadians were concentrated around the Hotel, the two Scottish platoons occupying the high ground, where Repulse Bay Mansions now stand. Major Templar reported that any attempt to 'break through to Wongneichong Gap', with the force at his disposal, was out of the question.

THE BATTLE OF RED HILL

In the Stanley sector efforts made during the previous night by 'B' Company Royal Rifles to move northwards by way of Stanley Mound and Violet Hill had proved abortive. It was decided to try to link up with the troops in the northern sector by attacking through Taitam Valley, the area which we had tamely given up two days earlier. Brigadier Wallis planned an attack along the main Island Road to Taitam cross-roads, which was to be the first objective. From there, if things went well, the attack would continue through the valley to Stanley Gap. The troops detailed for this operation were two companies of Royal Rifles and No. 1 Company HKVDC, all under the command of Lieut.-Colonel Home (Royal Rifles).

Captain Penn, with better knowledge of the terrain, suggested that Notting Hill and Bridge Hill should first be occupied, since this would cover the left flank of the road advance, and also fire could be brought to bear from the summit directly on to the cross-roads. It was then decided that 2/Lieut. Carter, who knew the country well, should lead the way up the hills with ten riflemen from No. 1 Company HKVDC, followed by a platoon of Canadians. The road attack was to be led by the Carriers (No. 3 Platoon) followed by the rest of No. 1 Company and the HQ Company of the Royal Rifles, under Major Macauley, MC.

The flank party, strengthened by the inclusion of Lieut. E. M. Bryden and a section of Vickers guns from No. 2 Company HKVDC, moved off at 0915 hours; the road party a few minutes later. Near 'Brinville' the Carriers came under heavy fire; one man

was killed and F./O. Thomson, who was acting as Intelligence Officer, was badly wounded. A section of Royal Rifles, led by Lieut. Fry, and accompanied by Lieut. Bompas (HKSRA) was sent to occupy Red Hill. Captain Penn took his LMG's forward to where he could bring fire to bear on Cash's Bungalow, from which the enemy was quickly driven.

The Japanese on Red Hill were reinforced, as could be seen from the flanking party. Both Fry and Bompas were killed, and the Canadians were driven back down the slope. The LMG's at the foot of the hill then came under heavy fire, and within a few minutes Captain Penn and 2/Lieut. Redman were both wounded and disabled, and Sgt. N. L. White was mortally wounded, as well as other casualties. Major Macauley then sent back for reinforcements since it was impossible to advance further while the Japanese held Red Hill in force.

Meanwhile 2/Lieut. Edwards with the carriers, followed by some of No. 1 Company and a few Canadians, had pushed forward to within striking distance of the cross-roads. An enemy battery on the slope beyond the reservoir was engaged by the Carriers and most of the gunners were shot down. Edwards went forward with the riflemen, covered by the carriers, but found the enemy in strength. Edwards and Cpl. J. M. Houghton were killed. The remainder fell back to the carriers, where Sgt. G. Lemay took charge. Lemay decided to stand his ground, hoping that the flanking party would soon afford covering-fire for another attack on the enemy position.

Carter and his ten men took the crest of Notting Hill without difficulty, but Bridge Hill was strongly held. Captain Clark, with a platoon of Canadians, came up, and an obstinate fight continued for several hours. The Japanese were eventually driven off the crest of the hill by the expedient of setting fire to the undergrowth. Bryden then brought up his MG's and, at about 1400 hours, fire was directed on to the cross-roads, but by that time Lemay's small party, outnumbered and outflanked, had fallen back. Fire was then directed, at extreme range, on to the crest of Red Hill, but with little apparent effect. At about 1600 hours enemy light tanks were seen on the road near Taitam Tuk Dam, and these were engaged by Bryden's guns.

By 1700 hours the Japanese on Red Hill had been reinforced, and now outnumbered the attackers heavily. Major Macauley ordered his troops to fall back to the vicinity of Palm Villa. At 1800 hours the flanking party was recalled—and that ended the fight for Red Hill.

Sgt. Lemay's party had only just returned, when orders came that they were to proceed to Repulse Bay Hotel to assist in the defence there. There were only two carriers left. Sgt. Lemay's party set off at 1800 hours, reached the hotel without incident, and took an active part in the defence there, as will be told later.