

DEEPWATER BAY AND SHOUSON HILL

Colonel Doi's forces had already isolated the Ridge and pushed on across the golf-course. By 1600 hours they were attacking Pill-box 14 and Brick Hill, both held by men of 'A' Company Middlesex. H.M.S. Cicala (gunboat) was sent round from Aberdeen. The gunboat entered Deepwater Bay and vigorously shelled the enemy, breaking up the attack for a time. The Japanese aircraft attacked her with bombs and machine-gun fire, and she was eventually holed and sank later in Lamma Channel.

Throughout the previous night, as has been said, forty men of 'A' Company Punjabis had been engaged with the enemy at Shouson Hill. They had fought hard and had lost nearly half their strength. Lieut.-Colonel Kidd went to the scene himself. He was killed and only four of the Punjabis were left standing.

Captain (temporary Major) A. J. Dewar (RASC) with some twenty of the HKRNVR occupied and held the two houses on top of Shouson Hill. This 'island of resistance' fought magnificently and held out until the final surrender four days later. Major M. Hanlon (RAOC), with a few of his men, held the RAOC Depot at Little Hong Kong while Major H. Marsh (Middlesex) collected some fifty men, of various units, and defended the 'Combined Company HQ' in the same area.

These individual efforts prevented the Japanese from penetrating further but P.B.14 was taken and the Middlesex position on Brick Hill was overrun, despite gallant resistance. Some days later (on the 29th December) Lieut.-Colonel Ride saw on the beach a pile of headless corpses, with hands and feet tied, which showed what had been the fate of the wounded men of the Middlesex.

At the seaward extremity of Brick Hill there was the 17th Battery HKSRA. The O.C., Captain Bartram, went out in front of the position with a tommy-gun and a bucket of grenades, and put up a stout fight before being killed. Lieut. Fairclough conducted the defence from the gun position. The position was eventually overrun. Fairclough was wounded and left for dead. Under cover of darkness he climbed down the cliff to a cave, where he remained for four days. He then swam to Aberdeen, only to find that the fighting was over. He later escaped from Shamshuipo Camp—but that is another story.

THE NORTHERN SECTOR

In this area the Japanese at dawn pushed forward vigorously at Mount Nicholson and along Black's Link, forcing back the Royal Scots. They also pushed back our line further north, which exposed the flank of 'B' Company Punjabis, which had been moved across to fill the gap between the Royal Scots and the Rajputs. Major Prasad withdrew his company to conform.

At 0700 hours Brigadier Rose arranged another counter-attack, and 'C' Company, Winnipeg Grenadiers attacked from Middle Gap. Some ground was made but the Japanese were firmly dug in on the eastern slope of Mount Nicholson. At 0815 hours the Canadians fell back; the enemy attacked in turn, and finally by about 1000 hours reached the crest of the hill. From this position they could command the whole of the western slope, Middle Gap and the east slope of Mount Cameron. The Grenadiers on Black's Link had to withdraw, and our next 'strong point' was Mount Cameron, held by 'C' Company Grenadiers.

As a reserve for this area, men of 'D' Company Punjabis were withdrawn from the pill-boxes on the north shore and sent to Wanchai Gap, at which place were now located the HQ of both West Brigade and the Grenadiers.

The Japanese followed up their success at Mount Nicholson by making an attack along King's Road, while from a position near the Power Station they directed a heavy mortar fire on to the Naval Yard. At 1030 hours there was another enemy landing, this time in the Causeway Bay area; and it was reported that 'the house-tops in the area were crowded with them.' This force was presumably the advance party of either the Suzukawa or the Kanki Butai, both of which were brought across during this and the following day. An A.A. Lewis-gun post at Watson's Factory, Causeway Bay, manned by men of No. 6 Company HKVDC, was overrun. By noon the Japanese were pressing their attack down King's Road, and every gun in the Naval Yard was out of action, due to intensive mortar fire.

Our 'Line' now ran as follows. West side of Causeway Bay—Leighton Hill—Wongneichong Village—Mount Cameron—Bennet's Hill. The units holding it were, from North to South, 'C' Company Punjabis; 'Z' Company Middlesex; 'B' Company Rajputs; 'B' Company Punjabis; four companies of Royal Scots; 'C' Company Grenadiers (on Mount Cameron); 'D' and 'B' Companies Grenadiers, holding from Mount Cameron to Bennet's Hill, inclusive; then mixed units of 'A' Company Middlesex, Sappers, Naval Ratings, Officers and men of the HKRNVR and men of administrative details.

At Repulse Bay there were 'A' Company Royal Rifles (less one platoon); a platoon of Middlesex; a naval party; two platoons of No. 2 Company HKVDC and the Carriers from No. 1 Company HKVDC.

At Stanley there were the remainder of the Royal Rifles, 'C' and part of 'D' companies Middlesex, withdrawn from the pill-boxes; 1st and 2nd Batteries HKVDC and the residue of 1 and 2 Companies HKVDC.

Of the other HKVDC units, No. 3 Company, having lost all its officers and 70 per cent of its personnel, had practically ceased to exist. Some of its survivors were with the Middlesex at Leighton

Hill, some at Stanley, some attached to No. 6 Company HKVDC. Nos. 4 and 7 Companies, which were much below strength, were forming a second line of defence behind Mount Cameron. No. 5 Company was in the Mount Davis area, in case of a surprise landing in the West Point area. No. 6 Company was still distributed along the North Shore on A.A. defence. 3rd Battery was still on Aberdeen Island. 4th and 5th Batteries had been "written-off". The Armoured Car Platoon, with only two vehicles left, was operating in the North Sector. It had done excellent service during the two counter-attacks at Wongneichong Gap.

December 22nd

THE LAST FIGHT AT THE RIDGE

Early, at about 0500 hours, a telephone message was received from Repulse Bay that all officers and men capable of doing so should retire after dark and make for the hotel. At 1000 hours the Japanese made an attack, which was beaten off with considerable loss to the enemy, but it was evident that this was only the prelude to a full-scale assault on the Ridge. Fortress HQ left the decision to Macpherson, as to whether to fight it out, try to withdraw or surrender.

Both food and water had run out by now. At 1500 hours the Japanese opened with shell and mortar fire and it was clearly only a question of time before the houses were completely demolished. Lieut.-Colonel Macpherson then ordered Captain Strellett to put out a white flag. The latter did so, and had it shot out of his hand by a machine-gun burst. Lieut.-Colonel Macpherson then walked to the door holding a flag, and fell, badly wounded. This ended the attempt to surrender.

Orders were then given for the evacuation of the position that night. Two men remained to take care of the wounded. The forty officers and men who were left split up into small parties and made their way over the hills. They had barely gone before the Japanese broke in. They found only Lieut.-Colonel Macpherson and about thirty other wounded. These were treated in the same manner as the prisoners at 'Eucliff'. Six days later Lieut.-Colonel Ride saw their corpses piled in a heap some fifty yards from the house.

Captain Strellett's party reached 'Twinbrooks', where, on the morning of the 24th, they were surrounded and had to surrender.

Another party, with CSM S. D. Begg in charge, made for Repulse Bay, which was already in enemy hands. At Eucliff they were fired on, went over the wall and took refuge in a natural cave below the house, where they found several Canadians. The following night (the 23rd) Begg gave orders that all who could swim were to follow him and at 1930 hours he led the way into the water. At that moment CSM Hamlon 'a mess of blood' joined the party—having just left the scene of the Eucliff massacre.

The phosphorescence in the water betrayed the swimmers and the Japanese swept the surface of the bay with machine-gun fire. Some of the swimmers were hit; some died later of cold and exhaustion in the water. It was not until 1700 hours on the 24th that Begg and two others reached Stanley, after nearly twenty-two hours in the water. CSM Hamlon remained, and later joined a party, including Major Young and CQMS J. Meyer (HKVDC) which reached Lamma Island.

WITHDRAWAL FROM REPULSE BAY

During the previous night the men of the Royal Rifles had made a great effort to push forward to 'Altamira' on the main road and so cover the withdrawal from the Ridge; but they were pushed back by overwhelmingly superior numbers and by dawn were back in the hotel area. Throughout the morning Repulse Bay was under heavy mortar fire from the enemy on Middle Spur. Sgt. Lemay took his Carriers into action against them and Lieut. Prophet moved No. 6 Platoon to the ridge immediately south-west of the hotel and engaged the enemy with MG and LMG fire. With the assistance of the artillery in the Stanley area the position was partially stabilised. The Japanese, however, continued their attacks fiercely. Their two battalions, though much reduced in numbers, were numerically far superior to the defending force. One of the Carriers received a direct hit near the entrance to the hotel and the other was later put out of action near South Bay Road bridge. Sgt. Lemay's party was then attached to No. 6 Platoon. The Canadians were forced to fall back to the hotel, leaving the Volunteers holding the ridge above.

Major Templar decided that the position was no longer tenable. Defence of the hotel itself with the enemy holding all the higher ground, would be impossible. He gave orders for a withdrawal under cover of night. The position was complicated by the presence of civilians, including women and children. It was first decided that they should accompany the troops and No. 6 Platoon was detailed to act as guard for these civilian evacuees. The order was cancelled later as it was decided that the civilians would run far greater risk by making their way through enemy patrols than by remaining in the hotel.

The evacuation was to be made via the tunnel leading from the hotel to the Lower Beach Road and thence past the Lido up to the main Island Road; from there the withdrawal would be either by the road or over Stanley Mound. To safeguard this route it was essential that the bridge crossing the Lido Road should be occupied and held to prevent the enemy coming from the direction of Repulse Bay View towards Lower Beach Road. No. 6 Platoon was detailed for this task and Lieut. Prophet moved with his platoon towards Violet Hill area and throughout the afternoon they were in action against the enemy in that area. Several patrols of the enemy were engaged and driven off. In a further attempt to clear out the enemy

snipers, the undergrowth was fired. At 1600 hours the platoon withdrew, leaving a section under Sgt. T. Stainton, to deal with any further enemy movement in that area.

At 1930 hours the platoon moved out again as a fighting patrol, with orders to hold the bridge at all costs from 2000 hours until 0300 hours on the following morning (the 23rd), by which time it was hoped that the members of the garrison would be well on their way to Stanley. Japanese snipers near the bridge were dealt with, and the Volunteers occupied the bridge without further incident.

The evacuation of the hotel, even when unhampered by civilians, was no easy task. The outposts were withdrawn and the men assembled in the hotel, but the Japanese pressed forward the moment the outposts moved in. An enemy patrol entered the north wing of the hotel, but these intruders were detected and dealt with quietly and unobtrusively. Lieut. 'Benny' Proulx (HKRNVR) was detailed to lead the party, as having most knowledge of the country. The troops were all in their stocking-feet to avoid noise, but the first three men who went down the narrow tunnel made such a din, their steel helmets and accoutrements rattling against the sides, that Major Templar decided to risk sending the remainder out by the road. Proulx, missing the others, returned up the tunnel to the hotel, but found only Japanese officers to whom to report, so made a hasty exit. The men followed the route indicated as far as the main Island Road, then split into small parties and made their way by devious routes over the hills. All reached Stanley safely, though one party of three, whose sense of direction is evidently not their best asset, found themselves at dawn back at the hotel, with all the weary work to do again.

Most of the wounded were removed with the troops, but two Scottish Volunteers had to be left behind, and these owe their lives to the hotel nursing sister, who on numerous occasions stood between them and the Japanese bayonets during the next three days.

Meanwhile No. 6 Platoon was covering the retirement by holding on to the bridge. Right well did they perform their task. At 2000 hours, just before the evacuation started, the Japanese made a fierce attack on the bridge. They overran Cpl. Sharp's section, but were driven off by a bayonet charge and later by L.A. fire. Intermittent assaults were made during the next five hours, but all were repulsed; and the Volunteers, having held their position for the stipulated time, withdrew at 0300 hours on the 23rd. They went back along the main road. Near Frederick's house they encountered a party of Japanese whom they put to flight with hand-grenades and a tommy-gun burst. On arriving back at Stanley, No. 6 Platoon joined Nos. 5 and 4 Platoons near Stanley View, while Lemay took his party on and rejoined the remains of No. 1 Company (now under 2/Lieut. Carter) on the isthmus.

THE NORTH SHORE

In the early hours of the morning Japanese landing-craft were seen near the Naval Yard. The pill-boxes opened fire and the boats sheered off westwards. A report came that an enemy landing had been made. Strong police patrols were sent out through the Central and Eastern Districts and found that the rumour was incorrect.

Throughout the night and continuing up to dawn, enemy launches and landing-craft kept the North Shore defences on the alert. Our pill-boxes frequently opened fire on Japanese craft. There were, however, no surprise landings; and it appears that these demonstrations were intended to compel us to keep troops along the North and East shores.

At Causeway Bay and North Point, however, the Japanese had been busy ferrying more troops across, and had, according to their reports, two more complete infantry regiments, or six battalions, on the island.

THE ENEMY BATTLE - LINE ON THE 22nd

The Japanese forces were approximately as follows: On the front from Causeway Bay to Bennet's Hill they had the remains of the 228th (Colonel Doi) and 230th (Colonel Shoji) Regiments, together with another newly landed Regiment (number not given). Tanaka's two battalions of the 229th were engaged at Bennet's Hill and Repulse Bay. In the Stanley area there was the Divisional Reserve together with another Regiment, probably under Colonel Suzukawa. They had, in other words, fifteen battalions on the island, though several of these must have been less than half strength. In addition they had apparently five or six battalions of 'garrison' troops.

DEMOLITION OF OIL INSTALLATIONS

During the morning, acting on orders from the War Office, it was determined to destroy the oil installations on the mainland. Artillery fire was brought to bear on the Texaco tanks at Tsun Wan, the Shell tanks at Tai Kok Tsui and the RN tanks about a mile south of the Cosmopolitan Docks. It was impossible, however, to shell the Socony tanks at Laichikok as they were close to the hospital of the women's prison.

THE ENEMY ADVANCE ALONG 'THE LINE OF THE GAPS'

At 0900 hours the Japanese started an attack in the Middle Gap area. The Canadians on Mount Cameron were heavily mortared and dived-bombed. They could make no reply to the dive-bombing except by rifle fire, and the ground was too rocky for them to dig in.

Later there was a heavy bombardment of the Royal Scots positions further north, particularly the flat ground known as Mount Nicholson Camp. By the early afternoon the Japanese were consolidating their positions on the northern lower slopes of Mount Cameron within a hundred yards of the Royal Scots forward defended localities.

During the afternoon Brigadier Rose judged that, from information available, the enemy was concentrating between Little Hong Kong and Mount Cameron, with the intention of attacking north-west towards Wanchai Gap. As a counter-measure, Nos. 4 and 7 Companies HKVDC were brought forward to a line running from Wanchai Gap to Mount Kellett. Lieut. G. H. Calvert (HKVDC, HQ) collected all available men from Volunteer HQ and brought them down to strengthen the line.

During the afternoon the enemy attacked the centre of our line, and, though the attack was repulsed with considerable loss to the enemy, a serious gap was made between the left flank of the Royal Scots and the right flank of 'B' Company Punjabis. After dark an attempt was made to re-adjust the line, but the enemy attacked while the move was in progress, the full force of the attack falling on the Punjabis. Major Prasad had only eight men of his company left owing to casualties and dispersal. An enemy break-through was prevented by 'B' Company Rajputs which took the Japanese in flank. The enemy, apparently unaware of their near-success, did not press the attack. 'B' Company Middlesex, withdrawn from coastal defence, was hurriedly sent in to fill the gap.

On the southern sector of our line there was little action during the day. An attack south of Mount Cameron was pushed back by 'D' Company Grenadiers. At Bennet's Hill the enemy was also repulsed.

STANLEY FRONT

After the enemy occupation of Repulse Bay, Stanley was completely isolated. Our troops occupied the line of hills—Chung Am Kok, Stanley Mound, the Twins, Notting Hill and Bridge Hill; but they were in serious straits. The Howitzers were short of ammunition—only 45 rounds left. Food was also running short. Once again, the Navy came to the rescue and the provisioning and supplying of the Stanley garrison was carried out by motor torpedo-boats from Aberdeen. The water supply to Stanley had been cut off by the Japanese capture of the Taitam Reservoir, and water had to be strictly rationed.

CONDITIONS DETERIORATING

In the evening a serious report concerning the water supply was received from the Director of Public Works. No water was coming from Taitam; the Aberdeen supply was out of action for at least three days, and only a trickle was coming from Pokfulam. . . . "The town (of Victoria) is now helpless."

Our troops were now beginning to feel the strain. The three battalions which had fought on the mainland had been on the move for fourteen days with practically no rest. The past three days had been days of continuous fighting without pause for sleep or opportunity to eat. The Japanese with their vast superiority in numbers could

afford to rest their men; we could not. They had the initiative; we were compelled to try to anticipate their attacks. There was a growing feeling among the rank and file that further resistance merely postponed the inevitable and was not worth the waste of life, though among the higher ranks it was well understood that every day, every hour, was of vital importance to the Empire war effort, and that we should fight it out to the bitter end.

December 23rd

MOUNT CAMERON

Soon after midnight the Japanese made a violent attack on Mount Cameron, held by 'C' Company Grenadiers with a few from other units intermixed. The enemy pressed the assault without regarding losses, and eventually superior numbers told. The Canadians, outnumbered ten to one, had their line of defence changed to a number of isolated groups fighting independently. Some of the survivors made their way back to Magazine Gap; others continued to resist. Lieut.-Colonel F. D. Field (RA) went forward to Wanchai Gap with the only reserves that could be spared—forty men of the Royal Marines under Captain Farrington. These joined the party of Royal Scots in Wanchai Gap, and patrols were sent forward to Mount Cameron. There was a considerable amount of confused fighting in the dark, and conflicting reports came back regarding the situation. At dawn it became clear that the Japanese held the summit of Mount Cameron, while 'A' Company Royal Scots and the Marines were still in position from Wanchai Gap to St. Albert's Convent, which was being used as a hospital. The survivors of the Canadian company were at Magazine Gap in support.

This serious loss necessitated the withdrawal of West Brigade HQ to Magazine Gap.

THE DEFENCE OF LEIGHTON HILL

Further to the north the situation was becoming critical. The Rajputs, much reduced in numbers and short of ammunition, fell back at about 0800 hours, exposing the right flank of 'Z' Company at Leighton Hill. The garrison at Leighton Hill consisted of thirty-five men of the Middlesex and the seven survivors of Field's platoon of No. 3 Company HKVDC. They had in all six Vickers guns.

This small force had held Leighton Hill against all attacks for two days. The whole surrounding area had been shelled continuously until it was reminiscent of Flanders in 1918. The Japanese had made a number of unsuccessful assaults; but now, after the withdrawal of the Rajputs the enemy could infiltrate into the streets and houses adjoining the area.

There were no reserves to send in. At Fortress HQ a party of some fifty men was collected—gunners, spare signallers, and some Royal Scots details returned from hospital and this party was hurried down to Happy Valley, where it occupied the Lee Theatre and the

houses adjacent. This served to strengthen the line, but Leighton Hill remained isolated. The enemy attacks continued violently and it seemed to be only a question of time before this 'strong point' fell into enemy hands.

At midday our line ran from Pill-box 55 on the North Shore to Leighton Hill; thence to Canal Road, St. Albert's; Wanchai Gap and Bennet's Hill.

At 1500 hours the Japanese launched an attack across the race-course. They were repulsed with heavy loss.

Throughout the afternoon both Wanchai Gap and Magazine Gap were heavily bombed. 'The position of every gap was unenviable; for the nature of the country was such that local defence was bound to be restricted and confined to the gap itself, thus providing an excellent target for the enemy air force, which did not fail to take full advantage of the opportunity.'

At 1730 hours the Royal Scots made a local counter-attack and 'A' Company secured a foothold on the western slope of Mount Cameron. This they held throughout the night.

THE WITHDRAWAL TO THE STANLEY ISTHMUS

Stanley Mound changed hands twice during the day. It remained in the hands of the Japanese and a counter-attack by 'B' Company Royal Rifles failed to dislodge them. The attack came also on Stanley View held by No. 2 Company HKVDC. No. 6 Platoon held positions on the Chung Am Kok side of Stanley View, and the Japanese made an attack on the forward section but, in doing so, exposed themselves to the flanking fire of Pte. Walker's section. These men, at a range of barely 150 yards, had easy targets, and the attacking force was virtually annihilated. The attacks were renewed during the afternoon, the brunt falling on L./Cpl. Sharpe's section on the hill immediately overlooking Island Road. L./Cpl. Sharpe was killed and there were a number of other casualties. Prophet then withdrew his platoon to join No. 7 Platoon (Lieut. Bryden) on the ridge running from Stanley View to Chung Am Kok. Here the Company held its own against infantry attacks, but was subjected to harassing fire from the higher ground on Stanley Mound.

Brigadier Wallis decided that, with the force at his disposal, it was not feasible to attempt to hold the line of hills, and that his troops could put up a better resistance on flatter ground and on a narrower front, where communication would be easier. The company of Royal Rifles had already withdrawn, and orders were sent to Major Forsyth to bring his men back from Stanley View. Brigade HQ was now reconnoitring the area and preparing three defensive lines; the first, north of Stanley Village; the second immediately south of St. Stephen's College main buildings and the third running from St. Stephen's Preparatory School to Tweed Bay.

THE SHORTAGE OF AMMUNITION IN THE NORTHERN SECTOR

The Ordnance Depot at Little Hong Kong, though still in our hands, was virtually isolated, owing to the Japanese pressure in the Deepwater Bay area. This was a very serious situation, for there was a grave shortage of ammunition, particularly for guns and mortars, in the Northern Sector.

After dark, eight ammunition lorries were sent out, escorted by an Armoured Car, with 2/Lieut. Carruthers in charge. The attempt to get through was successful, and six of the lorries returned safely with their loads. Without these, the troops would have been in even worse straits. Unfortunately it was impossible to obtain hand-grenades, which would have been of the greatest use in the street fighting which was developing in the Northern Sector.

December 24th

THE LOSS OF LEIGHTON HILL

At dawn our positions showed little change. 'Z' Company still held Leighton Hill. From there the line ran along the outside of the race-course to Morrison Hill and Mount Parrish. The remains of the two Punjabi companies and the composite company of Rajputs (now reduced to two platoons) held here. South of Mount Parrish were the Marines. The houses near the Monument were still held by details of 'B' Company Middlesex, with whom were some of the survivors of No. 3 Company HKVDC. The line through St. Albert's to Wanchai Gap was held by the Royal Scots. During the night the Japanese had made no further progress on Mount Cameron and, in fact, 'A' Company Royal Scots was now holding the northern as well as the western slopes. South of Wanchai Gap, the Grenadiers held the line down to Bennet's Hill; these were intermingled with contingents of RN, RNVR and HKRNVR. Little Hong Kong was still holding out and the party of HKRNVR, under Major Dewar, still held the summit of Shouson Hill.

The main enemy attack was in the northern sector, where the Japanese sent in all three regiments, though two of these were by this time less than half-strength. Throughout the morning there was intensive shelling of Leighton Hill. At midday there was an infantry attack which was beaten back with heavy losses to the enemy. By the afternoon, however, the position became untenable and Captain Man was ordered to withdraw if he possibly could. At about 1645 hours the withdrawal was made and, despite the fact that the Japanese had infiltrated past both flanks, most of the defenders succeeded in getting away with their guns. They joined the mixed party of gunners and Royal Scots details in the area between the Lee Theatre and Canal Road. Eight of the garrison, who were holding the further end of Leighton Hill, found their retreat cut off, and stayed to fight it out. This included two members of Cpl. Broadbridge's party from No. 3 Company HKVDC—Ptes. L. A. Fox and H. Wong. Both of these eventually got away. Fox reached Chungking and later fought in Burma.

MORRISON HILL

Following their capture of Leighton Hill, the Japanese directed an artillery barrage on to Morrison Hill, held by a platoon of 'B' Company Middlesex. By 1800 hours all the Middlesex machine-guns had been knocked out, and the Japanese then commenced pressing infantry attacks. Major R. E. Moody, DAAG, collected a party of military clerks, spare signallers, military police, etc., some thirty men in all, and took them down to strengthen the force at Morrison Hill. It is worthy of note that this party held Morrison Hill until the final surrender.

FIRES IN THE CENTRAL DISTRICT

There was very heavy shelling from both sides of the harbour during the early part of the night. The artillery fire was directed on to the Central District, the Naval Yard and Victoria Barracks. A large fire was started near the China Fleet Club, which seriously impeded forward movement. Later there were other fires in various parts of the town. By midnight the Fire Brigade, worn out with their efforts during the past few days, asked for military assistance which, under the circumstances had to be refused, as there were no men available.

THE BREAK - THROUGH AT STANLEY

Throughout the morning the Japanese had been bringing up troops in the Stanley area with the obvious intention of breaking through the defences on the isthmus. Major Forsyth, HKVDC, took charge of the Stanley Village area, as Forward Commander. The three platoons of No. 2 Company HKVDC were sent out to re-occupy Chung Am Kok, to prevent enemy penetration there. Stanley Village itself was held by the Company HQ Group of No. 2 Company—ten men in all. On the east of the village was the Stanley Platoon, HKVDC, under Lieut. Fitzgerald, with a section of Middlesex machine-gunners in support in No. 1 Bungalow. On their right was Captain Weedon's company of Middlesex with part of 'A' Company Royal Rifles.

Monastery Hill was held by a platoon of Middlesex and a section of No. 1 Company HKVDC (Cpl. E. C. Drown). Further back was the Second Line—the low ridge immediately south of St. Stephen's College, occupied by the men of 1st Battery HKVDC (Captain Rees). Sgt. Murphy with another section of No. 1 Company was in position at the north-east corner of the prison. At the Preparatory School were the rest of No. 1 Company HKVDC and a platoon of Middlesex.

The Japanese evidently intended to force the defences without further delay. They had enormous numerical superiority, for in addition to the two battalions of the Divisional Reserve, they had another full Rentai—some five battalions in all. They also had light tanks.

The Scottish Company while moving out to Chung Am Kok, passed through the right flank of the Japanese attacking force, and Cpl. Leith's section was engaged in hand-to-hand fighting and routed the enemy opposed to them, bringing away with them a quantity of Japanese equipment.

Immediately after the area was occupied, the Japanese attacked vigorously, forcing No. 6 Platoon to fall back. No. 5 Platoon was cut off and isolated. Being unable to make their way to Chung Am Kok, the men of No. 5 Platoon fought their way back to the isthmus and joined the third line of defence near the cemetery. During the night the other two Scottish platoons were attacked continuously. Sgt. Stainton, who had throughout done magnificent work, was seriously wounded at close range by a wounded Japanese officer, who was in turn dealt with by Cpl. W. E. MacFarlane. Despite all attacks, the Scots held their ground throughout the night.

On the isthmus the attack developed at 2050 hours when three enemy tanks came down the road. A light anti-tank gun, positioned on the road, scored two direct hits on the leading tanks, which caught fire; the third tank escaped. A strong infantry attack was then launched, the brunt falling on the left flank at Stanley Village. The handful of Scots held their ground gamely; Major Forsyth was wounded but refused to go back. The Stanley Platoon and the Middlesex machine-gunners also held their position and every attack was beaten back.

At 2230 hours Forsyth was again wounded seriously and was carried into the school-house adjoining the police-station. The Volunteers were losing men fast and Fitzgerald asked for reinforcements. Soon after midnight the Stanley Platoon fell back to a line with the Middlesex in the Bungalow. The Japanese by this time had control of the beach on the east side (Stanley Bay) and were sweeping the road-fork with machine-gun fire. Both the Middlesex guns were put out of action; of the 28 men of the Stanley Platoon, fourteen had been hit while every man of the Scottish party had been killed or wounded. By 0100 hours on the 25th the position became untenable and Fitzgerald decided to withdraw. The survivors of the Stanley Platoon and section of Middlesex made a hazardous withdrawal along Fort Road, and were joined by five wounded men, the survivors of Forsyth's party. CSM T. Swan, badly wounded, refused to leave his wounded commander, and remained to 'fight it out to the finish'. Neither he nor Forsyth was ever seen again. Fitzgerald's men made their way to the Preparatory School, where Major Templar (RA) and Captain Weedon (Middlesex) were forming the third line of defence.

Meanwhile on the right flank the Japanese had broken through along Beach Road soon after 0100 hours. The Middlesex machine-guns had continued firing until they were overrun, and the enemy losses must have been very high. The company of Royal Rifles, barely half-strength, fell back along Prison Road. The break-through

was complete. Monastery Hill was still held by details of Middlesex and Volunteers, but this was now isolated, and the Japanese pressed on past St. Stephen's College to our second line. Here they were held up.

Captain West (Middlesex) had placed a platoon of his company in the centre of the ridge, and the men of 1st Battery HKVDC were holding the line from Prison Road to Fort Road. The Battery had been reorganised into four infantry sections. On the extreme right was Sgt. Millington's section lining the Prison Road; 2/Lieut. H. S. Jones had a section covering the road entrance to the College; on his left were two sections under 2/Lieut. H. G. Muir, one in the vicinity of Barton's Bungalow (now Bungalow C.), the other one holding the lower slopes at the south end of the football ground.

At approximately 0200 hours on Christmas morning the machine-guns opened fire. The first attack of the Japanese was along Prison Road, and Sgt. Millington's men were hotly engaged. Then the enemy attacked across the football ground, where the machine-guns took heavy toll; and later all along the line. The attack was heaviest on the right and Millington's section suffered worse. Throughout the early hours the struggle continued along the ridge. Captain Rees was badly wounded and disabled, and the line grew thin as more men were hit. Just before dawn the Japanese stormed the ridge at a point immediately south of the tennis-courts. Two of the Middlesex guns were overrun and the enemy broke through the centre of our line. The two sections on the right were forced back towards the prison and Sgt. Millington was killed. 2/Lieut. Jones rallied his section and brought them back in a gallant effort to retake the position, but the odds were far too heavy. Jones was killed, as were half his men and the rest fell back, still fighting, towards our third line.

The two sections on the left were also forced back. On the extreme left our men fell back to the Preparatory School, where the Japanese were again held up by the mixed force of Middlesex and Volunteers there.

2/Lieut. Muir with the remainder held on for some time. They made a stubborn stand in and around Barton's Bungalow. All enemy attacks there were repulsed. Eventually the Japanese brought up a flame-thrower and drove back the defenders, but they retook the position after a fierce hand-to-hand fight. It was a fight to the finish; no quarter was given and the battle-crazed Japanese 'fleshed their steel' on every recumbent body, alive or dead. There were no survivors of this section.

This fight at the ridge in which seventy Volunteer gunners and about thirty men of the Middlesex held up the attack of twenty times their number of Japanese, flushed with victory and 'fighting mad', will forever be one of the proudest memories of the HKVDC. Of the 3 officers and 65 men of the Battery, 35 were killed and 5 were wounded; the Middlesex lost 22 out of 29 engaged. But the

Japanese counted their casualties by the hundred, piled along the ridge and around the bungalow, for the men of 1st Battery, like their comrades of the Middlesex, 'died hard.'

December 25th

THE LAST STAND AT STANLEY

At daylight on the 25th the two Scottish platoons on Chung Am Kok Peninsula found their positions practically surrounded by the enemy, who were in considerable strength. The Japanese had infiltrated past both flanks and were now in the Chung Am Kok Fort. It was decided to attempt to recapture the fort and Prophet took forward a fighting patrol of twelve men to attack the enemy on the summit of Chung Am Kok height. The patrol worked up to within fifty yards of the objective, and Pte. I. F. Grant actually reached the summit, and was killed there. Further advance, however, was impossible; half the men were hit and the patrol was forced to withdraw. The Scottish position was under constant mortar and machine-gun fire and the Japanese were closing in. Prophet then decided, after consultation with Bryden, to evacuate and return if possible to Stanley. Prophet, with Ptes. Kempton and Tillery, set out in an effort to locate sampans which might be used after dark. They found it impossible to make their way to any of the beaches and, in fact, were cut off from the others, and made their way back with difficulty. It was then decided to hold the position until nightfall, after which each man should try to make his way to Stanley as best he could. Throughout the afternoon the position remained static, the enemy putting down heavy mortar concentrations, but not attempting to come to close quarters. After dark the position was evacuated. Prophet and some others swam across, arriving at Stanley about 2100 hours; the others made their way by devious routes back through the enemy lines. The Japanese were probably not on the look-out, for the surrender had already been made, though the men of No. 2 Company did not know it.

At dawn on the peninsula the position was obscure. The men of the Volunteers and Middlesex at Monastery Hill had been forced to withdraw and had made their way back successfully to Stanley Fort. The Stanley Platoon had been ordered back to the Fort, where Captain Skipwith detailed them to act as HQ guard for the last stand. HQ Company Royal Rifles had been recalled from their position north-east of the prison and had fought their way through the enemy, with the loss of one-third of their men. The survivors of 1st Battery HKVDC and of No. 5 Platoon were also back at the Fort.

At the Preparatory School there were still the remains of 'A' Company Middlesex (now commanded by 2/Lieut. King, the only remaining officer) and part of No. 1 Company under 2/Lieut. Carter. The Japanese had already infiltrated past their right flank and were in the Tweed Bay area. The two subalterns decided to withdraw,

which was the only course they could have taken. Cpl. Drown's section had already been brought back from its advanced position and Sgt. Murphy's section managed to make its way back from the north end of the prison, complete with guns and equipment.

In the vicinity of the Fort a last line of defence had been prepared, and this was now manned by the survivors of the Royal Rifles, Middlesex and Volunteers. Major J. Watson (HKVDC) withdrew all spare gunners from 2nd Battery, formed them into an infantry unit, under Lieut. S. J. G. Burt, and brought them down to strengthen the line.

The enemy made no infantry attacks during the day. It seemed probable that the Japanese commander was resting his troops after their previous day's efforts, and was making preparations for the final attack on the following day. There was, however, heavy shell and mortar fire, and air-raids continued throughout the day. At about 1400 hours Captain Crozier observed a large enemy concentration on the heights of Chung Am Kok (these were apparently preparing for an attack on Prophet's and Bryden's men) and 2nd Battery opened fire with good effect. This drew a terrific bombardment from the Japanese counter-batteries; the No. 2 gun was knocked out and extensive damage done to the Battery.

The defenders were in a sorry plight. They had few mortars and no mortar bombs. The Middlesex and Volunteer machine-guns had all been knocked out. For weapons they were now reduced to their rifles and the one gun at Bluff Head. They were very short of ammunition. For several days they had been on short rations of food and water. They were completely exhausted after so many sleepless days and nights. They had barely enough men left to hold the line; and it was evident that the intensive bombardment, to which they could make no reply, was only the prelude to a full-scale attack.

THE HOSPITAL AT ST. STEPHEN'S COLLEGE

The main building of St. Stephen's College was being used as an emergency hospital. In the hall there were some 65 patients, with another 30 in the adjoining class-rooms. The Staff comprised Lieut.-Colonel G. D. R. Black (HKVDC), Captain Whitney (RAMC), a Sister from the Military Hospital, six VADs, Chinese nurses of St. John Ambulance, together with hospital orderlies.

At 0530 hours on Christmas morning, while the fighting was still continuing along the ridge, "about 150 or 200 Japanese broke into the hospital". They started bayoneting the wounded men, driving their bayonets repeatedly through bodies and mattresses. Lieut.-Colonel Black and Captain Whitney went forward in an endeavour to stop them. Black tried to bar the doorway to prevent more Japanese entering. He was shot through the head and "bayoneted dozens of times" as he lay on the ground. Whitney was also shot and then bayoneted repeatedly. The massacre continued

until 56 of the patients in the hall had been stabbed to death. The others concealed themselves under beds and in dark corners. One of the few survivors was CSM Begg, who had previously been one of the three survivors of the Eucliff adventure.

In the morning the surviving wounded were driven upstairs at the point of the bayonet and, together with the hospital orderlies, confined in one small room. There were in all about forty of them. Throughout the day, at intervals, men were taken out, one by one, and butchered. Two or three of the seriously wounded men died in the room. At 1700 hours a Japanese officer came in and told them that they were very lucky—'Hong Kong has surrendered; if not, all will be killed.' After dark all the wounded men who could stand were forced at the point of the bayonet to carry out the bodies of their murdered comrades and the blood-soaked mattresses to a great fire, which had been made from broken school desks.

Still more horrible was the treatment of the women, all of whom were wearing Nurses' uniform and Red Cross arm-bands. They were confined first in a small room upstairs. The four Chinese nurses were raped by Japanese soldiers repeatedly, then taken away, and have not been seen since. Three of the British nurses were also taken away at intervals, and their dead bodies were seen next day. The other four were raped again and again throughout the morning and afternoon. In the evening a Japanese officer told them also that they were lucky that Hong Kong had surrendered; for in another hour they would have been dead.

The four nurses did what they could for the few wounded men who had survived the massacre. Blankets, dressings and drugs had been destroyed or removed by the Japanese. It was not until the morning of the 26th that Lieut. Stoker (HKVDC) was able to reach the hospital and take the four nurses away. The wounded were removed later in the day.

THE HOSPITALS AT HAPPY VALLEY AND ST. ALBERT'S

The Jockey Club at Happy Valley was being used as an emergency hospital. The Japanese arrived there on the evening of the 24th. The nurses were confined in one room, and four of them were taken out and raped. Further measures, which presumably included a massacre of the patients, were prevented by Dr. J. A. Selby, who managed to distract the attention of the Japanese officers until they were too drunk to do any harm.

At St. Albert's Hospital the Japanese tied up the members of the nursing staff—sisters, nurses and orderlies and trained a machine-gun on them. They were diverted, however, by finding one of their own wounded officers in one of the beds and well cared for, and after a couple of hours released the prisoners.

It is strange that the enemy should have been so pleased at this, since their treatment of our own wounded was either to leave them to die slowly or to "flesh their steel" on non-vital parts. An officer of the Middlesex, shot in the leg, whilst lying on the ground, received two sword-slashes and no less than fourteen bayonet-stabs. Yet he managed to crawl away after dark, and, so far as is known, is alive and well today.

There was only one known case of the enemy picking up a wounded British soldier. Pte. J. E. Mogra, of No. 3 Company, HKVDC who had been shot through the body, called out in Japanese for water. A Japanese officer came to him and, on learning that Mogra had been born and had lived most of his life in Japan, not only gave him water but ordered that he should be picked up with the Japanese wounded. He refused, however, Mogra's request that the other British wounded should be given water. Mogra died two days later, but told his story to some of the other prisoners first.

THE LOSS OF BENNET'S HILL

In the Aberdeen sector the Japanese attacked soon after midnight, and a number of them reached the northern slopes of Bennet's Hill and dug in there. By 0300 hours the enemy again advanced in this area, trying to infiltrate west of Bennet's Hill, where they were held up by the HKRNVR. Desultory fighting continued for some hours. At about 0800 hours the enemy drove in our defences east of Bennet's Hill and made a deep salient. 'B' Company Grenadiers was preparing for a counter-attack on this salient, but the impromptu 'truce' which was ordered at 0900 hours prevented this from being carried out. When the period of the truce ended, the opportunity had been lost; for the enemy there had been heavily reinforced. Colonel Tanaka sent in all that was left of his 229th Regiment. By 1400 hours the enemy had completely surrounded Bennet's Hill, and an hour later the men of the Grenadiers there were forced to surrender. 'B' Company Grenadiers, the HKRNVR and the mixed force on the sea-front were forced to withdraw to conform, and it appeared to be only a matter of hours before the Japanese broke through to Aberdeen.

THE LAST STAND IN THE NORTHERN SECTOR

At dawn on the 25th our positions were roughly as follows:— From the sea-front to the Lee Theatre were remains of 'B' and 'C' Companies Punjabis, together with a mixed force of gunners, British and Indian, and Royal Scots hospital cases. Morrison Hill was held by a platoon of 'B' Company Middlesex and Major Moody's party of 'oddments'; with these were the twenty survivors of Captain Man's 'Z' Company. The houses by the Monument were held by the remainder of 'B' Company Middlesex and a handful of Volunteers. 'B' Company Rajputs was on Mount Parrish; to the south of Mount

Parrish were Farringdon's Marines, linking up with the Royal Scots who held the line from there to St. Albert's and thence to Wanchai Gap.

Although there was still a threat of an enemy landing in the Central District, it was decided to remove all troops from shore defences; and 'D' Company Middlesex was sent in to support the Punjabis. The residue of 'A' Company Punjabis was also withdrawn from the pill-boxes and moved to Fortress HQ. This left the whole of the shore-line unguarded except for No. 5 Company HKVDC.

The enemy pressure against Morrison Hill was to some extent relieved when at 0600 hours a Bofors AA gun was taken down to Morrison Hill, and, at short range, shelled the enemy out of the Craigenhower and Civil Service Clubs.

Nearer to the sea-front, however, the Japanese advanced steadily, infiltrating from house to house. Here we were at a serious disadvantage, since we could not make the use of artillery fire in such a congested area without causing heavy loss of life among the civilian population. The Japanese had no such scruples and put down heavy mortar concentrations, some of them lasting half-an-hour. The Middlesex and Punjabis fought splendidly; but what mortars we had were useless for want of ammunition; we had exhausted our supply of hand-grenades and even SA ammunition was running very short.

By 0630 hours the enemy had made a penetration along the sea-front, threatening to outflank the defenders at the Lee Theatre and Morrison Hill. Lieut.-Colonel Stewart, commanding the Middlesex, began preparing a second line of defence; O'Brien Street—Wanchai Market—Mount Parrish.

At 0900 hours two British civilians, captured at Repulse Bay Hotel, came across under a flag of truce. They told of the incredible number of guns and troops they had seen on their journey, and emphasised that in their opinion further resistance was useless. Major-General Ito sent a message that he would not initiate further hostilities for three hours. His demand for surrender was refused. The 'truce' was apparently honoured by the Japanese troops in the vicinity, but Japanese planes continued to bomb Stanley, Aberdeen and Mount Gough; their artillery continued to shell the Gaps from the Kowloon side; and Tanaka utilised the time to reinforce his line at a threatened place.

At midday the Japanese artillery on the island opened up vigorously and there was a strong forward movement of the infantry. A tremendous assault was made on Mount Parrish and, though the Japanese lost heavily in the attack, they got to close quarters with the Rajputs there. In a hand-to-hand struggle, one platoon of the Rajputs was cut off; the other was driven back. The loss of Mount Parrish opened a way along Kennedy Road to Fortress HQ. Road-

blocks and anti-tank mines were put out, and the last reserve, a platoon of 'A' Company Punjabis, was moved out along Kennedy Road to prevent further penetration there.

Lieut.-Colonel Stewart reported that his men, though fighting well, were being slowly but surely overwhelmed by vastly superior numbers, and at 1400 hours he ordered the troops to withdraw to the 'O'Brien Street Line'. This was no easy matter since our men were everywhere in close contact with the enemy. The men, by now utterly exhausted, had to retire as fast as they could run and man the new line before the enemy could take advantage of their withdrawal.

THE LOSS OF WANCHAI GAP

Further south, the Japanese planes made numerous dive-bombing attacks on Wanchai Gap and Magazine Gap. At the latter they dropped incendiaries which set the hillside alight. By 0900 hours the men of 'A' Company Royal Scots had lost their foothold on the slopes of Mount Cameron, and were back in Wanchai Gap, which was attacked continuously by dive-bombing planes and by heavy concentrations of mortar fire throughout the morning. At midday an infantry attack was made and was beaten back. Air and Mortar bombing was intensified during the afternoon, and at about 1430 hours the Gap was overrun.

Magazine Gap was the next objective of the enemy. Brigadier Rose reported that it could hold out for two hours at most.

THE SURRENDER

At 1450 hours Captain Man reported "the line is breaking". Lieut.-Colonel Stewart suggested forming yet another line from the east end of the Naval Yard to Fortress HQ.

It was felt now that everything possible had been done. "This advance of the enemy along the line of the Gaps, the possession of those Gaps by him, thus giving him an open line of advance to the Central Districts, the fall of Bennet's Hill, the isolation of the force at Stanley, the deployment by the enemy of such superior forces and armament, the exhaustion of our troops after sixteen days of continuous battle, with no reliefs for any individuals, our vulnerability to unlimited air-attack, the impossibility of obtaining more ammunition for the few remaining mobile guns, the serious water famine immediately impending—these were the factors which led to the inevitable conclusion; namely, that further fighting meant the useless slaughter of the remainder of the garrison, risked severe retaliation on the large civilian population and could not alter the final outcome. The enemy drive along the north shore was decisive."

At 1515 hours the capitulation was made.

APPENDIX I

STRENGTH AND CASUALTIES

The strength of the military units forming the garrison was as follows:—

	Officers	Other Ranks
Headquarters, China Command	33	—
Headquarters, Royal Artillery	6	—
8 Coast Regiment, RA	19	518
12 Coast Regiment, RA	16	387
5 AA Regiment, RA	25	563
1 HK and S RA	14	860
965 Det. Bty. RA	3	144
22 Field Company, RE	7	213
40 Field Company, RE	7	220
RE Services	18	54
2 Royal Scots	35	734
1 Middlesex	36	728
Canadian Staff	14	78
Winnipeg Grenadiers	42	869
Royal Rifles of Canada	41	963
5/7 Rajputs	17	875
2/14 Punjabis	15	932
HKVDC (all units)	94	1,665
Royal Signals	7	177
RAOC	15	117
RASC	14	183
RAVC	2	3
RAMC	26	146
RA Dental Corps	4	6
RIASC	—	13
HK Mule Corps	3	250
RAPC	3	25
IMS	5	55

This gives a total of 541 officers and 10,778 other ranks. Excluding the HKVDC there were 447 officers and 9,113 other ranks.

The number of casualties, as given in Lieut. General Maltby's final figures were:—

	Killed or Died of wounds	Missing	Wounded	Total
Imperial Officers	74	62	2,300	4,414
Imperial Other Ranks	595	696		
Indian Other Ranks	376	311		

It is not possible to give accurately the total of killed and wounded for each individual unit. The heaviest loss fell on the Rajputs, who lost 100% of officers and nearly 65% of men. Next were the Royal Scots and the Royal Rifles of Canada, who lost more than 50%. The other three battalions each lost between 40% and 50%.

The naval casualties were given as follows:—

	Killed		Missing		Wounded		Total	
	Off.	O.R.	Off.	O.R.	Off.	O.R.	Off.	O.R.
Royal Navy	2	45	—	14	—	14	2	73
Royal Marines	—	4	—	—	—	—	—	4
RNR & HKRNVR	12	6	5	4	6	4	23	14
HK Dkyd Def Corps	—	18	—	9	1	4	1	31

The Japanese losses were never published in any reliable form. Various statements were made, ranging from the somewhat low figure of