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National Defence Headquarters
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REPORT NO. 163

HISTORICAL SECTION

CANADIAN MILITARY HEADQUARTERS

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CANADIAN PARTICIPATION IN THE DEFENCE OF HONG KONG, DECEMBER, 1941

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Canadian Participation in the Defence
of Hong Kong, December, 1941

This report deals with the organization and despatch of a Canadian Expeditionary Force to Hong Kong in October 1941, and the Force's subsequent operations during the siege of that Island by the Japanese. In the compilation of the report Canadian sources of information have been supplemented by official British reports.

2. The record of the authorization, organization and despatch of the Force has been drawn from Headquarter Files at the Department of National Defence, Ottawa. The account of the operations of the Canadian Forces at Hong Kong is based primarily upon detailed reports compiled by the component units of the Force, and now in the files of the Historical Section at Ottawa. Particularly valuable are those of the two infantry battalions, prepared in Japanese Prisoner of War Camps by the Officers Commanding and other surviving officers of the units. Their narratives have been supplemented by personal interviews after their return to Canada. These Canadian sources have been examined against the background of reports submitted by G.O.C. British Troops in China, and the Brigade Commander under whom one of the Canadian battalions served (Operations at Hong Kong 8-25 Dec 1941, Despatch by Maj. Gen. C.M. Maltby, M.C.; War Diary and Narrative, Mainland Infantry Brigade and Attached Troops, Brig. C. Wallis; and War Diary and Narrative, East Infantry Brigade and Attached Troops, Brig. C. Wallis).

CANADA'S DECISION TO SEND A FORCE TO HONG KONG

3. The first proposal towards Canadian participation in the garrisoning of Hong Kong was sent to the Secretary of State for External Affairs, Canada, by the Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs, in London, on 19 Sep 41. In this despatch the Canadian Government was informed of the army garrison of four infantry battalions then maintained in this distant Crown Colony and of the approved policy "that Hong Kong should be regarded as an outpost and held as long as possible in the event of war in the Far East." The situation in the Far East was considered to have changed. British defence in Malaya had been improved and there had been "signs of a certain weakening in the Japanese attitude towards us (Britain) and the United States". Canada was asked to provide "one or two Canadian battalions" on the grounds that "it would increase strength of garrison out of all proportion to actual numbers involved, and it would provide a strong stimulus to garrison and Colony; it would further have a very great military effect on the whole of the Far East and would reassure Chiang Kai Shek as to the reality of the intention of holding the Island" (3/Cdn Ops OS/1, Tel 162 Dominions Office to the Government of Canada. See Appx "A").

4. The request of the War Office for the reinforcement of the garrison of Hong Kong by Canadian infantry battalions was considered by the War Committee of the Cabinet on 23 Sep 41. It was decided to defer the decision until there had been an opportunity for an examination by the General Staff of the implications involved in this suggestion and until the views of the Minister of National Defence could be obtained (HQs 20-1-20 Vol. 1, C.G.S. to D.M.O. & I, 26 Sep 41). The proposal was reviewed by the Chief of the General Staff, Major-General H.D.G. Crerar, in a memorandum to the Minister on 24 Sep 41.

and approved on that date by Hon. C.G. Power, in the absence of Colonel Ralston, Minister of National Defence (HQS 20-1-20 Vol. 1, C.G.S. to Minister, 24 Sep 41). On 29 Sep 41 the Secretary of State for External Affairs replied to the Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs, "Canadian Government agree in principle to send two battalions to strengthen Hong Kong garrison and will be glad to consider proposed arrangements for their despatch." (HQS 20-1-20 Vol. 1, Tel 199, External Affairs to Dominion Affairs, 29 Sep 49).

5. Expressing gratification at Canada's willingness to provide the requested force the British Government telegraphed on 1 Oct 41:-

His Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom are most grateful to His Majesty's Government in Canada for their ready agreement in principle of reinforcement of Hong Kong garrison. Further communications will be sent as soon as possible as regards proposed time and detailed arrangements for despatch.

(HQS 20-1-20 Vol. 1, Tel 171, Dominion Affairs to External Affairs, 1 Oct 41)

A week later a note of urgency was sounded in the United Kingdom's request "that under all circumstances it would be most desirable if the two Canadian battalions could be despatched at a very early date". (HQS 20-1-20 Vol 1, Tel 176, Dominion Affairs to External Affairs, 9 Oct 41)

6. The factors which influenced the decisions of the War Committee of the Cabinet and the Canadian General Staff were described during the subsequent inquiry by a Royal Commission (Rt. Hon. Sir Lyman P. Duff, G.C.M.G., Report on the Canadian Expeditionary Force to the Crown Colony of Hong Kong, pp 13 to 16). There was primarily a deep sense of the obligations of Canada in relation to the common cause. Australia had fought in Libya, New Zealanders in Crete, South Africans in Abyssinia. "Here were our partners in a great enterprise in the war saying: 'If you have any men to spare we would be glad to have them'" (Hon. C.G. Power, Associate Minister of National Defence). "I do not think it was thinkable for this country to send a negative answer to the request of the United Kingdom" (Hon. A.L. Macdonald, Minister of National Defence for Naval Services). This was the evidence given before the Royal Commission appointed to inquire into the organization, authorization and despatch of the Canadian Force to Hong Kong. In referring to the British request the Minister of National Defence, Colonel J.L. Ralston, stated:-

I had at the end of the consideration of the telegram this in mind, that the furnishing of one or two battalions would add a great deal more than a force of that size would usually do. It seemed to me from what I knew generally that above all needs we needed time and I had very definitely in my mind, rightly or wrongly, that if Japan did come into the war, the United States would be in, too; and I had it definitely in my mind that the United States were not too ready to come in, and anything that would either defer or deter Japan from coming in would be highly desirable from our point of view... It seemed to me that we had an opportunity to make a contribution, perhaps not large in numbers but certainly effective in its results, which we should not disregard.

(Ibid, p. 15)

7. That the reinforcement of the Hong Kong garrison by two Canadian

battalions was an undertaking considered justifiable on strictly military grounds appears in the evidence of the C.G.S. (General H.D.G. Crerar):-

So far as general military situation at Hong Kong and prospective problem of its defence against attack were concerned, I had had long discussions in Ottawa, in July and August, 1941, with Major-General Grasett, who was passing through Canada on returning to the United Kingdom and who, until that time, had been Commander-in-Chief, China Command (Hong Kong). Major-General Grasett had filled the appointment of Commander-in-Chief at Hong Kong for some two years, and until his departure for the United Kingdom had been responsible for the organization of the defences. In his verbal appreciation of the military situation confronting the Hong Kong garrison in the event of war with Japan, Major-General Grasett informed me during our conversation that the addition of two or more battalions to the forces then at Hong Kong would render the garrison strong enough to withstand for an extensive period of siege an attack by such forces as the Japanese could bring to bear against it.

(Ibid, p. 14)

ORGANIZATION OF THE FORCE

8. Once agreement in principle had been reached between the two governments, discussion of the necessary details regarding movement of the Canadian troops proceeded at a military level. Canadian Military Headquarters in London acted as intermediary between the War Office and the Department of National Defence in Ottawa (HQS 20-1-20 Vol. 1, Tel GS 2129, Canmilitary to Defensor, 9 Oct 41). A tentative sailing date towards the end of October was set, and scales of equipment and transport for the Expeditionary Force were mutually agreed upon (Ibid, and HQS 20-1-20 Vol. 1, Tel GS 0672, Defensor to Canmilitary, 10 Oct 41).
9. When it came to the selection of two battalions to send to Hong Kong, the C.G.S. submitted a memorandum to the Minister recommending the Royal Rifles of Canada and the Winnipeg Grenadiers. Apart from reviewing such considerations as the state of training of available units and the undesirability of disrupting the formations of 4 and 6 Cdn Divs in Canada or of the other divisions then in England, General Crerar gave due weight to previous experience of the two units recommended in garrison duty (HQS 20-1-20 Vol. 1, C.G.S. to Minister, 30 Sep 41).
10. R.R.C. had just returned from Newfoundland and Wpg Gren from Jamaica. "The duties which they there carried out were not in many respects unlike the task which awaits the units to be sent to Hong Kong. The experience they have had will therefore be of no small value to them in their new role. Both are units of proven efficiency". It was further considered that to allot these two battalions indefinitely to a home defence role following a period of "semi-overseas" responsibility, would have an adverse effect upon their morale. Another main factor was that of proper territorial representation: "I consider it most desirable that one unit should come from Western Canada and the other from Eastern Canada." At the same time, as one unit was from Quebec and the

letter from Winnipeg, both English and French-speaking elements of Canada would have equal representation. The Minister of National Defence approved, 9 Oct 41, the selection of the units recommended (Ibid).

11. On 9 Oct, the first of a series of meetings was held at D.N.D. to deal with administrative arrangements in regard to the despatch of the two battalions (HQS 20-1-20 Vol. 1, Minutes of Meeting of Directorates, D.N.D., 9 Oct 41). On the same day Warning Orders were sent to R.R.C. and Wpg Gren, instructing them to be ready to move from 0900 hours 23 and 25 Oct respectively, "to carry out duties in semi-tropical climate" (HQS 20-1-20 Vol. 1, Tel G3 0666, C.G.S. to M.D. 4, and Tel G.S. 0667, C.G.S. to M.D. 10, 9 Oct 41). Wpg Gren were then stationed at Winnipeg and were to remain there until proceeding to Vancouver for embarkation. R.R.C., on Coast Defence duties at Saint John, N.B., were to move to Valcartier for outfitting prior to despatch (Meeting of Directorates, op cit).

12. On 11 Oct 41 a further request was received from the War Office for Canada to include in her Expeditionary Force a Brigade Headquarters and certain specialists. C.M.H.Q. telegraphed D.N.D. as follows:

On recommendation G.O.C. Hong Kong Troopers now would be very grateful if Canada could supply in addition to two bns following personnel. Bde H.Q., - Bde Commander 1, Bde Major 1, Staff Capt 1, Clerks, - Staff Sgt 1, Other Ranks 3. R.C.A.S.C. Supply -, Sgts 2, Issuers 2. M.T. Workshop-Officer 1, Staff Sgt 1, Electricians 2, Fitters 8. R.C.O.C., - Clerks 4, Storemen 4. R.C. Signals, - Officer 1, Operators 10, Line Operators 9, Operators Switch-board 3, Dispatch Riders 6, Linesmen 4. R.C.A.M.C., - Medical Officers 2, Nursing Sisters 2. R.C.A.F.C., - Officer 1, Clerks O.R. 4. Provost, - Sgt 1, Cpl 1, O.R. 6.

Details of weapons, ammunition, transport and clothing follows.

If Canada cannot find any of above personnel War Office will find them. If Canada cannot find any of the above by time of sailing despatch two bns should not, repeat not, be delayed on that account.

(HQS 20-1-20 Vol. 1, Tel GS 2152, Cannilitary to Defensor, 11 Oct 41)

13. The request from the War Office for a brigade headquarters from Canada found a ready response. The appointment of Colonel J.K. Lawson, Director of Military Training at D.N.D., as Commander of the Canadian Force in the rank of Brigadier was approved that day (11 Oct). In addition, it was decided that Colonel F. Hennessy, D.S.O., M.C., Director of Organization at D.N.D., should be appointed Officer in Charge of Administration under the Brigade Commander (HQS 20-1-20 Vol. 1, C.G.S. to Minister, 11 Oct 41). The appointment of a Senior Administrative Officer was deemed necessary to free the Brigade Commander of all administrative details peculiar to a detached Canadian force of the nature contemplated (HQS 20-1-20 Vol. 1, Tel G3D 1514, Defensor to Cannilitary, 11 Oct 41). The appointment of Brigade Major was filled by Major C.A. Lyndon, R.C.A.C., and that of Staff Captain by Captain H.A. Bush, R.C.A.S.C.

14. On 15 Oct 41 a special War Establishment, Cdn IV/1940/175/1, was promulgated for a brigade headquarters (see Appx "B"). It provided for a total of 16 officers and 83 other ranks. This number included, in addition to personnel requested by the War Office, the Senior Administrative Officer above referred to, two Dental Officers and their assistants, three Chaplains (two of whom were attached to the infantry battalions) and a detachment of the Canadian Postal Corps (HQS 20-2-20, Headquarters Force "C", War Establishment, 15 Oct 41).

15. The designation "'C' Force" was allotted by D.N.D. to the Canadian troops about to be despatched to Hong Kong (Meeting of Directorates, op cit). For reasons of security in communications the Inter-Service Security Board in London allotted the code name "Orinoco" to the Canadian Force (HQS 20-1-20 Vol. 1, Tel GS 2180, Canmilitary to Defensor, 14 Oct 41).

16. The composition of "C" Force remained at a brigade headquarters with details, and two infantry battalions, and it was at this strength that the Force that left was eventually despatched. It is of interest to note, however, that a few days before the outbreak of hostilities at Hong Kong a suggestion that further Canadian commitments for the Far East might be required came from C.M.H.Q.:

For personal information C.G.S. Troopers state Chiefs of Staff Committee has recommended increase Orinoco to Brigade Group by despatch from Canada of additional infantry battalion and ancillary troops. Dominion Affairs has been asked to approach Canada through diplomatic channels.

(HQS 20-1-20 Vol. 2, Tel GS 2743,
Canmilitary to Defensor, 4 Dec 41)

There is no evidence to show that such a request was made to External Affairs (HQC 5393-13, Under Secretary of State for External Affairs to D.M. Army, 16 Feb 46), and on 12 Dec C.M.H.Q. notified D.N.D. that the War Office proposal was not being proceeded with (HQS 20-1-20 Vol. 2, Tel GS 2849, Canmilitary to Defensor).

17. The message from the War Office transmitted to D.N.D. on 9 Oct 41 had suggested "administration of Force would be done by British administrative units now in Hong Kong" (HQS 20-1-20 Vol. 1, Tel GS 2129, Canmilitary to Defensor, 9 Oct 41). This suggestion met with Canadian concurrence as it was considered that to set up an independent channel of maintenance for the small force from Canada would prove difficult and unnecessary. The general considerations in this respect were set down by the C.G.S. in a memorandum to the Minister:

It seems probable that sailings from Canadian ports to Hong Kong may be both irregular and infrequent. The length of time to deliver a shipment would never be less than a month and might be three months or more. The quantities of equipment, etc., required will normally be small.

On the other hand, Hong Kong may be regarded as an outpost of the main British post at Singapore, and the British must have an established L. of C. through Singapore to India and elsewhere.

We must, of course, maintain the force in men. Units have their "first reinforcements" with them and unless they suffer heavy casualties, the maintenance of their strength will require merely the occasional despatch, perhaps two or three times a year as sailings permit, of drafts to restore normal wastage. Should war ensue in the Pacific, the possibility of even this much will depend on the naval situation in the Hong Kong area.

Therefore, I recommend that we do not undertake maintenance of Force "C" from Canada except in men.

If you approve, I will instruct C.M.H.Q. so as to advise the War Office.

Ministerial approval was given 31 Oct 41, (HQs 20-1-20 Vol 2, C.G.S. to Minister, 29 Oct 41)

18. Regarding the medical category to be despatched, both in the original force and later if reinforcements were sent, C.M.H.Q. advised Ottawa that:

Troopers state medical category for personnel infantry battalions Hong Kong down to and including British category B7. This category equals Canadian C2.

(HQs 20-1-20 Vol. 1, Tel GS 2143, Cannilitary to Defensor, 10 Oct 41)

"This statement of acceptable medical categories from the War Office," notes Sir Lyman Duff, "is not without significance as indicating the view of the War Office as to the nature of the task that was being undertaken. The statement points to an expectation at the War Office that the Canadian reinforcements would be employed in garrison duties" (Duff Report, p. 35). It is a matter of further import, in the light of the exacting physical conditions under which personnel of "C" Force were later held by the Japanese as prisoners of war, to note that the medical category established for the Force at D.N.D. did not descend to the minimum indicated above. It was decided that "units proceeding with "C" Force should be considered as Infantry Garrison Battalions within the meaning of Routine Order No. 1350, and should, therefore, include Categories A1, A2, and B1" (HQs 20-1-20 Vol. 1, D.N.O. & I. to D of Org, 10 Oct 41). The provision of reinforcements for Force "C" to replace estimated casualties was under consideration at D.N.D., when the sudden cutting off of Hong Kong and its subsequent fall put an end to the matter (HQs 20-6-20, Reinforcements and Recruiting "C" Force, folios 1-13).

19. With the realization that Canadian troops stationed at Hong Kong would be served only over a long, slow and vulnerable route with supplies, it became obviously a matter of good policy to send them forward as well armed, equipped and supplied as possible. Every endeavour was made by D.N.D. to meet, as a minimum, the scales recommended by the War Office in such matters. The British authorities agreed to arrange for the provision of such stores and equipment as were not available in Canada (HQs 20-1-20 Vol. 1, Tel GS 2161, Cannilitary to Defensor, 11 Oct 41). The complete scale of general ordnance stores requested by the War Office was provided by D.N.D. (bedsteads, bolsters and mattresses were to be purchased in Hong Kong) (HQs 20-1-20 Vol. 1, Tel G&D 1542, Defensor to Cannilitary, 14 Oct 41). The only Canadian deficiency in technical stores was in Boys Anti-Tank Rifles and ammunition for 2" and 3" mortars and for Signal Pistols. These requirements the War Office agreed to supply at Hong Kong by releases from British sources (HQs 20-1-20 Vol. 1, Tel GS 2208, Cannilitary to Defensor, 16 Oct 41). D.N.D. was able to provide all the mechanical transport requested with the exception that 15-cwt trucks were to be substituted for 18-cwt trucks (HQs 20-1-20 Vol. 1, Tel G&D 1542, Defensor to Cannilitary, 14 Oct 41. See also para 42).

20. Upon receiving advice concerning the quantities of equipment which Canada proposed to forward with "C" Force the War Office expressed its satisfaction:

War Office has learnt with gratification the quantities of equipment which will be taken by Canadian units to Hong Kong.

(HQs 20-1-20 Vol.1, Tel GS 2208, Cannilitary to Defensor, 16 Oct 41)

21. Early in the negotiations between the Governments of the United Kingdom and Canada for the despatch of Canadian troops to Hong Kong the question of financial responsibility was raised. The previous practice had been that for any formations which Canada on her own initiative had undertaken to raise, train and despatch as a part of her contribution to the war effort she would bear the whole cost. Such was the arrangement in effect with respect to the Canadian Corps then in Great Britain. On certain occasions, however, when the United Kingdom had requested the provision by Canada of special units, as in the case of Canadian forestry units in Britain, the United Kingdom had assumed part of the expenses involved (HQS 20-1-20 Vol. 2, Financial Superintendent to A/Deputy Minister, Army, 8 Dec 41). At a meeting of the War Committee of the Cabinet held on 15 Oct 41 "it was assumed that the financial conditions would be on the same basis as in the case of the Canadian Corps" (HQS 20-1-20 Vol 2, Hon. J.L. Ralston to Hon. J.L. Ilsley, 24 Dec 41). Canada thus undertook "to assume the entire financial responsibility for the Canadian troops in Hong Kong" (HQS 20-1-20 Vol. 2, Deputy Minister, Army to Under Secretary of State for External Affairs, 12 Jan 42).

22. With the prospect of a Canadian Force serving alongside a British Force at Hong Kong, it became necessary to define the powers of the Commander of the Canadian Force and place that Force in proper relationship to the British Force. To that end a series of Orders-in-Council was approved and specific instructions were issued by the C.G.S. to Brigadier Lawson. P.C. 8030, made under the Visiting Forces (British Commonwealth) Act, provided that the Canadian Force would "serve together" with the forces of other parts of the Commonwealth in Hong Kong (HQS 20-1-20 Vol. 1, P.C. 8020, 17 Oct 41). Pursuant to this order Brigadier Lawson was authorized to place "C" Force in combination with His Majesty's Forces from the U.K. already serving in Hong Kong (HQS 20-1-20 Vol. 1, C.G.S. Instructions to Brigadier J.K. Lawson, 20 Oct 41). To assist the Force Commander in correctly executing the instrument necessary for this purpose, D.N.D. later transmitted to him, after his arrival in the colony, a text of a revised Order of Detail. This order was based on one recently issued by the Canadian Corps Commander in the United Kingdom (HQS 20-1-20 Vol. 2, Tel GS 317 Defensor to Orinoco, 23 Nov 41).

23. As it was the intention of the War Office to take reciprocal action under the Visiting Forces Act in respect of British Forces serving at Hong Kong alongside the Canadians, the text of the new instrument to be executed by Brigadier Lawson was transmitted to London (HQS 20-1-20, Vol. 2, Tel GS 0802, Defensor to Canmilitary, 1 Dec 41). At that point a complication came to light when the War Office advised D.N.D., through C.M.H.Q. that Brigadier Lawson might be required to command Indian troops and that the Visiting Forces Act did not apply to the latter. Accordingly, the War Office suggested that the most simple and satisfactory solution would be a "grant of emergency commission in United Kingdom Land Forces to Lawson to give him the same powers of command over Indian troops as a United Kingdom officer" (HQS 20-1-20 Vol. 2, Tel GS 2540, Canmilitary to Defensor, 18 Nov 41). D.N.D. agreed to this step. On 10 Dec 41 advice was received from the War Office that Brigadier Lawson had been granted an emergency commission in the Gloucestershire Regiment, and that he would be granted substantive rank of Brigadier in forthcoming War Office Orders (HQS 20-1-20 Vol. 2, Tel GS 2184, Canmilitary to Defensor, 10 Dec 41).

24. While Canada was taking measures to regulate relations between her military forces in Hong Kong and other forces of His Majesty, a telegram arrived from the British Government suggesting that the G.O.C. British Troops in China be appointed to command the combined forces (HQS 20-1-20 Vol. 1, Tel 187 Dominion Affairs to External Affairs, 28 Oct 41). It is of interest to note that this was the first occasion when the United Kingdom had asked the Canadian Government for such concurrence. In previous instances of Canadian and British troops serving in combination there had been a substantial disproportion between the size of the forces involved, and it had been an implicit assumption that the British Commander was to be regarded as the commander of the combined force. The present procedure was regarded as an act of courtesy on the part of the Government of the United Kingdom (HQS 20-1-20 Vol. 2, Under Secretary of State for External Affairs to Associate Minister of National Defence, 30 Oct 41). On 31 Oct 41 External Affairs advised London that "this meets with the approval of the Canadian Government" (HQS 20-1-20 Vol. 1, External Affairs to Dominion

Affairs, 31 Oct 41).

25. P.Cs. 8021, 8022 and 8023 invested the Commander of "C" Force with extensive powers which were deemed necessary by reason of the factors of time and distance that would separate him from D.N.D. and from other Canadian formations. The first two of these orders dealt with matters of discipline. They enabled the Force Commander to perform certain functions under K.R. & O. (Can), and invested him with powers to convene General and District Courts-Martial, as well as providing for the confirmation of sentences imposed by such Courts (HQS 20-1-20 Vol. 1, P.Cs. 8021, 8022, 17 Oct 41). Under P.C. 8023 Brigadier Lawson received authority in the matter of writing off losses and the disposal of claims (HQS 20-1-20 Vol.1, P.C. 8023, 17 Oct 41).

26. With regard to the disciplinary powers given to the Commander of "C" Force it may be noted that the British suggestion that the G.O.C. China Command should command the combined forces at Hong Kong (see para 24) was accompanied by a request that Canada should "issue a Court-Martial Warrant to the General Officer Commanding British Troops in China without further formalities" (HQS 20-1-20 Vol. 1, Tel 187 Dominion Affairs to External Affairs 28 Oct 41). Commenting on this request the Under Secretary of State for External Affairs advised the Associate Minister of National Defence as follows:

The other point in the request made by the Dominions Office with regard to Court-Martial Warrant to the General Officer Commanding British Troops in China is, of course, out of the question. - The Government, by the Order-in-Council which was made last week, settled the question of policy involved by providing for a Warrant to the Canadian Commander, and it is along the same general lines which have been followed in every case where substantial Canadian Forces were involved.

(HQS 20-1-20 Vol. 2, N.A. Robertson to Hon. C.G. Power, 30 Oct 41)

Dominion Affairs was notified of the arrangements that had already been made with respect to Courts-Martial, and it was pointed out that such arrangements had been proved to be satisfactory elsewhere (HQS 20-1-20 Vol. 1, External Affairs to Dominion Affairs, 31 Oct 41).

27. The Canadian Force Commander was given a direct channel of communication to D.N.D. In his instructions Brigadier Lawson was informed,

You will keep constantly in mind the fact that you are responsible to the Canadian Government for the Force under your command. In consequence your channel of authority and communication on all questions (except those concerning military operations referred to in paragraph 6 of these instructions) including matters of general policy as well as of transfers, exchanges, recalls and reinforcements, will be direct to National Defence Headquarters.

... ..

You will keep me constantly informed as to your situation generally.

(HQS 20-1-20 Vol. 1, C.G.S. Instructions to Brigadier J.K. Lawson, 20 Oct 41)

DESPATCH OF "C" FORCE

28. It has been noted above (para 10) that the two infantry battalions selected for "C" Force had had experience in garrison and coast defence duties. R.R.C. was mobilized on 8 Jul 40, at Quebec, and trained in the Quebec district and at Sussex, N.B. In November and December 1940 the Battalion was sent to Newfoundland. It returned to Canada in August 1941 and late in September took up coast defence duties at Saint John, N.B., where it remained until it was warned for overseas duty on 9 Oct 41. The Battalion was commanded throughout its active service by Lieut.-Col. (later Brigadier) W.J. Home, M.C., a Permanent Force officer (Duff Report, p. 25).

29. Wpg Gren was mobilized at Winnipeg on 1 Sep 39 as a machine gun battalion. The Regiment trained in the Manitoba capital during the autumn and winter of 1939-40. In the spring of 1940 it was assigned to garrison duties in Jamaica relieving a British battalion. After a period of duty of more than a year it returned to Canada in three flights on 9 Sep, 21 Sep and 8 Oct 41. Almost immediately it was warned for duty overseas. From June 1941 the Regiment was commanded by Lieut.-Col. J.L.R. Sutcliffe (Ibid, p. 28).

30. The establishment adopted for each of the infantry battalions selected for Hong Kong included, with attached personnel, 34 officers and 773 other ranks. This W.E. - Can II/1940/12F/1 - had just been authorized for units of the Canadian Army under FC77/7841 dated 9 Oct 41 (C.M.H.Q. file 3/Inf Bn/1, Tel GSD 1544 Defensor to Canmilitary, 14 Oct 41). The first reinforcements to be taken with the battalions consisted of six officers and 150 O.Rs. The combined totals for establishment and reinforcements, therefore, amounted to 40 officers and 923 O.Rs. per battalion (HQs 20-6-20 (DMR), A.G. to Minister, 18 Jan 42). At the time R.R.C. was selected for duty at Hong Kong the battalion was up to full strength, and actually had two men surplus to establishment. On 10 Oct 41 Wpg Gren was 52 O.Rs. under strength, a figure that was later increased to 136 as a number of men were S.O.S. for medical and other reasons (HQs 8884-5 Vol. 1, Wpg Gren Part II Daily Orders, 30 Sep to 24 Oct 41). The lower strength of the latter unit was due to its having operated in Jamaica with reduced numbers in accordance with British garrison establishment. Approximately 440 more men were therefore required in order to bring the units up to strength and to supply each battalion with first reinforcements (HQs 8902, Report to Parliament by Minister of National Defence, 21 Jan 42).

31. There was little time in which to select the men required. Between the date of warning for overseas service (9 Oct) and the date of embarkation (27 Oct) there was an interval of only 18 days, and out of this period embarkation leave had to be taken. The policy was adopted that all reinforcements would be sought on a voluntary basis to serve overseas in a "semi-tropical" climate. It was necessary that the utmost secrecy as to the destination of the Force be maintained, and this was undoubtedly a factor in limiting to as few localities as possible the canvass for voluntary reinforcements (Duff Report, p. 35). Military District No. 2 supplied 154 O.Rs. for R.R.C. (102 from A. 10 and A. 11 Advanced Training Centres at Camp Borden, and 52 from the Midland Regiment) (HQs 8884-5 Vol. 1, D.O.C. M.D.2 to D.N.D., 28 Jan 42, Appx, Nominal Rolls of Draft to R.R.C.). Wpg Gren received 252 men from Military District No. 10 (189 from A. 15 Advanced Training Centre, Winnipeg, 40 from No. 10 District Depot and 23 from No. 100 Basic Training Centre, Portage la Prairie) and 30 from A. 18 Advanced (N.G.) Training Centre at Dundurn, in Military District No. 12 (HQs 8884-5 Vol. 1, Commandant A. 15 I.T.C. to D.N.D., 27 Jan 42; Commandant A.18 A.T.C. to D. Org, 27 Jan 42; D.O.C. M.D. 10 to D.N.D., 27 Jan 42).

32. The standard of training of these additions to R.R.C. and Wpg Gren became one of the chief matters dealt with by the Royal Commission appointed in February 1942 to investigate the despatch of the Canadian Expeditionary Force to Hong Kong. The evidence presented to the Commission showed that "of the men added to the strength of the Hong Kong expedition, all but about six per cent had undergone more than sixteen weeks military training after enlistment in the active army" (Duff Report, p. 6). In his report the Commissioner expresses the opinion:

From the whole of the evidence... I have reached

the conclusion that there was no unfairness either to the battalions, or to the expedition, as a whole, from the addition of this small percentage of men who had not fully completed the standard period of training at the time they were accepted by the battalion officers.

... ..

In the course of my examination of the evidence I find that the inclusion of this small percentage of men was not a result of any shortage of fully trained men in Canada. It arose from the necessity of obtaining the men with great speed and secrecy, and the impracticability in the time available of selecting them from a larger number of training centres.

(Ibid, p. 7)

33. Movement to the port of embarkation took place according to schedule. R.R.C. left Valcartier early on the morning of 23 Oct 41, being joined at Ottawa the same day by the personnel of "C" Force Headquarters, which had concentrated at Lansdowne Park, Ottawa. Wpg Gren left Winnipeg on 25 Oct. The troop trains reached Vancouver on 27 Oct, and embarkation was completed the same evening (HQ 63-302-334, Major J.N. Gwynne, Embarkation Staff Officer to Movement Control, D.N.D., 28 Oct 41). The bulk of the Force embarked on the S.S. "Awatea", the British transport supplied by the War Office for the expedition. Four officers and 105 O.Rs. of R.R.C. were carried on the escort vessel provided by the Canadian Government, H.M.C.S. "Prince Robert" (HQ 63-302-334, Movement Control to G.C.C. Hong Kong, 28 Oct 41).

34. Embarkation on board the "Awatea" was not without incident. The report of the Embarkation Staff Officer refers to the following disturbances:

The ship was crowded in the troop decks, carrying, in the estimation of the writer, about 150 more than she could conveniently accommodate. This crowding resulted in some dissatisfaction on the part of the Winnipeg Grenadiers, about fifty of whom forced their way off the gangway into the shed. They were, however, persuaded by their officers and N.C.O's to return in a matter of about twenty minutes.

(E.S.O. to Movement Control, 28 Oct 41,
op cit)

But the Second-in-Command (later C.O.) Wpg Gren comments:

The inference that Winnipeg Grenadier personnel were the sole participants in the incident referred to is entirely incorrect. If required, Statutory Declarations can be forwarded to the effect that personnel from both units of "C" Force participated.

(HQ 5395-13, Letter, Lieut-Col. G. Trist to D.H.S., 15 May 46)

35. Because of "very great overcrowding in all but the cabins and the lack of an organized working system for serving food", the evening meal on board for personnel other than officers and sergeants was described as a "hopeless

muddle" by a senior officer present (Lieut-Col. W.J. Home, "C" Force Report 13 Oct to 7 Dec 41, p. 6). And from the personal diary of a member of R.R.C. comes the illuminating information: "Things began to look bad. Supper time came and the lads waited hours for it and it turned out to be tripe and onions." (Defence of Hong Kong, D.M.I. Interviews and Reports, Vol.II, Extracts from the Diary of Rfn Sidney Skelton, R.R.C., 27 Oct 41).

36. A muster of "C" Force at the port of embarkation revealed the absence of 44 men. Further checks during the voyage raised the total of absentees to 51 (HQS 8538-11, Tel CA1 Orinoco to Defensor, 3 Nov 41, and CA2, 16 Nov 41). 50 of these were members of Wpg Gren (HQS 8884-5 Vol. 1, Wpg Gren Part II Daily Order 254, 27 Oct 41). In reporting these absences the Brigade Commander pointed out that the men transferred to Wpg Gren from the training centres had not had time to know, or to be known by, their officers, and that this situation was largely responsible for the difficulties encountered.

Some men never entrained, others did not reach the port of embarkation, while others, who were employed on loading parties, etc, apparently took the opportunity to absent themselves, the fact that they were absent not being discovered until after the ship sailed.

(HQS 8538-11, Commander "C" Force to C.G.S., 15 Nov 41)

37. The original statement of embarkation strength showed 98 officers and 1884 O.Rs. aboard the "Awatea" and the "Prince Robert" (HQS 63-302-334, Movement Control to G.O.C. Hong Kong, 28 Oct 41). As has been indicated above, these figures were subject to later revision. "C" Force disembarked at Hong Kong with the following numbers:

	<u>Offrs</u>	<u>O.Rs.</u>	<u>All Ranks</u>
Bde H.Q.	16 x	83	99
R.R.C.	40	920	960
Wpg Gren	40	873	913
	—	—	—
Totals	96 x	1876	1972 x

(Report of "C" Force Headquarters and Details, Parade State, Force "C")

One member of R.R.C. died on the voyage and was buried at sea (CA1, 3 Nov 41, op cit). The total military personnel of "C" Force sailing from Vancouver on 27 Oct 41 was therefore 1973 all ranks. This figure does not include one stowaway, a R.O.A.M.C. private from No. 11 District Depot, who was later returned to Canada on H.M.C.S. "Prince Robert" (HQS 8538-11, Lieut.-Col. F.J. North (A.D.) to D.A.G. (B), 16 Nov 41).

38. Two Auxiliary Services Officers, Supervisors G. Porteous (Y.M.C.A.) and F.G. O'Neill (K. of C. Cdn Army Huts), were attached to "C" Force Headquarters extra to establishment to provide the necessary recreational facilities and comforts for the Force.

x Plus two Auxiliary Services Officers attached.

39. When the S.S. "Awatea" left Vancouver she carried 248 tons of baggage and equipment belonging to Brigade Headquarters and the two battalions of "C" Force, together with 104 tons of foodstuffs and 120 tons of ammunition (Movement Control to G.O.C. Hong Kong, 28 Oct 41, op cit). This cargo included all ordnance and technical stores that Canada had undertaken to provide for the Force (see para 19). These stores occupied about 35,000 cubic feet of the "Awatea's" total of 45,000 (HQs 20-1-20 Vol. 2, Q.M.G. to Minister, 19 Dec 41). By an unfortunate mishap the vessel sailed with the balance of this space -- some 10,000 cubic feet -- unfilled. From aboard the "Awatea" the Force Commander reported:

Despite my repeated representations at N.D.H.Q. regarding the necessity for at least a proportion of our transport to accompany us, none of the MT had apparently arrived at Vancouver by the 27th October, and it was therefore necessary to sail without it, although there were two holds practically empty.

(HQs 8538-11, Commander of "C" Force to C.G.S., 15 Nov 41)

40. Vehicles allotted for the use of "C" Force numbered 212. Suitably boxed, and with spare parts included, they required 150,000 cubic feet of cargo space (Q.M.G. to Minister, 19 Dec 41, op cit). When the cargo limitations of the passenger vessel were learnt by the Q.M.G. Branch, on 16 Oct, arrangements were made, with the help of the Sea Transport Department of the British Ministry of War Transport, for the loading of the bulk of the mechanical transport on the S.S. "Don Jose", which would sail at a later date (Ibid). The G.O.C. Hong Kong was notified that "only very limited MT, probably 12 to 18 vehicles, could be shipped with troops" (HQs 20-1-20 Vol 1, Tel GSD 1573, Defenser to Fervour, Hong Kong, 20 Oct 41). But the vehicles that were to have been shipped on the "Awatea" were held up with the remainder intended for the "Don Jose", and, although upon realization of the error they were rushed to Vancouver in a last-minute effort, they missed the "Awatea" by a narrow margin (Q.M.G. to Minister, 19 Dec 41, op cit).

41. The vehicles intended for "C" Force did not reach their destination. All the motor transport with the exception of one carload of spare parts was placed on board the "Don Jose", which sailed from Vancouver on 4 Nov 41. The remaining carload became available later and was shipped from the same port on the S.S. "Fernplant" (HQs 20-1-20 Vol. 2, M.G.O. to Minister, 27 Dec 41). As events transpired the "Don Jose" could not have reached its destination before Hong Kong was attacked by the Japanese. The Vessel put into Manila on 12 Dec 41 and was held there (HQs 63-301-666, C.N.S. to Q.M.G., 16 Jan 42). Because there was little prospect of her cargo ever being made available to "C" Force, a request by Washington for the use of the equipment in the Philippines was granted (HQs 63-301-666, Military Attache, Washington, to Minister of National Defence, 27 Dec 41). The one carload of spare parts loaded on the "Fernplant" on 22 Nov proceeded with the vessel to Los Angeles, as the ship was held there and it was considered very unlikely that the voyage would be completed, this equipment was off-loaded and returned to Canada (HQs 63-327 Vol. 1, Military Attache to D.N.D., 5 Mar 42).

42. The failure to send any mechanical transport with "C" Force was made the subject of most exhaustive inquiry by the Royal Commissioner, Sir Lyman Duff. His findings are set down at length in his report. At the time of the inquiry (the report was submitted on 4 Jun 42) there was no evidence available to show that the Canadian troops suffered through the lack of the twenty vehicles that might have accompanied them (Duff Report, p. 8). Nor, in the light of later information regarding operations at Hong Kong, does it appear that the deficiency had much bearing on the final outcome.

43 The Royal Commissioner's general conclusions concerning the organization of the Hong Kong Expedition were as follows:

In October, 1941, the Canadian Military authorities undertook a task of considerable difficulty. Subject only to my observation concerning twenty of the two hundred and twelve vehicles of the mechanical transport, they performed that task well. Canada sent forward, in response to the British request, an expedition that was well-trained and (subject as aforesaid, in so far as shipping facilities allowed) well provided with equipment. In spite of the disaster that overtook it soon after its arrival in Hong Kong, it was an expedition of which Canada can and should be proud.

The war came upon us when we were unprepared for it. In such circumstances, recalling military history, one would perhaps not be greatly surprised to discover that even two years after its commencement some military enterprise had been undertaken which had proved to be ill-conceived, or badly managed. The Hong Kong expedition falls under neither description.

(Ibid)

44. These conclusions must be judged historically in the light of the conditions existing when the expedition was organized, and not in the light of later events. Considering the material at hand in Canada in October 1941, and taking due account of the assumptions upon which the whole enterprise was based (above, para 3), it would seem that no very valid criticism can be directed at the manner in which the expedition was organized by the Department of National Defence.

THE CANADIANS AT HONG KONG, 16 NOV - 7 DEC 41

45. The voyage to Hong Kong was devoid of major incident. In spite of the crowded conditions aboard the "Awatea" a programme of training was carried out that was considered to be beneficial to all. Lectures were given on such topics as "Health in the Tropics", "Hong Kong, People and Customs", and "The Japanese Army" (Report of "C" Force Headquarters and Details, p. 3). There was instruction in the handling of the Bren Light Machine Gun, Thompson Sub Machine Gun and 2" Mortar. Particular attention was paid to the training of the new reinforcements. The T.S.M.G. and the Mortar were indeed much of a novelty to the majority of the personnel of both infantry battalions. "Up to the time of sailing the Rifles (R.R.C.) had had one 2" Mortar while the Unit was stationed in St. John's, Newfoundland, but this only for a short time. As for the Winnipeg Grenadiers, the first time any member of the Unit saw this weapon was on board ship" ("C" Force Report, p. 6).^x Brigade details worked on

x Lt.-Col. Trist includes the T.S.M.G. as a weapon not "seen by the Winnipeg Grenadiers prior to embarking on H.M.T.S. 'Awatea'" (HQ 5393-13, Trist to D.H.S. loc cit).

their respective duties checking stores, maintaining paybooks and performing various clerical tasks ("C" Force H.Q. Report, p. 2).

46. After approximately three weeks at sea the Canadian Expeditionary Force arrived at Hong Kong on 16 Nov 41 (HQs 20-2-20, Tel CA3, Orinoco to Defensor, 16 Nov 41). The troops were greeted by the Governor of the Colony, Sir Mark Young; Major-General C.M. Maltby, M.C., G.O.C. China Command; Commodore A.C. Collinson, R.N., Senior Naval Officer, and members of their staffs ("C" Force Report, p. 8). It had been considered that the arrival of "C" Force should be widely publicized as providing "a strong stimulus to the garrison and Colony", and as having "a very great morale effect in the whole of the Far East" (see para 3). Considerations of security, however, exerted a restraining influence on the extent to which details regarding the Force might be made known (HQs 20-1-20 Vol. 2, Tel 51164, Troopers to Fervour repeated Defensor, 11 Nov 41).

47. Simultaneous press and radio announcements were released in London, Ottawa and Hong Kong as follows:

A Canadian Force under the command of Brigadier J.K. Lawson has arrived at Hong Kong after a safe and uneventful voyage, the Canadian Government announced at Ottawa today. Canadian troops will serve with the other units of His Majesty's forces making up the Hong Kong garrison. The strength of the force was not disclosed.

(HQs 20-1-20 Vol. 2, A.C.G.S.
to D.P.R. (Army), 15 Nov 41)

48. Upon its arrival "C" Force was established at Sham Shui Po Camp (5605) on the north-western edge of the City of Kowloon, on the Mainland. (Note - Map reference points for the Mainland are taken from G.O.C.S. No. 3961, Hong Kong and the New Territories, 1:80,000. See Map "A", appended.) This camp had been constructed in 1927 to accommodate "Sha Force", -- the troops sent to Shanghai during the trouble in that city. It was rebuilt in 1931 to quarter two battalions. Buildings were of the bungalow type, of brick and stucco construction. A main road divided Sham Shui Po Camp into two areas, Hankow Barracks on the east side and Nanking Barracks to the west. Wpg Gren occupied the former and R.R.C. the latter. Brigade Office and details together with some officers were accommodated in the Jubilee Buildings at the south end of the camp. Quarters for the officers of the Brigade staff were found in the Peninsula Hotel, Kowloon. The two Canadian nursing sisters were attached for duty and quarters at Bowen Road Military Hospital (196531) on Hong Kong Island ("C" Force H.Q. Report, p.4).

49. In keeping with the procedure followed by the British units in Hong Kong, Chinese cooks and mess waiters were employed by the Canadian units, and native servants replaced batmen for officers. In making these arrangements for "C" Force Brigadier Lawson requested D.N.D. to issue confirming authority for the payment of this civilian labour employed by units, and to grant allowances to officers who must employ natives as personal servants (HQs 20-1-20 Vol 2, Tel 1674, Fervour to Defensor, 4 Dec 41).

50. Because of the employment of Canadian troops in other parts of the world in somewhat similar circumstances it was felt at Ottawa that the case of "C" Force should be considered in the wider implication of the principle involved. Accordingly, steps were taken to amend K.R. & O. (Can) and F.R. & I. (Overseas) so that British regulations in this respect could be made applicable to Canadian troops serving at such stations where non-European servant and groom allowances were admissible (HQs 2157-2, Minister of National Defence to Privy Council, 16 Apr 42 and P.C. 44/4430, 27 May 42).

51. Another matter in which "C" Force found it necessary to change established practice and adopt methods employed by the British units stationed at Hong Kong was the messing system. All rations had to be purchased from the R.A.S.C. or N.A.A.F.I., an allowance of \$1.19 (Hong Kong), or about .33 (Canadian), per day, being allotted for the food of each man in the unit (Cf Preliminary Narrative, The History of the Canadian Military Forces Overseas 1941-42, Chap. XI, para 169). It was necessary for the Canadian battalions to appoint a Messing Officer who had to devote his full time to messing, to the exclusion of other duties. His responsibility covered the following matters:-

- (1) Indenting for, checking, transporting, storing and dividing rations.
- (2) Drawing up weekly menus for corporals' and men's messes.
- (3) General supervision of messes, kitchens and butcher shops.
- (4) Delivery of rations during manning exercises.

("C" Force Report, p. 11)

52. The first two weekly reports from Commander "C" Force provide a picture of the general mode of life into which the Canadians came to be fitted. The welcome extended on arrival was cordial and helpful. Accommodation and messing were favourably commented upon. Health and discipline were good. Training and drill, which had continued throughout the voyage, were entered upon to an even more intense degree without any break upon arrival. The task of breaking down, checking and distributing stores taken in bulk was undertaken immediately. No time was lost in arranging for reconnaissance of the Island by all officers and non-commissioned officers down to and including section commanders. The experience and the facilities of China Command were utilized, and personnel of the Canadian services were attached to and working with their counterparts in the British services. The general picture is one of co-ordinated and intense activity directed by a Commander who had no illusions of security (HQs 8538-11, Tel 1544, Fervour to Defensor, 24 Nov 41 and Tel G2 Orinoco to Defensor, 30 Nov 41).^x

HONG KONG AND ITS DEFENCES

53. The Colony for the defence of which "C" Force was now sharing responsibility had an area of 390 square miles, and consisted of the Island of Hong Kong, Kowloon Peninsula and the New Territories. Hong Kong and the Kowloon Peninsula were British-owned; the New Territories were held from China on a ninety-nine-year lease dating from 1 Jul 98 HQMS 8902, Extracts from Colonial Annual Reports, Hong Kong, 1938).

54. Hong Kong Island has an approximate area of 35 square miles. It is about ten miles long from east to west, and from three to five miles wide. The water passage between Hong Kong and the Mainland is less than half a mile wide at its narrowest point, - opposite the Lye Mán Peninsula on the north-east corner of the Island. The country is very mountainous and woody. (Without a study of photographs or a careful examination of the contour lines on a large scale map of the Island it is difficult to realize the almost precipitous steepness of the majority of the hills over which Canadian and British forces had to operate during the campaign.) The only city, Victoria, lies on a narrow strip of waterfront not more than a mile wide, along the north shore, with the main ridge of mountains rising immediately behind to a height of 1800 feet at Victoria Peak (177535) - the highest point in the Island. (Note - Map reference points for Hong Kong Island are taken from G.S.G.S. No. 3868,

x "Fervour" was the code name for G.O.C., Hong Kong.

Hong Kong, 1:20,000. See Map "B" appended.) This natural barrier, which extends the full length of the Island, is broken at intervals by a series of gaps which give access to the south. From the ridge the terrain slopes sharply down to the south shore, with sundry smaller hills spotting the southern coast. A highway encircles the Island, running close to the shore most of the way. The only additional main road, the Repulse Bay road, runs north and south across the centre of the Island from Victoria to Deep Water Bay (2149). All other roads outside the city are little better than trails, and are in most cases impassable to motor traffic (Report on the Part Played by the Winnipeg Grenadiers in the Defence of Hong Kong, p. 3).

55. The Kowloon Peninsula is almost completely urbanized, and is the centre of most of the Colony's industry. It is separated from the Island of Hong Kong by Victoria Harbour and is inhabited predominantly by Chinese. It has most of the ocean terminal facilities, and is the location of the main commercial docks. To the north-east of the City of Kowloon lies the only aerodrome, Kai Tak (6005), which, in 1941, was being used for both military and commercial purposes ("C" Force Report, p. 15).

56. The New Territories include a portion of the mainland of China lying south of the Sham Chun River approximately 17 miles north of the northern boundary of the Kowloon Peninsula, and bounded east and west by Mirs Bay and Deep Bay respectively. The whole area, including some neighbouring islands, approximates 350 square miles. The land is hilly, particularly in the centre, where the highest peak, Tai Mo Shan (5115), has an altitude of 3000 feet. High ridges extend down into the south-eastern extremity of the Territories, and afford commanding positions looking across the narrow strip of water to Hong Kong Island. Most important of these, from a tactical viewpoint, is the Devil's Peak Peninsula overlooking Lye Mun Strait. A road, 50 miles long, encircles the main portion of the New Territories, its eastern arc following the line of the Kowloon-Canton Railway. These routes provide the normal means of communication with the northern boundary along the Sham Chun River (Ibid).

57. A census taken in April 1941 showed the total population of the Colony to be 1,500,000 people, of whom 750,000 natives were on Hong Kong Island (HQMS 8902, War Office to Brig. J.C. Murchie, C.M.H.Q., Note on Hong Kong, 26 Oct 41). The pre-war non-Chinese civilian population was some 20,000; a large proportion of the European women and children had now been evacuated (Ibid). Between 1937 and 1941 the number of Chinese in Hong Kong had nearly doubled. After the fall of Canton, towards the end of 1938, thousands of refugees came into the New Territories, infiltrating thence into Kowloon and Hong Kong. A War Office appreciation in mid-December contained the remark, "the most serious weakness of the situation was the presence of 750,000 Chinese in the City of Victoria" (HQMS 8902, Tel GS 2877, Camilitary to Defensor, 15 Dec 41). This doubling of the native population not only placed a heavy strain upon Hong Kong's food and water supply during the siege but had made it almost impossible for civil authorities or service intelligence to weed out or control the fifth columnists who had established themselves along with the genuine refugees. There seemed little doubt that much detailed information relative to the Colony's defences must have been collected by agents of the enemy in these favourable times. Once hostilities had broken out the fifth columnists treacherously engaged in sniping and spotting activities, in endeavouring to spread dissension and false propaganda and in suborning the loyalty of native personnel (see para 113).

58. As Governor of the Colony Sir Mark Young, K.C.M.G., C.G.M., was titular Commander-in-Chief of all Naval, Army and Air Forces in the Colony. Responsibility for the defences of Hong Kong was vested in the Senior Officer of the three Services, Major-General C.M. Maltby, M.C., G.O.C. China Command. The forces at the G.O.C.'s disposal on the arrival in Hong Kong of "C" Force are briefly described in the following paragraphs.

59. The sudden outbreak of hostilities between Japan and the United Nations found the naval defences of the Colony in a much reduced state. Exigencies of the European war had necessitated the withdrawal to European waters of both the cruiser squadron and the powerful submarine flotilla normally stationed

at Hong Kong. There had also been a gradual transference of naval units and facilities to Singapore. "It was a matter of general knowledge that Singapore, in view of the perilous situation of Hong Kong vis-a-vis Japan, was being set up and fortified as the main British Far-Eastern base" ("C" Force Report, p. 19). On 8 Dec 41 two destroyers and a number of Auxiliary Patrol Vessels left as reinforcements for Singapore. When the Japanese began the attack on the Colony, the only naval craft available at Hong Kong were: one "S" Class destroyer, the "Thracian"; three or four gunboats (outdated craft); six or eight M.T.Bs.; a few minesweepers and minelaying tugs; and a number of miscellaneous local patrol craft (Estimates of exact naval strengths vary. See Note on Hong Kong, 25 Oct 41, op cit; Wpg. Gren Report, p. 2; and "C" Force Report, p. 21).*

60. Naval personnel in Hong Kong numbered some 1300 British and 300 Indian and Chinese, and included in addition to R.N. officers and ratings, Royal Marines, members of the Hong Kong R.N.V.R., Dockyard Defence Corps, R.N. Dockyard Police, Indian Police and Chinese Communications Ratings ("C" Force Report, p. 23). Naval Headquarters, with Commodore A.C. Collinson in command, was established in the Royal Naval Dockyard in Victoria. Because this dockyard was too vulnerable to attack from the Mainland, the Navy had taken over the unused civilian dockyard at Aberdeen (1850) on the south coast of the Island. This dock was large enough to accommodate the smaller craft which remained available for the defence of Hong Kong (Ibid, p. 20). Naval defence measures were confined to patrolling the approaches to Hong Kong, the installation and maintenance of indicator loops and anti-ship and anti-submarine booms, and the laying of contact and controlled mines in fields which prevented or regulated the passage of shipping approaching the Island from the west, south and east (HQMS 8902, Note on Hong Kong, Attached Map, Hong Kong and New Territories 1/80,000, showing Defence Dispositions, op cit).

61. The air power available for the defence of the Colony was virtually nil. The Garrison's air force consisted of five aircraft of outdated types. Two were Walrus Amphibians: the others were Wildebeeste Torpedo Bombers. (The War Office Note on Hong Kong gives the number of Wildebeestes as four. The Reports of "C" Force and Wpg Gren speak of three only). These aeroplanes were all at Kai Tak aerodrome. They were damaged or destroyed on the ground by Japanese air raids on the first morning of hostilities (Maltby Despatch, Appx "B", p. 7). R.A.F. personnel at Hong Kong numbered approximately eight officers and 80 other ranks. No outside assistance could be expected, the nearest British aerodrome being at Kota Bharu, 1500 miles distant ("C" Force Report, p. 16).

62. In enumerating the limitations of the forces under his command the G.O.C. China Command placed first the absence of air power.

The lack of reconnaissance both landwards and seawards was naturally a serious handicap. Study of the past history of Japanese operations had led me to believe that they were past masters in combined operations, and throughout the period of the siege I always anticipated a landing on the southern shores of the Island, and lack of distant seaward reconnaissance was for me a distinct handicap. Similarly I knew that the lack of opposition to the incessant enemy air raids had a somewhat depressing effect towards the end on the troops, and definitely increased the accuracy of the enemy bombing and the material damage done. For similar reasons the enemy's counter battery tasks were very much simplified.

(Maltby Despatch, p. 3)

63. The Army Forces in Hong Kong consisted of H.Q. China Command and two infantry brigades with supporting arms and ancillary troops. China Command Headquarters was organized on a scale comparable to that of a modified infantry

* The Senior Naval officer, Hong Kong, gives one destroyer, four gunboats, eight M.T.Bs., seven A.P.Vs. (Auxiliary Patrol Vessels), and an auxiliary craft used for minefield duty (not a fighting unit). (Interview with Commodore A.G. Collinson, C.B.E., R.N. (retired), at C.M.H.Q., 27 Jun 46)

division H.Q. (Ibid, p. 19) (See Appx "C"). At the Command H.Q. the G.O.C. directed operations from a specially constructed underground building ("Battle Box"), (191531) between Mt. Gough and Victoria. The Mainland Brigade, with headquarters in Kowloon, was under the command of Brigadier C. Wallis. It comprised the 2nd Battalion The Royal Scots and two Indian battalions, the 2nd Battalion The 14th Punjab Regiment and the 5th Battalion The 7th Rajputana Regiment. The Island Brigade, (see para 72) commanded by Brigadier Lawson, consisted of the 1st Battalion Middlesex Regiment (MG), and the two Canadian battalions. Headquarters for this brigade was at the centre of the Island, in Wong Nei Chong Gap.

64. Hong Kong had extensive artillery defences. Under the C.R.A. were East and West Fire Commands - the 8th Coast Regiment and the 12th Coast Regiment respectively - whose batteries, together with four batteries of the Hong Kong Volunteer Defence Corps, manned some 30 guns of 4" to 9.2" calibre at strategic points on the east, south and west sides of the Island. The mobile artillery defences consisted of a number of howitzers, 3.7", 4.5" and 6", which went into action in various commanding locations on the Mainland and the Island. These guns were manned by mountain batteries of the 1st Medium Regiment. Hong Kong and Singapore R.A., an Indian unit with British officers. The 965th Battery R.A., with six 18-prs and four 2-prs on mobile carriages, in a beach defence role, completed the ground artillery forces. In all, there were about 65 guns (excluding anti-aircraft equipment) at the disposal of the C.R.A. (Note on Hong Kong, encl 2 & 3; "C" Force Report, pp 21, 22; Report by Maj R.J.C. Hamilton, Ottawa to Manila and Return, 31 Aug to 10 Dec 45, Appx "A", p. 2).

65. The anti-aircraft artillery in the Colony consisted of twenty guns of various types, all stationed on the Island. These guns were operated by the 5th Anti-Aircraft Regiment R.A., which comprised one European battery (7 H.A.A. Bty R.A.) and two Indian batteries (17 H.A.A. Bty R.A. and 18 L.A.A. Bty R.A.). Half of the A.A. guns were 3" equipments. There were only four modern 3.7" guns, and two 40-mm Bofors. Twelve anti-aircraft searchlights were employed but there was no G.L. (radar) equipment (Note on Hong Kong, loc cit). It may be noted here that these few anti-aircraft equipments played a gallant part during the operations, and can claim five enemy aircraft shot down and three others which probably never reached their base (Maltby Despatch, p. 3).

66. Supplementing the regular military forces of the Garrison was the Hong Kong Volunteer Defence Corps, commanded by Colonel H.B. Rose, M.C. It included the four batteries of coast artillery referred to above, several companies of infantry (Wpg Gren Report speaks of seven), a field company of Engineers and detachments of administrative services (Note on Hong Kong, encl 3). Many nationalities were represented among the personnel of the Corps as the designation of the various infantry companies indicates, - Portuguese Coy, Eurasian Coy, Scottish Coy, etc. Units of the Corps had carried out regular military training, and had participated in annual manoeuvres based on the defence of the Colony (D.M.I. Interviews and Reports by Participants in Defence of Hong Kong, Wm G. Poy, N.C.O., D/R Section, Corps Signals, H.K.V.D.C.). The strength of the H.K.V.D.C. at the time of the outbreak of hostilities is variously reported as being between 1500 and 2300 all ranks (Note on Hong Kong, encl 3; Wpg Gren Report, p. 2).² In paying tribute to the work of the H.K.V.D.C. the G.O.C. China Command later wrote:

They proved themselves to be a valuable portion of the Garrison. In peace they had surrendered a great deal of their leisure to training, their mobilization was completed smoothly and quickly, and in action they proved themselves stubborn and gallant soldiers.

(Maltby Despatch, p. 9)

67. The total strength of the garrison of the Colony, including the

* Further information regarding H.K.V.D.C. may be found in Notes on Interview Lt-Col H.B. Rose, M.C., 8 & 9 Jun 46.

H.K.V.D.C., was a little less than 14,000. Of this number approximately one third consisted of Indian troops ("C" Force Report, p. 24). Strengths for 1 Sep 41 given in the War Office Note on Hong Kong show 3570 British, 2015 Indian and 4347 Colonial and Local Colonial troops. These figures do not include "C" Force, nor air force nor naval personnel. (See Appx "D").

THE PLAN OF DEFENCE

68. The task of the Hong Kong garrison was "to defend the Colony from external attack, and to deny the use of the harbour and drydock to the enemy" (Note on Hong Kong). Extensive measures had been taken to meet a major attack delivered against the Island from the sea. A seaborne invading force would have to contend with, in order, five lines of defence:

- (a) The Navy and offshore lines of defence (minefields).
- (b) The Coast Defence guns.
- (c) The Beach Defences, which consisted of pill boxes covering all possible landing points, a few scattered beach defence guns, anti-personnel land mines and barbed wire obstructions.
- (d) Infantry strongpoints situated in the hills above the coast line to stop penetration and localize any landing.
- (e) A reserve force to counter-attack and isolate or destroy any enemy landing parties.

(Wpg Gren Report, p. 1)

69. Until late in 1941 there appears according to Canadian accounts to have existed in Hong Kong an expectation, amounting almost to a conviction, that any attack on the Colony would come from the sea, and that against such a threat the Island's defences were impregnable (Wpg Gren Report, p. 2). The general feeling of security is alluded to by one of the Canadian Nursing Sisters with "C" Force after they had been taken for a drive around the Island.

We were told how strongly fortified the Island was; in fact it was impregnable. Later we learned that the majority of people in Hong Kong had felt the same way.

(Defence of Hong Kong, D.M.I.
Interviews and Reports, Vol 1,
Report of Lieut (N/S) A.M. Waters,
given on board S.S. "Gripsholm",
November 1943)

But the presence of Japanese troops in the border towns of Sham Chun (5031) and Sha Tau Kok (4028), north of Kowloon, and their control of the neighbouring Canton area presented a constant warning of a potential invasion of the Colony from the Mainland. Plans were in existence to defend Hong Kong against attack from the north, although the likelihood of danger from that direction does not seem, until quite late in the course of events, to have received a great deal of attention.

Wiring and field works on the mainland had not nearly been completed when hostilities broke out.

(Ibid)

70. The strength of Japanese forces in the area seems to have been very much underestimated. Wpg Gren record that a lecture given to Canadian officers shortly after their arrival in Hong Kong declared that "the Japanese had only about 5000 troops with very little artillery support opposing us from the north; that their troops were ill equipped and not used to night fighting; and that their aircraft was for the most part obsolete and their pilots very mediocre, unable to do dive bombing owing to poor eyesight" (Ibid. See also Maltby Despatch, Appx "B", p. 5). Another Canadian report points out that "it must be remembered, however, in fairness to all concerned, that since 1937 there had been several 'flaps'. On several occasions it looked like war, but on each occasion nothing happened, and most of those in the so-called 'know' of events in Hong Kong were sure there would be no war this time either" ("C" Force Report, p. 17). In explaining the reluctance of the Civil authorities of the Colony to put into effect the numerous measures required during the precautionary period of the Civil Defence Plan, General Maltby speaks of his difficulty in issuing a definite warning on the information then available, and blames three factors:-

- (a) The general doubt that Japan would declare war against the Allied powers.
- (b) The weakness of our intelligence system.
- (c) The belief that Japan was bluffing and would continue to bluff to the last, nor was the true gravity of the state of affairs reflected in the Embassy despatches from Tokyo.

(Maltby Despatch, p. 2)

71. Plans for the defence of Hong Kong contained two phases -- the battle for the Mainland, and the actual defence of the Island. On war with Japan becoming imminent units of the Mainland Brigade would occupy stations in the New Territories. Foremost positions along the frontier would be held as long as was possible. The defending troops would then fight a retiring and delaying action, carrying out extensive demolitions of roads, bridges and points on the Kowloon-Canton Railway. The main line of defence on the Mainland was the Gin Drinkers Line, "a position of great natural strength", which ran across the Peninsula for a distance of approximately 10½ miles through the Kowloon Hills (Note on Hong Kong). It was expected that this system of defences, which consisted of entrenchments, reinforced at intervals by concrete pill boxes, could be held for more than a week to allow time for the complete military evacuation of Kowloon (Maltby Despatch, p. 2). A third and final defence position on the Mainland would then be utilized, a short line at Devil's Peak (6501), about a mile north of Lye Mun Strait. This last position was considered strong enough to be held almost indefinitely ("C" Force Report, p. 24).

72. Although neither of the Canadian battalions was included in the Kowloon Brigade, it was the arrival of "C" Force in Hong Kong that made it possible for the force on the Mainland to be increased from one battalion - 2/14 Punjab - to an infantry brigade of three battalions. These dispositions were in accordance with a defence plan, originally outlined in 1937, which had never been fully implemented owing to the non-availability of troops in sufficient numbers. Although the Mainland units began the task of preparing and occupying their newly-assigned positions a few days before the arrival of "C" Force, unfortunately time was too short for either of the new flank battalions to be practised properly in their defence roles. They were therefore not familiar with the successive rear defence positions (Maltby Despatch, Appx B, pp 2, 3).

73. Defence positions on the Island were assigned to the two Canadian battalions and the Middlesex battalion, which, with some companies of H.K.V.D.C., comprised Brigadier Lawson's command. 1 Bx, a machine-gun unit, manned the

system of pill boxes which encircled the Island and covered certain strategic points in the interior. Wpg Gren, with Battalion Headquarters (226513) situated at Wan Chai Gap in the west centre, was responsible for the west and south-west portions of the Island. It also supplied a company to act as an aid to the civil power in Victoria and for the defence of Brigade Headquarters at Wong Nei Chong (227513) (Wpg Gren Report, p. 3). The defence of the eastern half of the Island was allotted to R.R.C., with Battalion Headquarters at Tai Tam Gap (263512). During the initial phase of the defence plan, while fighting was continuing on the Mainland, the north coast of Hong Kong Island would be left undefended except for the pill boxes manned by personnel of 1 Mx. Defence positions in this sector would be occupied by units of the Mainland Brigade as they withdrew to the Island (Note on Hong Kong).

74. Both the Canadian battalions had extensive frontages to cover. The R.R.C. report describes the wide distribution of the Battalion from Lye Mun Barracks (267537) in the north to Stanley Peninsula (2454) in the south, the outside perimeter of its area being about fifteen miles (W.D., R.R.C., December 1941, p. 10). The front for which Wpg Gren were responsible extended from the east end of Repulse Bay (2249) to the foot of Mt. Davis (155534) on the north-west corner of the Island. This meant a total frontage of 13,000 yards, not including Aberdeen Island, which was also held by the Battalion. The Wpg Gren positions "were all section posts from 200 to 800 yards apart" (Wpg Gren Report, p. 4). The majority of these posts were small trench systems high on the steep slopes above the shore line. Communication with other posts was by runner, except in a few instances where telephonic communication had been established. These were limited in number because of the distances involved and the shortage of wire:

The runner would in most cases have to traverse exceedingly hilly and difficult country to reach the section posts, with every possibility of losing his way, or being shot at [while] approaching the position from the front. There were very few of the positions which could be reached by runner under fifteen minutes.

(Ibid)

75. During the three weeks that elapsed between the arrival of the Canadians at Sham Shui Po Barracks and the outbreak of war officers and N.C.Os. of "C" Force units made several reconnaissances of defence positions and roads on the Island ("C" Force H.Q. Report, p. 5). Two manning exercises were held, when battle positions in each sector were occupied by one platoon per company for a week at a time. For these schemes troops were brought over from Sham Shui Po by R.A.S.C. launches and marched from the docks to their positions. Only five trucks were available per battalion. These were driven by Chinese, but personnel of battalion transport accompanied the drivers to familiarize themselves with the roads (Ibid). The balance of the troops left behind in camp continued daily training, as special attention was placed on the mastery of infantry weapons (W.D., R.R.C., December 1941, p. 8). R.R.C. reports the commencement of a Weapon-Training course for 25 of its N.C.Os. under instructors from 1 Mx (Ibid, p. 6. See also W.D., East Inf Bde, p. 105).

76. The Canadian battalions had thus barely familiarized themselves with their static role of Island defence when war broke out.

This Island Defence Plan had been developed in great detail in co-operation with the Royal Navy over a period of years. It needed extremely careful study to get full value from every man in the extensive defence sectors (especially in the South East and South West), and it needed careful rehearsals as had been done in the past, but the date of attack forestalled combined training with the Canadian troops.

(Maltby Despatch, Appx B, p. 3)

THE OUTBREAK OF WAR

77. On Saturday, 6 Dec 41, H.Q. China Command issued a warning of impending war, and ordered that all officers keep in touch with their respective battalion headquarters (W.D., R.R.C., December 1941, p. 9). That night all positions on the Island were blacked out. There was still, however, a strong feeling in Hong Kong that war would be averted (Ibid). On Sunday morning, 7 Dec, well before the outbreak of hostilities, all units were ordered to man their battle positions. H.K.V.D.C. mobilized, and units of the Kowloon Brigade moved into their Mainland positions, with forward troops being sent along the Tai Po (5620) and Castle Peak (3212) Roads up to the frontier. The Canadian battalions and Brigade Headquarters crossed from Sham Shui Po Barracks to the Island by ferry, Wpg Gren landing in Victoria, and R.R.C. at Sau Ki Wan (264536) and Lye Mun (Wpg Gren Report, p. 4; and W.D., R.R.C., December 1941, p. 10). Brigade Headquarters was in position and the manning of both battalion areas completed by 1700 hours (Ibid). Small rear parties were left at Sham Shui Po. These consisted of the battalions' first reinforcements, the baggage parties under the unit quartermasters, arranging for the shipment of unit stores and baggage to Hong Kong, and some R.C. Sigs personnel who were attached to H.Q. Kowloon Inf Bde ("C" Force H.Q. Report, p. 6).

78. The completion of the transfer of the Canadian units to Hong Kong Island found the troops disposed as follows. H.Q. Hong Kong Inf Bde, with Brigadier Lawson and his staff, was located at Wong Nei Chong Gap (225514) in concrete shelters on the west side of the Repulse Bay Road - the main road running across the Island. These shelters were designed for cover from weather and from view rather than as defensive strongpoints. Fitted with steel doors and window shutters they gave protection against rifle fire, but were not proof against mortar or shell fire. They were effectively camouflaged with paint and netting. Brigade Headquarters and headquarters of each battalion were connected by telephone with Fortress H.Q.

79. The Brigade Staff at Wong Nei Chong Gap consisted of Brigadier Lawson, the Brigade Major (Major Lyndon), the Staff Captain (Captain Bush) and the Brigade Intelligence Officer (Lieut. A.R.S. Woodside, R.R.C.), together with clerks, runners, intelligence and signals personnel ("C" Force H.Q. Report, p. 7). The office of the S.A.O. (Colonel Hennessy), the Field Cashier (Captain R.M. Davies, R.C.A.P.C.) and the postal detachment, was established at No. 8, "The Peak", a large house near H.Q. China Command, where it was attached to the British Second Echelon (Ibid). The two Nursing Sisters with "C" Force were already on duty at the Bowen Road Military Hospital in Victoria (Defence of Hong Kong, D.M.I. Interviews and Reports, Vol. 1, Reports of Lieuts (N/S) A.M. Waters and K.G. Christie, given on board S.S. "Gripsholm", November, 1943).

80. Wpg Gren, manning the western portion of the Island, established Battalion Headquarters at Wan Chai Gap, (203524) to the north-west of Mt. Cameron. On the left "A" Coy was at Little Hong Kong (211508), covering the Deep Water Bay and Repulse Bay areas; on the right "B" Coy, at Pok Fu Lam (170514), was responsible for the defence of the west coast; while in the centre "C" Coy held positions at Aberdeen and on Aberdeen Island. "D" Coy was stationed at Wong Nei Chong Gap as a Brigade Reserve and for local protection. It came directly under Brigade command. "D" Coy Headquarters was on the east side of the Repulse Bay Road, across from Bde H.Q. H.Q. Coy remained with Battalion H.Q. at Wan Chai Gap (Wpg Gren Report, p. 7).

81. All defences manned by R.R.C. faced the sea along the east and south-east coasts. Battalion H.Q. and H.Q. Coy were in the Boa Vista (257508) area, at Tai Tam Gap, near the junction of the Sheko Road with the Island Road. From right to left the distribution of sub-units was as follows: Stone Hill (246481) Area, including Stanley Village (247469), "B" Coy; Obelisk Hill (263503) and Tai Tam Tuk (2549), "D" Coy; Windy Gap (278474) and D'Aguilar Point (297458), "A" Coy; Lye Mun Area, "C" Coy and the four platoons of first reinforcements. Under command of the O.C., R.R.C.; was No. 2 Coy H.K.V.D.C. defending the

Sheko (283487) - Collinson (270506) area (W.D., R.R.C., December 1941, p. 11).

82. 1 Mx, equipped with medium machine-guns, was manning the concrete pill boxes that dotted the entire perimeter of the Island. Company areas of this Battalion thus lay within the defence areas of the two Canadian battalions. H.Q. "B" Coy 1 Mx was at Stone Hill utilizing the same company headquarters as "B" Coy R.R.C. Personnel of this company were manning ten pill boxes (Nos 21 to 30) around Stanley Peninsula, from West Bay to Tai Tam Bay. In the "D" Coy area of R.R.C. was "D" Coy 1 Mx, manning pill boxes (31 - 39) from Tai Tam Bay to Sai Wan Bay (2752) (W.D., R.R.C., December 1941, p. 13). The various detachments of 1 Mx were operationally under the command of the battalion commander in whose area they were stationed.

83. At 0550 hours on Monday, 8 Dec 41 (1720 hours Sunday, 7 Dec, Ottawa time), H.Q. China Command received word through Naval channels that war had broken out with Japan ("C" Force H.Q. Report, p. 6). All defence services were warned. At 0745 hours Kai Tak Airport was dive-bombed.^x The attacking force consisted of 45 single-seater fighters with forward guns (Maltby Despatch, Appx "B.1", W.D., Fortress H.Q., p. 1). All R.A.F. and civilian aircraft were caught on the ground and virtually destroyed (the Maltby Despatch speaks of three R.A.F. aircraft being destroyed, one seriously damaged and one slightly damaged. Eight civil aircraft were destroyed. (Op cit, p. 7.) Two commercial aircraft were, however, reported on 9 Dec as continuing to maintain communications with free China. (HQMS 8902, Tel 1737, Fervour to Defensor, 9 Dec 41.) The enemy air attack was then directed on the Sham Shui Po area, which was bombed and machine-gunned. The Jubilee Buildings were hit and two R.C. Sigs signalmen were wounded. These were the first casualties sustained by "C" Force (HQMS 8902, Tel 1732, Fervour to Defensor, 8 Dec 41).

84. Upon the outbreak of hostilities with Japan the Minister of National Defence despatched a message to Commander "C" Force:

Following from Minister of National Defence,
Concurrently with Dominion's declaration of
war against Japan I send you the assurance
of the complete confidence that Forces under
your command will in the days that lie ahead
worthily uphold the best traditions of
Canadian Arms.

(HQ 20-1-20 Vol. 2, Tel GS 353,
Defensor to Orinoco, 8 Dec 41)

85. Brigadier Lawson replied:

Following to Minister of National Defence.
All ranks much appreciate your message. We
shall do everything in our power to maintain
best traditions of Canadian Army.

(HQ 20-1-20 Vol. 2, Tel G.6,
Orinoco to Defensor, 10 Dec 41).

THE OPERATIONS ON THE MAINLAND (8-12 DEC 41)

86. Although participation by Canadian troops in the fighting on the Mainland of the Colony was limited to a single company, the following general

^x Pearl Harbour was attacked at 0755 hours, 7 Dec 41, Honolulu Time, which is 1255 hours 7 Dec Ottawa Time, and 0125 hours 8 Dec, Hong Kong Time. It will be noted that the Hong Kong and Pearl Harbour attacks were, from the viewpoint of local time, delivered simultaneously, i.e., just after first light.

outline of operations there is included, to demonstrate the extent to which the prearranged plan of defence was followed and to provide a background for subsequent events. The main source of information regarding this phase of the siege of Hong Kong is the Maltby Despatch. The War Diary and Narrative, Mainland Infantry Brigade and Attached Troops, Brigadier C. Wallis, has also been consulted. Strictly contemporary documentary evidence is restricted to the meagre and somewhat confused situation reports that were received by the War Office from H.Q. China Command during the action (HQMS 8902, Sitreps; Defence of Hong Kong). Supplementing this material are the reports compiled by the Canadian battalions. The information contained in these accounts was supplied by the various commanders of the units engaged on the Mainland, and was given to the Canadian diarists during the period when British and Canadian officers were incarcerated together as prisoners of war following the capitulation (Wng Gren Report, p. 4). Situation maps showing dispositions on the Mainland were prepared in the prison camp for the "C" Force Commander, and are of some assistance in establishing the movement of forces during the Mainland action.

87. By first light on 8 Dec the three infantry battalions of the Kowloon (Mainland) Brigade were at their battle stations, with 5/7 Rajput on the right, 2/14 Punjab in the centre and 2 R.S. on the left. The 5/7 Rajput's position was in the Kowloon Peak (6206) area south-east of Tide Cove (6014), where they were holding the right end of the Inner Defence (Gin Drinkers) Line. 2/14 Punjab, the former Mainland Battalion, had forward troops in the Sheung Shui (5127) area, just inside the northern frontier. These consisted of one infantry company, four of the battalion's Bren gun carriers, and two armoured cars of H.K.V.D.C. (Maltby Despatch, Appx "B", pp 2, 8). 2 R.S. occupied positions along the Castle Peak Road, north-west of Lai Chi Kok (5306), whence patrols went forward up the road on the west side of the Peninsula.

88. Four 4-gun troops of mobile artillery were deployed behind the Gin Drinkers Line under Brigade command as follows:

1st Mountain Battery (Hunt's), - 3.7" How, at
Customs Pass (6306) to cover the Right Bn.

2nd Mountain Battery, - 4.5" How, at Filters (5407)
3.7" How, at Tai Wai (5711)

covering the centre and left bns.

25th Medium Battery, - 6" How, at Polo Ground
(5705) Kowloon, covering the whole front

(Ibid, p. 3)

89. Early in the morning of 8 Dec enemy troops advanced over the border, crossing the Sham Chun River, Laffans Plain (5530) and the Indus River in the neighbourhood of Sheung Shui. All demolitions along the frontier are reported to have been successfully carried out. As the Japanese advanced 2/14 Punjab withdrew down the Fan Ling (5225) - Tai Po - Kowloon Road to Tai Po Market on Tolo Harbour. They were attacked here at 1300 hours, but repulsed the attack with heavy losses to the enemy. To avoid danger of being outflanked the Battalion withdrew further that evening to a point east of Grassy Hill (5615), at the mouth of Tide Cove (MS 8902, Tel 1737, Fervour to Defensor, 10 Dec 41). Meanwhile, on the left, the Carrier Platoon of 2 R.S. made contact with the enemy at Ping Shan (3819), about half way up the western road. During the day patrols withdrew along the Castle Peak Road to Brothers Point (4008), successfully blowing their demolitions. There was no action on the front held by 5/7 Rajput on the right. The Japanese forces were thus far apparently advancing in two columns along the axes of the main roads (Wng Gren Report, p. 4). They are believed to have been advancing on a two-battalion front along the Tai Po road, and to have employed another brigade in the Castle Peak road sector (Maltby Despatch, Appx "A", p. 3. See footnote to para 220).

90. A withdrawal to the Gin Drinkers Line was ordered by the Mainland Brigade Commander in the early hours of 9 Dec. 2/14 Punjab, which before first light had already retired to the head of Tide Cove, continued to fall back slowly under heavy enemy pressure, and by late afternoon was in its positions in the Inner Defence Line below Sha Tin Wai (6011). It continued to hold these positions for the next two days. During this period the pill boxes held by the 2/14 Punjab were under enemy shellfire, but reports fail to indicate that the battalion became involved in much action. 2 R.S. took up positions on the left end of the Inner Line, covering the area from Gin Drinkers Bay north to Golden Hill (5409) and Shing Mun Redoubt (5411). During the day the battalion continued to send patrols forward along the Castle Peak Road and overland through Telegraph Pass, on the west side of Tai Mo Shan. To fill a gap in the line between 2 R.S. and 2/14 Punjab a reserve company from 5/7 Rajput was brought into place in the Smuggler's Ridge (5510) Area (Maltby Despatch, Appx "B", p. 9).

91. Just before midnight on 9/10 Dec the enemy, in a sudden attack on the Inner Defence Line, seized Shing Mun Redoubt (HQMS 8902, Tel 1737, Fervour to Defensor, 10 Dec 41). The loss of this stronghold, a key position on the Gin Drinkers Line, came as a great surprise and a severe setback to the defenders of the line. The enemy, it appeared, had made his approach from an unexpected direction over "very difficult country" through the hills east of Tai Mo Shan. The employment of local guides was suspected (Ibid). The high standard of night fighting displayed by the enemy in achieving this success came as a revelation to the defending forces, who had been trained in more orthodox methods of combat. There were, unfortunately, to be numerous other occasions during the campaign when Japanese attackers were to demonstrate the superiority of their training in movement by night through difficult terrain. (The British G.O.C. was subsequently informed by a Japanese officer that a month had been spent on concentrated night training for the attack on Hong Kong. - Maltby Despatch, Appx "B", p. 8).

92. The loss of the Redoubt made all forward positions west of Shing Mun untenable. 2 R.S. was ordered to withdraw after dusk on 10 Dec to the line Golden Hill - Lai Chi Kok (HQMS 8902, Tel 1743, Fervour to Defensor, 11 Dec 41). Early next morning the enemy attacked along the battalion front. The two left companies astride the Castle Peak Road were driven back in disorder by mortar fire, but a line was re-established north-west of Lai Chi Kok Hospital (HQMS 8902, Tel 1750, Fervour to Defensor, 12 Dec 41). The 2 R.S. right flank (in the Golden Hill area) held - largely through the vigorous action taken there by the company of 5/7 Rajput - and by midday the battalion's position was stabilized (Maltby Despatch, Appx "B", p. 11).

93. At 2300 hours 9 Dec "D" Coy, Wpg Gren, which was in position at Wong Nei Chong Gap as brigade reserve, was ordered by Fortress H.Q. to move immediately to the Mainland, to come under command H.Q. Kowloon Inf Bde, as reserve company for 2 R.S. (Ibid, p. 7). The move was completed by early morning of the 10th, the company being replaced at Wong Nei Chong by "E" Coy (the first reinforcements). "D" Coy stood by all day in Kowloon (at the Hong Kong Polo Club). At approximately 0930 hours on 11 Dec, after the Japanese attack upon 2 R.S., Brigadier Wallis ordered this company to take up positions in the 2 R.S. area. Two platoons were stationed to cover Golden Hill on the 2 R.S. right flank; a third platoon was placed further south, above the Castle Peak Road. The promptitude and efficiency with which the company occupied its positions were the subject of commendation by the Brigade Commander (Ibid, p. 8). During the afternoon the forward troops exchanged fire with the enemy, and came under enemy shellfire, but there was no large-scale action.*

94. The possibility of launching a counter-attack on the Shing Mun Redoubt with "D" Coy Wpg Gren was discussed by the G.O.C. and the Mainland Brigade Commander. "It was felt impossible to employ the Canadian company in bad ground they had never previously seen, and in view of their lack of training" (War Diary and Narrative, Mainland Infantry Brigade and Attached Troops, Brigadier C. Wallis, 30 May 1942, p. 15). Counter-attacks in the same area, by 2 R.S. and by the Rajput company, had previously been considered and discarded as impracticable (Maltby Despatch, Appx "B", p. 11).

* It may be noted that this action involved the first engagement by a Canadian infantry battalion in the 1939-45 War.

95. At 1200 hours on the 11th, H.Q. China Command issued orders for a general withdrawal of all troops to the Island during the night of 11/12 Dec, except for 5/7 Rajput, detailed under the scheme of defence for the occupation of Devil's Peak Peninsula. With the battalion remained one 3.7" how troop R.A. (Ibid, p. 13). Enemy attacks decreased during the afternoon, and 2 R.S. began thinning out, withdrawing through the lines of "D" Coy, Wpg Gren. The British battalion retired down the Peninsula, and embarked from one of the Kowloon docks. A sitrep describes the withdrawal as "a difficult operation in view of constant pressure by superior numbers, who were very good at turning the flanks which were necessarily often offered owing to the smallness of units" (HQMS 8902, Tel 1754, Fervour to Defensor, 13 Dec 41). The Wpg Gren company, which covered the evacuation of 2 R.S. and followed the battalion to the dock, refers to "slight opposition from fifth columnists in Kowloon" being encountered (Wpg Gren Report, p. 8). By 2230 hours 11 Dec 2 R.S. were in Victoria, at Murray Barracks, and three hours later "D" Coy Wpg Gren arrived at Mt. Austin Barracks (180529), near Victoria Peak (Ibid, p. 5). "Much mechanical transport, nearly all carriers, and all armoured cars" were reported evacuated (Tel 1754, op cit).

96. 2/14 Punjab was ordered to withdraw via Devil's Peak to Hong Kong Island. On the night 11/12 Dec two companies ("A" and "B") carried out the move successfully, passing through 5/7 Rajput's positions at Ma Lau Tong (6504), and crossing to the Island at Lye Mun. Some confusion marked the movements of the remaining companies of the battalion (Ibid), and they did not reach the Island until the following night.

97. In the meantime 5/7 Rajput, which had been holding the right end of the Inner Defence Line, withdrew through Customs Pass to Ma Lau Tong, about half way down the Devil's Peak promontory. Early in the morning of 12 Dec the battalion was joined by its reserve company, which had been in position at Smuggler's Ridge (see para 90). Late that afternoon the Japanese attacked the left company 5/7 Rajput at Ma Lau Tong with an estimated strength of one battalion (Maltby Despatch, Appx "B", p. 17). The attack broke down in the wire defences, and the enemy suffered heavy casualties (Wpg Gren Report, p. 5). By midnight 12/13 Dec the Ma Lau Tong line had been evacuated as 5/7 Rajput withdrew to a shorter line at Hai Wan (6502).

98. Early on the morning of 13 Dec the G.O.C., because he foresaw "the greatest difficulties and even the impossibility of maintaining the Rajputs with ammunition and supplies in their isolated position", and further urgently required them to relieve and man the North East sector of the Island then held by 2 R.S., gave orders for the complete evacuation of Devil's Peak without delay (Maltby Despatch, Appx "B", p. 19). During the early morning hours the move to the Island was successfully carried out by steam launch and by the destroyer H.M.S. "Thracian" and three M.T.Bs. supplied at short notice by the Royal Navy. All personnel were safely evacuated, but it was necessary to abandon much of the 3.7" ammunition, and all mules of the mountain battery were left behind on the Mainland. At 1100 hours 13 Dec 5/7 Rajput concentrated for a rest at Tai Tam Gap (Ibid).

99. During the action on the Mainland coast artillery batteries on Hong Kong and Stonecutters Island (5304) had been employed against land targets in counter-battery and harassing fire roles with effective results (Tel 1754, op cit). Mountain batteries with the Mainland Inf Bde are described as finding many targets "on infantry and mortars", in engaging which they "exceeded their ammunition allotments" (Wpg Gren Report, p. 5). The report of the C.R.A. with respect to the mobile artillery declared that while there was insufficient artillery to support three battalions spread over 10 $\frac{1}{2}$ miles of country on the Mainland, yet "on the whole this artillery gave all the support possible, and the fire was generally effective in spite of having to be taken largely from the 1/20,000 map" (Maltby Despatch, Appx "M", Report by C.R.A., para 12). Upon the general withdrawal the mobile guns were successfully evacuated. The loss of the mules, however, immobilized the troops of the 3.7" hows on the Island (Ibid). The 6" coast artillery guns and the 60-pr guns of 25 Med Bty R.A. on Stonecutters Island were destroyed in their positions prior to the evacuation to Hong Kong Island (Tel 1750, op cit).

100. The evacuation of the forces assigned to operations on the Mainland was thus completed on the night of 12/13 Dec, just five days after the outbreak of war. The invasion of Hong Kong Island now appeared imminent. The way lay open for an attack across the narrow water passage of Victoria Harbour or Lye Mun Strait, and the enemy could choose his own time. To the garrison and civilians of the Colony, whose confidence in the strength of the Mainland defences had led them to believe that these could be held for a very long time, the rapid withdrawal came as a great shock.² Japanese batteries on the Kowloon Peninsula now began shelling the Island. A sitrep of 12 Dec remarked, "morale of the civil population considerably shaken by unexpected evacuation of Kowloon" (Tel 1754, op cit).

REORGANIZATION OF ISLAND DEFENCES (13-18 Dec 41)

101. With the arrival of the Mainland troops on the Island a reorganization of the forces on Hong Kong took place. The new system of command became effective at 2359 hours 13 Dec (Wpg Gren Report, p. 6). The forces on the Island were divided into an East and a West Brigade, commanded respectively by Brigadier Wallis and Brigadier Lawson. Units of the East Brigade were R.R.C. with attached troops (1 and 2 Coys, H.K.V.D.C.) and 5/7 Rajput. The West Brigade comprised Wpg Gren, 2 R.S. and 2/14 Punjab. 1 Mx, with headquarters at Leighton Hill (216534), came directly under command of Fortress H.Q. as "Corps Troops" for defence purposes. "This eased the situation for Brig Wallis, who had the larger half of the Island to command, and for Brig Lawson, who was unfamiliar with the ground" (Maltby Despatch, Appx "B", p. 23). 1 Mx detachments continued to man the pill boxes around the Island under operational command of the battalions in whose areas they found themselves (History of 1st Battalion Royal Rifles of Canada, p. 65). The inter-brigade boundary (with respect to East Bde) was:- incl P.B. 52 at the N.E. corner of Causeway Bay (2254) - Tai Hang Village (2253) - Jardine's Lookout (232522) - excl Wong Nei Chong Reservoir (229512) - Violet Hill (233503) - incl Stanley Mound (239483) - Chung Hum Kok (232461) (War Diary and Narrative, East Infantry Brigade and Attached Troops, Brig C. Wallis, 1 Oct 42, p. 4). Brigadier Lawson kept his brigade headquarters at Wong Nei Chong; Brigadier Wallis established his at Tai Tam Gap, in the area already occupied by R.R.C. Bn H.Q. (Ibid)

² The civilian viewpoint is given in Jesuits Under Fire, a composite narrative of the experiences of a band of Irish Jesuit missionaries during the siege of Hong Kong. After describing the looting and banditry which terrorized Kowloon between the time of the defenders' withdrawal and the entry of the Japanese forces the account proceeds:

We had, according to the official statement, "withdrawn to our island fortress," and we were a target for the enemy's guns at point-blank range. Mention of a "fortress" conveys a suggestion of strength and security, but it is a misleading word when it is applied to a city which is open to every form of attack from cannon and aeroplane. Militarily, it must have seemed a feasible plan to withdraw to the Island and let the enemy do its worst, but to the civilian population it seemed a move that could only lead to one conclusion. Up to this the greater part of the suffering caused by the war fell on the civilian population; henceforth it would fall on it more heavily still, and in greater proportion. There was never for a moment any weakness on the part of the people, and all did their part to the fullest extent - but there was no enthusiasm.

Weary and wounded soldiers had crossed the harbour up to a late hour on the previous night, and praise was lavished on them by the B.B.C. Very rough estimates were made of their losses in dead and missing. There was genuine sympathy for them, but the universal comment was:

"They have come off lightly in comparison with the civilians."

102. The reorganization did not immediately affect the disposition of sub-units of the two Canadian battalions. Companies continued to man their stations on the east, south and west of the Island. On the north coast, a sector which had been left virtually without infantry defence during the Mainland action (see para 73), units evacuated from Kowloon and the New Territories moved into position. 2/14 Punjab was placed in Victoria for the defence of the city. 2 R.S., which on its withdrawal to the Island on the night of 11/12 Dec had immediately manned positions at Quarry Point (2554) and North Point (2355), was relieved in that sector by 5/7 Rajput, and moved to the area Wan Chai Gap - Filter Beds (220520) to refit and reorganize (Maltby Despatch, Appx "B", p. 23). 5/7 Rajput was given responsibility for the defence of the coastal sector from Sau Ki Wan west to Tai Hang. On its right flank it joined "C" Coy, R.R.C., holding the Lye Mun area (see para 81). Later, on 16 Dec, 5/7 Rajput took over the line Pak Sha Wan - Sau Ki Wan from forward Canadian platoons, and manned all pill boxes from Pak Sha Wan to North Point (W.D., R.R.C., December 1941, p. 21; and Maltby Despatch, Appx "D").

103. With the realization that a Japanese attack from the Mainland was almost a certainty as soon as the enemy had marshalled his forces, the defenders of the Island made all possible arrangements to meet the impending assault. An invasion of the Island from the Mainland might well be in combination with a seaborne attack on the south shore, conceivably at a number of points at once. It was therefore necessary to keep the defence forces dispersed, in order to cover the entire perimeter of the Island. Reserves available to the G.O.C. were:-

- (a) 2 R.S. at Wan Chai Gap - Filter Beds, temporarily unfit until they could be thoroughly rested and re-organized.
- (b) Two Coys 5/7 Rajput in the North East sector.
- (c) One Coy Wpg Gren in the South West sector (Wong Nei Chong).
- (d) Two Coys 2/14 Punjab in North West Sector.
- (e) "Z" (Reserve) Coy 1 Mx, including one mobile M.G. pl.

(Maltby Despatch, Appx "B", p. 21)

104. While this was the reserve force whose function was "to counter attack and isolate or destroy enemy landing parties" (see para 68) subsequent events were to show that the two Canadian battalions, which had not yet been committed to action, must also be regarded as such a potential reserve. They were subsequently used in this role, but, as will be shown, the manner of their employment was generally one of small piecemeal action on a company or platoon scale, as the necessity for a wide dissipation of defence forces remained the dominating factor of all operations.*

105. In their respective company, platoon and section positions personnel of the Canadian battalions worked on improving their local defences by digging and wiring (W.D., R.R.C., December 1941, pp 18, 21). Royal Engineers placed mines at strategic road junctions (Ibid, p. 19). As a precautionary measure against possible parachute landings on the few comparatively level areas along the east coast, anti-paratroop posts were established in the company locations

* The request by the War Office for an additional Canadian battalion (see para 16) was made at the instance of General Maltby, who hoped thus to have a battalion to use as brigade reserve on the Island. ("C" Force - Interviews and Correspondence for Preliminary Report: Notes on Interview with Major-General C.M. Maltby at C.M.H.Q. 25 Jun 46, para 8)

of R.R.C. (Ibid, p. 17). To meet the paratroop threat in the Sheko - Windy Gap area a small mobile force was attached to "A" Coy R.R.C. It consisted of two Bren carriers, two vans and one motorcycle with about 30 all ranks from No. 2 Coy H.K.V.D.C. (Ibid, p. 19). At Wan Chai Gap, H.Q. Coy Wpg Gren was reorganized, as three platoons were detailed for flying column duty (Wpg Gren Report, p. 8).

106. In the face of increased shelling from the Mainland and the threat of an enemy landing on the north side of the Island, food stores were moved to points of relative safety along the southern coast. On 8 and 9 Dec the main R.A.S.C. Depot in Victoria, to which the R.C.A.S.C. Supply Section of "C" Force was attached, was evacuated from Queen Street, Victoria, to the Deep Water Bay Golf Club, while large quantities of supplies were also transferred to Stanley Barracks ("C" Force H.Q. Report, Supply Section R.C.A.S.C., p. 1). On 13 Dec the Q.M. of R.R.C. began moving battalion stores from Lye Mun Barracks to Palm Villa (252481), a house on the Stanley Road above Tai Tam Bay (W.D., R.R.C., December 1941, p. 18). The whole of the Island's mechanical transport, both military and impressed civilian vehicles, was pooled. A Vehicle Control Centre was established at the Happy Valley Race Track (216529) on the east side of Victoria. From this pool trucks were lent to units by the R.A.S.C. officer in charge, to be returned to the V.C.C. on completion of tasks ("C" Force H.Q. Report, V.C.C., p. 1; and HQC 5393-13, Hodgkinson to D.H.S., 21 Feb 46).

107. On the morning of 13 Dec the Japanese sent an envoy under a flag of truce demanding the surrender of the Colony and threatening "severe artillery and aerial bombardment in the event of refusal". The request was categorically rejected (HQMS 8902, Tel 1759, Fervour to Defensor, 14 Dec 41). Once the Mainland had been evacuated the Japanese, using artillery of up to 9" calibre, were free to set up their batteries opposite the north shore of Hong Kong and to shell selected targets at their leisure. The hilltops in the Kowloon and Devil's Peak Peninsulas, although not generally as high as the peaks on the Island, provided the enemy with extremely useful artillery observation posts. Observation was also carried out by Japanese aircraft, which flew over the Island several times a day, virtually unmolested by A.A. fire, engaged in bombing and spotting (History R.R.C., op cit, pp 65, 67).

108. At first enemy artillery fire and bombing were directed, with reasonable accuracy, on military targets. There was a systematic shelling of pill boxes along the north shore of Hong Kong, and by 18 Dec more than half of these between Lye Mun and Bowington (2153) were reported out of action (HQMS 8902, Tel 1781, Fervour to Defensor, 18 Dec 41). The defenders moved into alternative positions, but enemy fire seriously handicapped attempts to install telephone communications in the new sites (Maltby Despatch, Appx "B", p. 26). Coast artillery guns were also selected as targets. A sitrep from H.Q. China Command refers to 14 Dec as "a difficult day" in which "shelling increased in intensity and accuracy". Coastal guns at Belcher Point (164545) and Mt. Davis in the north-west corner of the Island, and at Pak Sha Wan (274539) in the north-east were hit (HQMS 8902, Tel 1767, Fervour to Defensor, 14 Dec 41). Another report of the same date revealed:

Japanese shelling was extremely accurate where old and well known batteries are concerned, but [it is] noticeable [that] recently sited positions at Waterfall Bay (164507) and West Bay [are] apparently unlocated.

(HQMS 8902, Tel 1775, Fervour to Defensor, 15 Dec 41)

On 16 Dec the "heaviest air raid of the war" was reported, as Japanese dive bombers attacked the Royal Naval dockyard at Aberdeen ("C" Force H.Q. Report, p. 9).

109. A proportion of the enemy's artillery and aerial action was directed against the defenders' supply system. The main Supply Depot in Victoria (Queen Street Depot) was bombed three times on 9 Dec during the last hour that it was

being cleared of food (see para 106). The V.C.C. Headquarters underwent frequent shelling ("C" Force H.Q. Report, V.C.C., 15 Dec 41). M.T. convoys came under heavy fire as they passed through the gaps leading to the south and east parts of the Island (Ibid., 16 Dec 41). On 17 Dec twenty vehicles were reported out of action by enemy shellfire (Ibid.).

110. On 17 Dec the Japanese made a second demand for the garrison's surrender. It was accompanied by an ultimatum from the Japanese Commander, Lieut-Gen Takashi Sakai,² that bombing and shelling, which up to that time had been confined to military objectives, would become indiscriminate if the terms were refused (Maltby Despatch, Appx "B", p. 27). The envoy that brought the demands was "apparently genuinely surprised and disconcerted when [the] proposal was summarily rejected" (HQMS 8902, Tel 1784, Fervour to Defensor, 18 Dec 41).

111. The enemy was as good as his word. Before evening of 18 Dec the intensity of air attacks, artillery and mortar fire had been very greatly increased. A sitrep of events up to 1900 hours on that date describes morning and afternoon air raids by nine Army Light Bombers and three Navy Heavy Bombers, which dropped over a hundred bombs, "the highest number to date". Deliberate and accurate dive-bombing attacks were made on military objectives and government centres. Stanley and Murray Barracks suffered. Aberdeen was shelled ineffectually from the seaboard, but fire on the north face of the Island was relentless and severe. The Asiatic Petroleum Company's oil installations at North Point were set ablaze. Bowen Road Military Hospital was badly hit, "its upper floor a shambles", and civilian hospitals were reported damaged by shellfire. A large number of godowns (warehouses) on the waterfront were destroyed, with the resultant loss of much-needed rice supplies. Road communications in Victoria became a serious problem as tram cables were smashed and water mains were broken. Signals communications were maintained with difficulty because of the cutting of land lines and even of buried cables (HQMS 8902, Tel 1791, Fervour to Defensor, 19 Dec 41).

112. As the City of Victoria and the neighbourhood was subjected to increased bombing and shelling it was not long before streams of Chinese civilians filled the roads leading to the southern end of the Island. Their headlong exodus added to the strain upon the authorities (History R.R.C., p. 67). The situation with regard to rice distribution had become extremely grave (Tels 1754 and 1759, op cit). On 15 Dec the Governor of the Colony reported that the most serious problem was the control of the Chinese population (HQMS 8902, Tel GS 363, Canmilitary to Defensor, 15 Dec 41). It was becoming increasingly difficult to retain the services of the great mass of Chinese workers. The majority of the transport drivers employed by the Army disappeared. Thus, even before transportation routes were severed, the distribution of ammunition and supplies was critically interrupted (Ibid.).

Chinese [drivers] are only reliable when a European N.C.O. and escort is with them. Some have been using their trucks for unauthorized purposes such as moving effects of wealthy Chinese to and from various parts of the Island.

("C" Force H.Q. Report, p. 9)

113. A number of subversive propaganda leaflets were dropped by enemy planes over the centres of civilian population and military positions (HQMS 8902, Tel 1737, Fervour to Defensor, 9 Dec 41). These carried distinctive appeals to the various groups at whose morale they were respectively directed, -- the British troops, the native Indian soldiers and the Chinese civilian population (Photostatic copies of Japanese propaganda leaflets, as supplied by Major E.E. Denison, Brigade Major "C" Force, are on file HQC 5393 - 13. See also Appx "E").

114. The Island authorities took counter-measures. Propaganda was circulated to the effect that Chinese Government troops were advancing to the aid

² In September 1946 Lieut-Gen Sakai was executed at Chungking as a war criminal.

of the Colony, although actually it was realized that "they could not be expected to exert any real influence before early January" (Tel 1775, op cit). An attempt was made to enlist the co-operation of Chinese secret societies in dealing with the disturbed civilian populace (Tel 1767, op cit). The arrest of a prominent Chinese merchant for defeatist talk was reported to have had an excellent effect on curbing that type of subversion (HQMS 8902, Tel 1781, Fervour to Defensor, 18 Dec 41).

115. While the defenders of the Colony were thus preparing for the invasion of the Island that now appeared imminent, the General Staff in Ottawa requested and received a War Office appreciation of the situation in Hong Kong and the possible future developments (HQMS 8902, unnumbered Tel, Defensor to Canmilitary, 14 Dec 41, and Tel GS 2877, Canmilitary to Defensor, 15 Dec 41). The War Office presented a purposely gloomy view of what was an "undoubtedly serious situation". While the present garrison of Hong Kong was of a strength considered proper to hold the Island only, and "should be capable of prolonged resistance" - reserves for 130 days were available - the possibility of early relief was considered remote, since the situation in Malaya was "expected to deteriorate seriously rather than improve". The naval and air forces required for the "advance from Singapore" could not be diverted to relieve Hong Kong. The freedom of action through the whole of the Far East that the Japanese had won by the severe setbacks imposed on allied air and sea power permitted them to reinforce any particular operation at will. With relief impossible the future task of the Hong Kong Garrison must be "to inflict the maximum damage on the Japanese" (Tel GS 2877, op cit. For full text of the War Office message see Appx "F").

THE ENEMY LANDINGS ON HONG KONG (18/19 DEC 41)

116. The bombardment that followed the second refusal of the Japanese demands for surrender increased in intensity on the evening of 18 Dec, its greatest force being directed against the eastern section of the Island's north shore. Shortly after 2000 hours the enemy, employing small boats towed by ferry steamers, effected a landing under cover of darkness, on North Point and in the Tai Koo (2554) area (HQMS 8902, Tel 1797, Fervour to Defensor, 18 Dec 41; Naval Message 523, Admiralty to N.S.H.Q., 23 Dec 41; W.D., Fortress H.Q., p. 11. Of interest is an extract from the Japan Times Weekly, 17 Sep 42, which gives the citation for bravery of a Japanese officer, Lieut Zempo Masushima, who swam ashore at Tai Koo on the evening of 17 Dec 41 and reconnoitred suitable sites for the subsequent enemy landings there and at North Point. A copy is on C.M.H.Q. file 24/Hong Kong/1 (Hist), under date of 9 May 46). The landing parties overcame the resistance of the 5/7 Rajput detachments who were manning the coastal pill boxes and the infantry defence positions along the waterfront (Maltby Despatch, Appx "D", 5/7 Rajput Report, p. 9). Then they fanned out to the east and west and advanced up the valleys leading to the high ground in the centre of the Island. By morning they had infiltrated as far as Wong Nei Chong and Tai Tam Caps (HQMS 8902, Naval Message 525, Admiralty to N.S.H.Q., 19 Dec 41). From the Governor of the Colony, Sir Mark Young, a challenging message went out to the defenders of Hong Kong:

The time has come to advance against the
enemy. The eyes of the Empire are upon
you. Be strong, be resolute, and do your
best.

(Naval Message 523, op cit)

117. From the beginning of hostilities on the Island the two Canadian battalions were virtually segregated from each other. R.R.C. formed part of the East Brigade, under the command of Brigadier Wallis, while Wpg Gren remained under the Canadian Brigade H.Q., now designated West Brigade (see para 101). After the first day's operations the two brigades were completely separated by Japanese penetrations that cut the Island in half. Information from Canadian sources regarding the operations above battalion level is extremely meagre, and, in the case of the East Brigade, it is virtually nil. As far as West Brigade is concerned, the loss, early during the siege, of the three senior officers of

Brigade H.Q. resulted in the absence of any authentic record of the manner in which the Canadian command functioned. (The Staff Captain, Captain H.A. Bush, who compiled the Report, "C" Force Headquarters and Details, was separated from his brigade headquarters from early on 19 Dec 41. Op cit, p. 10). In these circumstances it appears advisable to deal with the operations of each Canadian battalion separately. This is a comparatively simple matter in the Eastern sector, where for the majority of the fighting R.R.C. was virtually the only infantry unit employed. The picture in the west was more confused. In general the main source of material used has been the reports prepared by the surviving regimental officers, checked against the background of the Maltby Despatch and the East Infantry Brigade War Diary. Wherever possible the narrative has been linked with the situation reports that continued to come from H.Q. China Command during the confused seven days of fighting on the Island.

R.R.C. OPERATIONS - (1)
"C" COY'S ACTION AT LYE MUN (18-19 DEC 41)

118. In the original disposition of R.R.C., "C" Coy was assigned to the Lye Mun Area, in the north-eastern corner of the Island (see para 81). Placed under command of O.C. "C" Coy were the four platoons of reinforcements, -- 9R from "A" Coy, 12R from "B" Coy, 15R from "C" and 18R from "D". It may be observed that in the pre-arranged defence plan the role of "C" Coy with these reinforcement platoons was that of Battalion Reserve and Security Force in case of rioting in the nearby Chinese town of Sau Ki Wan (W.D., R.R.C., December 1941, p. 12). Paradoxically enough this was the first Canadian company to suffer casualties from Japanese shelling, and the first to engage the enemy on Hong Kong Island.

119. At some time between 9 and 15 Dec the three reinforcement platoons from "A", "B" and "D" Coys rejoined their respective companies. On 16 Dec waterfront defence positions occupied by "C" Coy between Pak Sha Wan and Sau Ki Wan were taken over by detachments of 5/7 Rajput (see para 102). The completion of this relief left R.R.C. with no troops on the northern waterfront (Ibid, pp 20, 21). "C" Coy was now defending the area between Mt. Parker (256525) and Sai Wan Bay, with Company Headquarters at Lye Mun Gap on the Island Road (Ibid, p. 23). Within this area were two military posts, the unoccupied Lye Mun Barracks (267537) to the north, and Sai Wan Fort (270530) on the east, an old walled stronghold manned by a 6" how battery, with an A.A. battery site close by. Outside the company area, to the north-east, was Pak Sha Wan Fort with a battery of two 6" coastal guns manned chiefly by Chinese gunners under British officers and N.C.Os. (No. 4 Bty H.K.V.D.C.). On the night of 15/16 Dec there had been an extremely heavy bombardment of the barracks and Pak Sha Wan, under cover of which an attempted enemy landing was reported. "C" Coy had rushed reinforcements to the R.A. battery, but the enemy, estimated at from one to three companies in strength, ran into such heavy machine-gun and artillery fire that those who were not shot in the water rapidly withdrew without effecting a landing (W.D., East Inf Bde, op cit, p. 12).

120. At 2030 hours on 18 Dec Sai Wan Fort was reported occupied by Fifth Columnists or Japanese invaders. Entry to the Fort had been gained by a subterfuge. It was customary each evening about darkness for a truck-load of Chinese coolies to drive from Sau Ki Wan up to Sai Wan, where they were employed in handling shells for the A.A. guns. At 1945 hours the sentry at the junction of the Lye Mun and Island Roads reported that a second truck, holding about 30 men had gone through, headed towards Sai Wan Fort (W.D., R.R.C., December 1941, p. 23).^{*}

* The R.R.C. War Diary infers that the "coolies" in the second truck were Fifth Columnists or Japanese soldiers. It records more than one instance of the enemy wearing coolie dress.

Major Bishop...ran into a patrol coming from the direction of Sai Wan Fort, as they were throwing hand grenades. At one of the platoon positions he opened into them with Tommy Gun. Accompanied by Lt. Scott he went to investigate the result and found seven dead Coolies three of which were in regular Japanese uniform and four in coolie dress, two were wearing arm-bands with crowns.

(W.D., R.R.C., December 1941, p.24)

121. Sai Wan Fort stood on high ground overlooking "C" Coy's positions, and the enemy's presence there constituted a distinct threat to the defence of the area. A counter-attack was hastily organized by O.C. "C" Coy (Major W.A. Bishop, E.D.). Shortly after 2230 hours 13 and 15R Pls attacked the Fort from the east side. The approach by road from the north was under fire from Lye Mun Barracks, which had by this time been occupied by the Japanese. In the face of the perpendicular twenty-foot brick walls, the attempt to enter the Fort failed (Ibid, pp 24, 25). In the meantime 15 Pl, which had been sent forward to clear Lye Mun Barracks, was driven back to the main road by heavy fire. To the west 14 Pl, which had been holding the left flank south of Sau Ki Wan, came under attack from Mt. Parker. It became necessary to draw all platoons back into a close defensive position about Lye Mun Gap (266523) (Ibid). Heavy casualties are believed to have been inflicted on the enemy, as the fires in Sau Ki Wan threw them into bold relief whenever they stood up to advance (Ibid, p. 31).

122. Japanese landings continued throughout the night as enemy troops poured ashore at North Point from laden junks, barges, motor launches and ferries (Maltby Despatch, Appx "B", p. 36). 5/7 Rajput, on whom the full force of the enemy's initial attack had fallen, fought gallantly until they had suffered heavy casualties (all British officers and most senior Indian officers being lost) and were overrun (Maltby Despatch, p. 9). At 0130 hours on 19 Dec "C" Coy received orders directly from Brigade Headquarters (which had been established with R.R.C. Bn H.Q. at Tai Tam Gap) to fall back half a mile along the Island Road. This retirement, through the narrow defile presented difficulties. The outer sections were moved first a short distance along the water "catchment" on the slopes of Mt. Parker, taking up a position covering the road to permit the evacuation of casualties. (These catchments consisted of culverts six to ten feet deep running around the mountain sides at high levels, to catch the torrential rainfall, and gradually sloping down to the reservoirs. At this time of the year they were dry and they provided the Japanese with easy covered approaches to all the high points on both the Island and the Mainland. — Wpg Gren Report, p. 3.) This slow procedure was repeated step by step until all positions had been cleared.

It was carried out with comparatively few casualties considering the condition of the men, none of whom had had a hot meal for five days owing to the destruction of the cooking arrangements. They had been doing continuous manning for over a week with no chance to sleep but in weapon pits. Some would fall down in the roadway and go to sleep, and it took several shakings to get them going again.

(W.D., R.R.C., December 1941, p. 32)

Captain F.T. Atkinson, the R.R.C. Adjutant, received the Military Cross for the "energy, initiative and courage" he displayed in selecting under fire "C" Coy's new position and for undertaking similar hazardous duties later in the campaign (Honours and Awards, "C" Force, Citation, Captain F.T. Atkinson).

123. The company held its new position during the morning of the 19th, with its left flank drawn back towards Boa Vista, a southern extension of Mt. Parker which was being held by an Indian battery manning two 6" hows (W.D., R.R.C., December 1941, p. 33). At 1020 hours a further withdrawal to Tai Tam Gap was ordered, and carried out, as plans were made for a full battalion retirement. The enemy was now in control of Mt. Parker (1700 feet high), and his presence there made the position of Battalion and Brigade Headquarters in Tai Tam Gap extremely precarious. At 1300 hours "C" Coy withdrew with the rest of the battalion about four miles south as Brigade H.Q. ordered a new defensive line established between Tai Tam Bay and West Bay. By nightfall the company had taken up defence positions at Stanley View (241475) on the Island Road south of Stanley Mound. Casualties in the first eighteen hours of operations had been heavy. "C" Coy and attached personnel went into action at 2200 hours 18 Dec with 5 officers and 172 O.Rs. At 1600 hours on 19 Dec 64 men answered roll call and four officers were present (Ibid). For the skill and courage he

displayed during "C" Coy's action in Lye Mun Gap the Company Commander was awarded the D.S.O.

Major Bishop, with great skill, so manoeuvred his force that, although heavily outnumbered and forced to retire slowly, he was able to prevent the enemy penetrating into Tai Tam Gap and saved the situation from turning into a complete disaster.

(Honours and Awards, "C" Force,
Citation, Major Wells Arnold Bishop, E.D.)

R.R.C. OPERATIONS - (2)
THE ACTION ON MT. PARKER (18-19 DEC 41)

124. As soon as it became apparent to Brigade Headquarters that enemy troops were advancing inland to the west of the R.R.C. positions, Lt-Col Home received orders that his pioneer platoon on Boa Vista should proceed with all haste to the top of Mt. Parker, with the object of reinforcing a platoon of No. 1 Coy H.K.V.D.C. there and holding the high ground against Japanese attack. By midnight 5 Pl, with two sections of 2 Pl attached, was on its way to begin the steep ascent of Mt. Parker, and a platoon from "A" Coy (No. 9) had left Windy Gap to occupy the Boa Vista position (W.D., R.R.C., December 1941, p. 28). Due to some error the H.K.V.D.C. platoon "understood that they were being relieved, and insisted on leaving as soon as 5 Pl arrived" with the exception of one N.C.O. and two men (Ibid, p. 27).

125. At 0300 hours Captain W.F. Clarke, O.C. 4 Pl R.R.C., was ordered to take command of the sub-units already despatched to Boa Vista and Mt. Parker, together with a platoon (No. 16) brought from "D" Coy in the Obelisk Hill area. With this composite force Captain Clarke was to co-ordinate the defence of Parker Ridge. 16 Pl was moved to Boa Vista. There had been no news from either 5 or 9 Pl, and it was not until daylight (0700 hours) that the latter platoon was discovered on the eastern slope of Mt. Parker, hopelessly engaging a force of some 150 Japanese who were holding the summit with a light field piece. 9 Pl, badly mauled, retired to Boa Vista, its withdrawal being heroically covered by the Platoon Commander, Lieut C.A. Blaver, who was awarded the Military Cross (Honours and Awards, "C" Force, Citation, Lieut C.A. Blaver). All personnel of 5 Pl and two sections of 2 Pl had been either killed or captured. No further attempt was made to take Mt. Parker. Instead Captain Clarke's party was ordered to hold Boa Vista until 1200 hours, in order to cover the evacuation of R.R.C. and Bde H.Q. from Tai Tam Gap. With the aid of an additional platoon (No. 10) supplied by "B" Coy -- this company had been ordered up to Tai Tam Gap from Stone Hill at first light -- the composite force remained in position on Boa Vista until 1300 hours, when evacuation from the north and east was completed (W.D., R.R.C., December 1941, p. 36). In the attempt to keep Mt. Parker out of enemy hands H.Q. Coy had lost 29 killed or captured; while the survivors of 9 Pl when it rejoined "A" Coy at Stone Hill that afternoon consisted of the platoon commander and 12 O.Rs. (Ibid, p. 29).

126. In authorizing the Commander East Brigade to withdraw his forces to the south, General Maltby had regard to the facts that the enemy's positions on Mt. Parker seriously threatened the combined Brigade and R.R.C. Headquarters and H.Q. R.A., East Group at Tai Tam Gap; that "infantry available for reinforcing in this area had been employed towards Mt. Parker and were now out of control"; and that in the event of a serious enemy attack there existed the danger of not only losing these Headquarters but of cutting off all troops in the area Collinson Battery - D'Aguilar Peninsula - Obelisk Hill (Maltby Despatch, Appx "B", p. 39). The Brigade Commander's appreciation of the situation further noted that Tai Tam Gap was beginning to come under artillery fire, probably directed from observation posts on Devil's Peak and Sai Wan Hill. The piecemeal use of platoons had proved valueless, as the Japanese now had an estimated strength of two battalions with mortars in the area, and steady reinforcement was proceeding. Operations against the enemy could be more effectively carried

out by creating a strong mobile reserve from all our troops now scattered from Stanley View to Sheko (W.D., East Bde, pp 29 - 31).

127. Shortly after midday the evacuation of Headquarters East Bde and of all units on the east side of the Island was well under way, as "B" Coy R.R.C. was placed astride the Island Road south of Tai Tam Gap to cover the retirement. The infantry and artillery manning positions in the Sheko Peninsula were withdrawn safely by lorry and on foot to the road junction at the Gap after the heavy guns at D'Aguiler and Collinson had been demolished. (Brigadier Wallis has pointed out that these two coastal batteries were abandoned without his orders. They were in self-contained, strong forts, and he had expected them to continue in operation against landward targets after the withdrawal of the infantry. - Notes on Interview with Brigadier C. Wallis, 3 May 46.) It is of interest to note that, according to information received by Canadians from Japanese officers after the capitulation, the original enemy plan on the east side of the Island had been for a two-pronged thrust, one to Deep Water Bay and the other down the Sheko Peninsula. The strong resistance that was met at Lye Mun Gap is thought to have deterred the enemy from making the eastern thrust, and his general line of advance was through Senatorium Gap (2452), between Mt. Butler (245524) and Mt. Parker (Interview with Major E.E. Denison, Bde Major "C" Force, at D.N.D., 17 Dec 45.)

128. During the withdrawal there appears to have been unnecessary loss of mobile artillery, as in some cases verbal orders were not correctly carried out. Batteries were put out of action instead of the order being followed to get out of action.

It will be seen later the terrible handicap resulting from the loss of these mobile batteries. This loss went a long way towards preventing East Brigade from joining hands with West Brigade, as the Infantry always found themselves confronting the enemy in commanding positions and were without the necessary covering fire support in assault.

(W.D., East Inf Bde, p. 34)

129. Late that afternoon (19 Dec) the eastern force was holding Stanley Peninsula and the hills to northward as far as a line running east and west through Stanley Mound (Naval Message 525, op cit). R.R.C. positions were now as follows: Bn H.Q. in the shelters at Stone Hill previously occupied by "B" Coy; H.Q. Coy at Palm Villa (see para 106); "A" Coy at Stone Hill; "B" Coy on Sugar Loaf Hill (246486); "C" Coy at Stanley View (see para 123); and "D" Coy on Stanley Mound (W.D., R.R.C., December 1941, pp 29-36). Bde H.Q. was established at Stone Hill, to make use of the existing telephone exchange there. While a sitrep for 19 Dec refers to the Stanley Area as being held by "one battalion of Canadians, two companies of Indian infantry and a scratch force of artillery and M.Gs." (Naval Message 525, op cit), Canadian accounts of subsequent operations include no reference to the employment of Indian troops in this sector. (A few Rajputs, who had been captured by the Japanese and driven ahead of the advancing enemy, managed to escape and join the Stanley Force. These were the only Indian troops in the Stanley Area. -- Wallis Interview, op cit.)

R.R.C. OPERATIONS - (3)

COUNTER-ATTACKS TOWARDS WONG NEI CHONG (20-22 DEC 41)

130. Two courses of offensive action now lay open to the East Brigade, - to counter-attack northwards through Gauge Basin (246511) in order to recapture Mt. Butler and Jardine's Lookout, or to attempt to effect a junction with the British and Canadian forces in the western half of the Island by proceeding to Wong Nei Chong by the Repulse Bay route (W.D., East Inf Bde, p. 31). Alternatively the Canadian battalion and the few attached troops might remain defensively in position awaiting further enemy attacks, prepared to withdraw completely within

the Stanley Peninsula for a last-ditch stand. There was additionally a not too remote possibility of being called upon to repel Japanese landings on the south coast. Enemy activities had been observed on Lamma Island, and it appears that the British command expected, even after 18 Dec, that a landing might be attempted from that direction (Interview Major E.E. Denison, Brigade Major "C" Force, at D.N.D., 17 Dec 45). Bde H.Q. was still in communication with Battle Box, and receiving its orders directly from H.Q. China Command. In the sitrep of 19 Dec above referred to the G.O.C. is quoted as saying: "I hope to be in a position to launch a general counter-attack tomorrow at dawn" (Naval Message 525, op cit).

131. Brigadier Wallis decided to push forward by the Repulse Bay route. The unexpected withdrawal of H.Q. No. 1 Coy H.K.V.D.C. from Gauge Basin had rendered impossible an advance by that line. Bounded on the north-east by reservoirs through which the passage was a narrow road, and later a footpath, and flanked on the south by hilly, thick-wooded country which rendered movement well nigh impossible, such an attempt could only have ended in disaster. The move would have been across the entire front of the enemy, who were in commanding positions from Mt. Parker to Jardine's Lookout (W.D., East Inf Bde, p. 34). Accordingly, early on the morning of 20 Dec R.R.C. received orders that "A" Coy should lead a brigade move westward along the Island Road past Repulse Bay.

132. "A" Coy, followed in order by "B", H.Q. and "D" Coys, moved off at 0800 hours. "C" Coy, still suffering from the effects of the Lye Mun Battle, remained at Palm Villa, occupying H.Q. Coy's positions (W.D., R.R.C., December 1941, p. 40). "A" Coy was warned that the enemy was holding the garage of the Repulse Bay Hotel, and the company was ordered to brush aside any weak opposition and continue to Wong Nei Chong. The advance guard ran into enemy resistance at Repulse Bay, but by 1100 hours the Hotel Garage had been cleared and the company had taken up defensive positions in the Repulse Bay Hotel (229492) and in a large private residence just beyond, Castle Eucliff (228492). The advance could make no further progress. An estimated two companies of Japanese with machine-guns were in commanding positions among the hills above the road. The Repulse Bay Hotel was occupied by many civilians, including women and children. "A" Coy now received orders by telephone direct from Fortress Headquarters that the Hotel must be held at all costs until some scheme had been devised for the safe removal of the civilian personnel (W.D., Fortress H.Q., p. 18).

133. At 1600 hours the O.C. R.R.C. ordered "B" Coy, which had been following "A" Coy in the battalion line of march, to attack through "A" Coy's positions and clear the road west of Castle Eucliff. Before the assault could be launched, however, orders came from Brigade Headquarters to the effect that the battalion advance was cancelled, and that "B" Coy would return to Sugar Loaf Hill (W.D., R.R.C., December 1941, p. 40). On the march back the company's orders were twice countermanded, and darkness had fallen before the unit reached its bivouac area. H.Q. Coy, which had halted on the outskirts of Repulse Bay and had remained there in waiting all day, was ordered back to its Palm Villa positions in the late afternoon. "A" Coy continued to hold the Repulse Bay Hotel and Castle Eucliff.

134. At 1100 hours on the morning of the 20th, when it was seen that "A" Coy was encountering stiff opposition at Repulse Bay, Brigadier Wallis and Lt-Col Home reconnoitred the situation, and it was decided that "D" Coy, which had been brought up from the rear position to the bridge (235492) east of the Hotel, should attempt to reach Wong Nei Chong across country by way of the east side of Violet Hill (Ibid, p. 38). Use of this alternative route had received consideration in the Brigade Commander's verbal orders to Lt-Col Home for the day's operations. As so little information was available regarding the enemy's progress it had been felt necessary to let the choice of routes depend on the development of events as the advance proceeded (W.D., East Inf Bde, p. 39). The country was entirely unknown to anyone in "D" Coy, nor was any information available about Japanese dispositions in the area, but a map route was decided upon, and at 1100 hours "D" Coy, commanded by Major M.A. Parker, moved forward, with a section of 3" mortars from H.Q. Coy attached. (W.D., R.R.C., December 1941, p. 38) An exceedingly stiff climb was followed by moves of some 2800 yards through two water catchments which ran generally in a north-westerly direction. The leading platoon engaged with bren gun fire an enemy battery at Gauge Basin,

inflicting heavy casualties. Then the company came under fire from Japanese troops on Violet Hill. Artillery estimated at 75-mm was being employed by the enemy. The mortar detachment, having carried their heavy weapon all day with no opportunity of using it; "decided to dismantle it, and did so, scattering it down a steep embankment. The sight was destroyed and the weapon made completely useless" (Ibid, p. 41). The Company Commander decided that it was impossible to get across the open ground that lay to the east of Wong Nei Chong Gap, and the attempt to reach the West Brigade was abandoned. "D" Coy reached Stanley View at 2300 hours and took up positions for the night at the Chung Hum Kok Food Stores (Ibid, p. 39).

135. Any further attempt to reach Wong Nei Chong by way of Violet Hill was considered impracticable and a new plan was decided upon.

After careful consideration and going over the situation with own staff and O.C. "D" Bn (R.R.C.), the Bde Comdr was of the considered opinion that Violet Hill and Middle Spur positions were occupied in too great strength by the enemy, who held dominating well concealed positions, to be evicted by troops with so little training... without strong artillery support. Such support could not be given. (The Stanley guns, 9.2" or 6" at Bluff Hd, could not bear. The 3.7" hows were only getting into position and sorting equipment and were unable to fire at this time.) There was reason to believe the enemy were not so strong between Tai Tam Tuk and Gauge Basin. It never had been and never would be the Bde Comdr's policy to give up trying to fight forward, nor did O.C. "D" Bn think otherwise it was felt.* The Bde Comdr considered it the Bde's duty and one with some hope of success if carried out with determination to try a fresh plan, i.e. attack through Tai Tam Tuk, thereby relieving the pressure on West Bde and Repulse Bay area, and endeavouring to make contact with West Bde.

(W.D., East Inf Bde, p. 44)

(The foregoing appreciation by Brigadier Wallis is quoted at length as setting forth his position in ordering a counter-attack through Gauge Basin along a route the use of which had previously been regarded as inviting disaster. See para 131.)

136. Confirmation of the new plan was received from Fortress H.Q. late on the evening of 20 Dec. The G.O.C. issued the following order to Brigadier Wallis:

- (a) Hold what you have, i.e. Repulse Bay Hotel.
- (b) Do what you can to get Wong Nei Chong Gap via Gauge Basin.
- (c) Use your Bren gun carriers boldly in recce.
- (d) Boldness will pay, especially if you get on the enemy's rear.

(W.D., Fortress H.Q., p. 19)

137. At 0630 hours on 21 Dec the Brigade Commander met the Battalion Staff of R.R.C. and all Company Commanders (including 1 and 2 Coys H.K.V.D.C.) and issued orders for a battalion counter attack (less "A" Coy) to be made north from Palm Villa along the Island Road and Tai Tam Reservoir (2451) Road towards Gauge Basin, with Wong Nei Chong Gap as the ultimate objective. The R.R.C. War

* "D" Bn was R.R.C.; "E" Bn was Wpg Gren

Diary gives the following organization for the column of march:

Advanced Guard, No 1 Coy H.K.V.D.C.
Vanguard, "B" Coy R.R.C. less two platoons.
Main Guard, "D" Coy R.R.C.
Main Body, Bn H.Q. and "C" Coy, R.R.C., and
No. 2 Coy H.K.V.D.C.

The Advanced Guard was placed under the command of Major T.G. MacAulay, D.C.M., E.D., O.C. H.Q. Coy R.R.C. (W.D., R.R.C., December 1941, p. 42).^{*} Three British officers - Major C.R. Templer and Capt Bompas, R.A., F/Lt Thompson R.A.F. - were detailed by Brigadier Wallis to act under the Advanced Guard Commander "to stiffen and speed up the operation" (W.D., East Inf Bde, p. 48). The left flank, at Notting Hill (253489) and Bridge Hill (252491) was to be cleared and protected by a small force under Captain W.F. Clarke (a platoon of H.Q. Coy and a detachment from No. 1 Coy H.K.V.D.C.). On the right 2 Pl R.R.C. was to clear Red Hill (261486) above the road (W.D., R.R.C., December 1941, p. 42).

138. In briefing the R.R.C. officers Brigadier Wallis told them that he considered failure on 20 Dec was partly due to:

- (a) Slowness in Bn inter-communication, all messages having apparently to be passed by runner. That runners often did not return.
- (b) That in Adv Gd fighting ALL Comdrs must be much further forward to see for themselves and avoid long distances for runners.
- (c) That tactical handling of Coys had been faulty as they were kept to the road and low ground enabling the enemy to pin them by fire from the high ground.
- (d) That much greater energy and speed were necessary, use being made of 3" and 2" mortars to dislodge opposition.

(W.D., East Inf Bde, p. 45)

139. At 0915 hours the Advanced Guard moved off from Palm Villa. Fifteen minutes later the leading platoon ran into strong opposition at the crossroads (255493) south of Tai Tam Tuk Reservoir. At the same time rifle and machine-gun

* Brigadier Wallis lists the order of march rather differently:

Adv Gd Comdr:- Major MacAulay, R.R.C.

Tps:- Carriers No. 1 H.K.V.D.C.
No. 1 Coy (less carriers)
Coy "D" Bn. 3" Mortar Det:

Main Body:- "D" Bn H.Q. and Adv Bde H.Q. close at hand.
One coy "D" Bn and 3" Mortars
No. 2 Coy H.K.V.D.C.
One Coy "D" Bn.

(W.D. East Inf Bde, p. 47)

fire came from Notting Hill on the left and Red Hill on the right. The advanced guard became heavily involved, and organized an attack on Red Hill. The force detailed to clear Bridge and Notting Hills, having found the enemy too strong to cope with, called for reinforcements, and "D" Coy was ordered to the left flank (W.D., R.R.C., December 1941, p. 43). An attack on Japanese positions on Bridge Hill, led by Lieut F.G. Power (who won the Military Cross in this action), was pressed home with great vigour. By 1200 hours Notting Hill and Bridge Hill had been successfully cleared of Japanese, and shortly afterwards enemy enfilade fire from Red Hill ceased. At 1300 hours the Brigade Commander reported to the G.O.C. that "he was very worried over the terrible slowness and lack of training of "D" Bn, but that they were really doing their best that day at any rate and fighting gamely" (W.D., East Inf Bde, p. 50).

140. The advance was resumed, but it was again halted by machine-gun fire from the Tai Tam Crossroads. A 3" mortar brought forward on a truck went into action with good effect, and at 1400 hours the Japanese position was rushed with two bren carriers and all available troops (about 30 R.R.C. and H.K.V.D.C. personnel). The attackers came under a rain of hand grenades (many of which failed to explode) but they succeeded in capturing the position and wiping out the enemy there (W.D., R.R.C., December 1941, p. 44). (The carriers employed in this attack were two of the three used in operations on the east side of the Island. They were under the command of an officer of H.K.V.D.C., Lieut Edwards, one of them being operated by a crew of R.R.C. personnel. See para 210.)

141. The road on the west side of Tai Tam Tuk Reservoir now appeared clear of enemy troops, but the R.R.C. advance had broken down as the various companies had all become involved in flank actions and were holding their positions on the hills above the road. At 1700 hours Japanese light tanks moving down the Island Road from Tai Tam were engaged by the advanced guard and by machine-guns on Bridge and Notting Hills, and were driven off after a brisk exchange of fire. At 1800 hours any attempt to advance further north was abandoned as the Brigade Commander was forced to the conclusion that he must again harbour his troops in their former positions (W.D., East Inf Bde, p. 51). "D" Coy retired from the hills on the left to Chung Hum Kok for the night. "C" Coy returned to defensive positions at Palm Villa, with "B" Coy going to Stanley View and Stanley Mound. The platoons of H.Q. Coy remained attached to other companies (W.D., R.R.C., December 1941, p. 45). Of the day's operation the China Command communique reported:-

Yesterday counter-attack from Stanley toward Tai Tam Tuk failed although certain number of enemy killed at cost of about 100 Canadian casualties.

(HQMS 8902, Tel 301, Admiralty to Defensor, 23 Dec 41)

142. One more attempt was made by forces of the East Brigade to break through to Wong Nei Chong. This was a counter-attack made on the night of 21-22 Dec by "A" Coy R.R.C. from its positions at Repulse Bay. The company was now isolated from the rest of the battalion, but it had telephonic communication with Battle Box. "A" Coy passed from the control of O.C. R.R.C. at 1500 hours 21 Dec, when an officer of the R.A. (Major C.R. Templer), detailed by Brigadier Wallis to take command, arrived at the Repulse Bay Hotel with reinforcements consisting of two infantry platoons (15R Fl of "C" Coy and a composite platoon from Bn H.Q., R.R.C.), two machine-gun detachments (H.K.V.D.C.), two carriers and two lorries (W.D., R.R.C., December 1941, p. 44). For the next two days O.C. "A" Coy (Major C.A. Young, M.C., V.D.) received his orders both from Major Templer and direct from Battle Box (Ibid, p. 47. See also Notes on Interview with Major Young, at H.Q., M.D. No. 5, 22 Mar 46).

143. Early in the day, on orders from Fortress H.Q., "A" Coy had sent two platoons (8 and 9) to patrol northward along the road towards Wong Nei Chong, and to reinforce "The Ridge" (227507). This was a house about 400 yards south

of the Gap east of the main road, used as an Advance Ordnance Depot, and which was being held by a group of about 100 R.A.O.C. and R.A.S.C. personnel (W.D., Fortress H.Q. p. 22). By mid-afternoon No. 8 Pl was at "The Ridge", and No. 9 at "Altamira" (Spanish Villa), a house on the other side of the road. "A" Coy now received orders from Major Templer to proceed to Jardine's Lookout, a high hill (1350 feet) 1000 yards beyond Wong Nei Chong Gap. It was captured by the Japanese on the night of their first landings and had been the objective of unsuccessful counter-attacks by Wpg Gren (see para 167).

144. As the attacking force moved off from Repulse Bay Hotel an ammunition truck and the two carriers were almost immediately knocked out by enemy fire. The party proceeded in lorries up the Repulse Bay Road to the bend (226511) south of the Police Station, picking up 9 Pl on the way. Although the route was under Japanese observation the force was not molested, perhaps because the enemy wished to draw more troops into ambush. The attack was organized and was launched at 1700 hours, Major Young having a force of approximately 350, consisting of 7 and 9 Pls, "A" Coy H.Q., and the two reinforcing platoons brought by Major Templer. The assault against the strongly held Gap was unsuccessful. "A" Coy withdrew to Spanish Villa for the night (Maltby Despatch, Appx "B", p. 52, and Interview with Major Young, op cit).

145. Shortly after midnight two platoons (8 and 9) were despatched, on orders from Fortress H.Q., to the vicinity of the fork (223490) where the Repulse Bay Road joined the Island Road. (Inter-communication was still possible over civilian telephone lines.)^x They were to take possession of a catchment there which was suspected of being used by the enemy as a supply route. At 0200 hours the two platoons were ambushed and heavily attacked. 8 Pl took up a position in "Overbays House" (221493) overlooking the Island Road. The remnants of 9 Pl withdrew to the Repulse Bay Hotel (W.D., R.R.C., December 1941, p. 47). At 0400 hours "A" Coy was ordered forward again to "The Ridge". The only forces now remaining to the Company Commander were 7 Pl, Coy H.Q., and the platoon (15R) attached from "C" Coy. With these Major Young occupied "The Ridge" at first light under desultory fire. During the day (22 Dec) the enemy increased his attempts to dislodge the defenders from their position. Early in the afternoon word was received from the G.S.C. (1), Colonel Newnham, that as "The Ridge" was surrounded, it would be advisable for the defenders to surrender. A resulting break-out by the British troops precipitated a heavy Japanese attack, supported by mortar and machine-gun fire, which was driven off after three hours of heavy fire from both sides. (Interview with Major Young, op cit) Just before midnight Major Young, realizing that his position was rapidly becoming untenable, and feeling that no useful purpose was being served by this occupation, withdrew to Ancliff Castle. 8 Pl, ordered early in the day to retire from "Overbays House", had fought its way back to the Hotel under cover of darkness, losing eight men killed on the way (W.D., R.R.C., December 1941, p.47)

146. Late on the night of 22/23 Dec orders were given "A" Coy to retire to the R.R.C. battalion area on Stone Hill. A China Command sitrep for 23 Dec announced:

Garrisoned Hotel was evacuated by Stanley force last [night] as surrounded and untenable, and small party of women and children unable to walk had unfortunately to surrender.

(HQMS 8902, Tel 60010, Troopers to Defensor, 24 Dec 41)

x R.R.C. officers generally spoke in French when using the civilian telephone lines as a precaution against successful eavesdropping by the enemy (Interview with Major Young).

Major Young states that on receipt of Colonel Newnham's message Lt-Col R.A.P. McPherson, R.A.O.C., who was in command of the British troops at "The Ridge", decided to risk a break-out through the enemy lines. He was killed in the attempt. Major Young felt that chances of getting through would be better after dark, and held the Canadians in their position. (Interview with Major Young, op cit)

It was decided that the best chance of rejoining the battalion lay in splitting up into small groups. 8 and 9R Pls were despatched before first light (23 Dec), and they succeeded in infiltrating through enemy-dominated territory to rejoin the battalion at Stone Hill. The balance of the company and attached troops (about 100 all ranks) concentrated at Castle Eucliff at 0500 hours and from there attempted, by breaking up into small parties, to make their way to Stone Hill by various routes. The evacuation was carried out with some losses. (The bodies of two platoon commanders were later found with hands tied and throats cut: - Interview with Major Young.) - A few escaped by swimming across Repulse Bay (W.D., R.R.C., December 1941, p. 51). Major Young and 34 other ranks waited until nightfall and then made their way by boat across the Bay to H.M.S. "Thracian", which was lying aground off Round Island (2146) in West Bay (Ibid). They remained on board for two days, and after dark on Christmas night attempted to reach Stanley Peninsula in Carley floats. On finding the Fort occupied by Japanese the party turned back to Lamma Island. They finally surrendered at Telegraph Bay (1651). From the personnel of "A" Coy who reached Stone Hill on 23 Dec a composite platoon was formed and attached to "B" Coy R.R.C. (Ibid, p. 51).

R.R.C. OPERATIONS - (4)
THE WITHDRAWAL TO STANLEY VILLAGE (23 DEC 41)

147. For the remaining companies of R.R.C. in the Stone Hill - Stanley Mound area, 22 and 23 Dec were increasingly difficult days which saw the Japanese launching a succession of attacks upon their positions. Sugar Loaf Hill was taken by the enemy at noon on the 22nd, with detachments of 1 Mx losing two Vickers M.Gs. there, and having a gun crew at Palm Villa wiped out. A number of individual acts of bravery were performed by personnel of "C" Coy, R.R.C., who recaptured the guns and put them all back into action against the enemy. By nightfall Sugar Loaf Hill had been regained in a spirited assault (Ibid, p. 48).

148. In the meantime "B" Coy (reinforced by a platoon from H.Q. Coy and two from "D" Coy attached) on Stanley Mound had come under heavy shelling and mortaring. Japanese night attacks with hand grenades and bayonets were three times repulsed, until ammunition was running short, and only one bren gun remained in action. "The men were exhausted from the unaccustomed hill climbing and from the wearing of heavy and unsuitable battle dress. The battalion had no pack equipment for carrying food, mortars, ammunition, etc." (Maltby Despatch, Appx "B", p. 55.) "B" Coy was finally forced to evacuate the top of Stanley Mound and retire to new positions on its south slope (W.D., R.R.C., December 1941, p. 48). Early on the morning of 23 Dec the company launched a counter-attack on the Mound, supported by an artillery and machine-gun barrage. Enemy penetrations, however, had reached Stanley View, south-west of the Mound, and fire from "B" Coy's left flank broke up the attempted counter-attack (Tel 60010, op cit).

149. At 1700 hours on 23 Dec orders were given for a general battalion withdrawal to Stanley Peninsula. Eighteen officers were now either killed, wounded or missing, and the strength of the battalion (less "A" Coy at Repulse Bay) was only 350 all ranks. The O.C. R.R.C. reported "that his men were exhausted and he felt they would fight better on the flatter ground around Stanley Village" (W.D., East Inf Bde, p. 62). "B" Coy was sent to Chung Hum Kok in order to provide protection for the battalion's left flank. In the retirement half the company missed its way, and arrived in Stanley Village. About 65 all ranks occupied the A.A. Fort at Chung Hum Kok (W.D., R.R.C., December 1941, p. 51). The remaining companies (less the missing "A" Coy) with Bn H.Q. took up positions on Mary Knoll (245473) and in Stanley Village across the narrow neck of the Peninsula. Headquarters of Stanley Force was established at Stanley Prison (Ibid, p. 53). (On the morning of 22 Dec the garrison at Stanley had been placed under command of Brigadier Wallis, who had organized three defensive positions in depth, each of which was to be held to the last. -- W.D., East Inf Bde, p. 56.)

150. There was still telephone communication with Command H.Q., and on the morning of 24 Dec, following consultation with General Maltby, it was decided that R.R.C. should be relieved that night, and would move down into Stanley Fort to rest. Relief of the unit was carried out by composite units under officers

of 1 Mx and H.K.V.D.C. The Chung Hum Kok force, consisting of two platoons of "B" Coy R.R.C. and a mixed platoon from "A" Coy, remained in its position under heavy pressure from the enemy. An attempt early on the 24th by 10 and 11 Pls, on orders of the Force Commander, to rejoin the company at Chung Hum Kok failed under enemy M.G. fire, and the two platoons returned to Stanley Village. The same evening a second attempt to relieve "B" Coy failed, when a detachment of No. 2 Coy H.K.V.D.C. was ambushed on its way to Chung Hum Kok (W.D., R.R.C., December 1941, p. 55). Early on Christmas morning stragglers got through to the A.A. Fort, which by that time was virtually surrounded (W.D., East Inf Bde, p. 73).

R.R.C. OPERATIONS - (5)
COUNTER-ATTACKS ON STANLEY VILLAGE (24 DEC 41)

151. The relief of R.R.C. brought the battalion a brief respite from the incessant fighting in which it had been involved from the evening of 18 Dec. Personnel were in a state of extreme exhaustion.

Men and officers were falling asleep any time they weren't in motion, and whenever a sub-unit halted for a minute or so individuals had to be kicked awake again.

(W.D., R.R.C., December 1941, p. 56)

But the period of rest was not to be of long duration. Late on Christmas Eve a heavy artillery and mortar bombardment on the forward and support areas was followed by an attack in which the enemy worked his way down the east and west beaches, and moved from house to house through the centre of the Peninsula. As there was grave danger of a break-through the Force Commander ordered Lt-Col Home to occupy the high ground immediately north of the Fort, overlooking Stanley Prison and Stanley Village. By 0400 hours "C" Coy had moved up to occupy the positions ordered. During the morning a partial reorganization of the battalion took place, as "A" Coy was reconstituted, and a new H.C. Coy formed of rifle platoons, with the signals and mortar platoons retained intact (Ibid).

152. Throughout the early hours of Christmas Day the situation steadily deteriorated.. A second enemy attack which developed at 0300 hours drove the defenders back to the vicinity of the cross roads (252463) west of Stanley Prison. In the circumstances the Force Commander decided that "early, deliberate counter attack was essential". Accordingly, at 0630 hours he issued orders for a company attack to recapture the area east and north-east of the Prison that had been lost during the night. The attack was to be supported by fire "by all weapons in the Reserve Line which could bear." (But unfortunately, owing to the configuration of the ground, no artillery support was possible. The 9.2" battery at the south-east tip of the Peninsula could not shorten further left than Red Hill, while the 6" guns at Bluff Point could not engage to the right and south of Stanley Mound.) (W.D., East Inf Bde, p. 75.)

153. The Battalion Commander detailed "D" Coy for this daylight operation. In the words of the unit war diary:

About 1530 hours "D" Coy commenced the attack unsupported by any artillery or additional fire support. In about three quarters of an hour the attack had come to a halt, the company suffering, as foreseen, terrible casualties amounting to 26 killed and 75 wounded, and without having dislodged the enemy from their positions in the bungalows. About 1700 hours after having collected their wounded, "D" Coy returned to Stanley Fort.

(W.D., R.R.C., December 1941, p. 57.)

154. During the afternoon it became apparent to the Force Commander that a further enemy attack might be expected that night, by-passing the Prison, which was still in the hands of the defenders, and penetrating to the Fort if possible. Reorganizing his defences, Brigadier Wallis gave orders for another company of R.R.C. to relieve R.A. elements under Major Templer, who were holding the road at 248459 to the left of "C" Coy's positions (W.D., East Inf Bde, p. 80). At 1800 hours the reorganized "A" Coy began to move forward along the road in full view of the Japanese on Stanley Mound, from whose positions the road was being heavily shelled. Suddenly, as a car flying a white flag came up the road, all enemy fire ceased, but not before the leading platoon of "A" Coy had suffered casualties of six killed and twelve wounded. The "Cease Fire" was tentatively ordered as it was learned that an armistice had been in effect since 1500 hours that afternoon (W.D., R.R.C., December 1941, p. 58.)^x

155. During the week's campaign in the eastern sector of Hong Kong Island the bulk of the fighting - after the destruction of 5/7 Rajput as an effective unit on the first night - had been done by R.R.C. Heavy casualties had been inflicted on the enemy, particularly in the operations near Tai Tam Tuk and in the successive attacks upon Stanley Peninsula. From the Japanese themselves came a tribute to the defenders.

About the 12th Jan 1942 Lieut-General Kitojima, Imperial Artillery, Japanese Army, visited North Point Camp. He congratulated us on our stubborn defence of Stanley, which he said was well carried out on a sound plan.

(W.D., East Inf Bde, p. 86)

WPG GREN OPERATIONS - (1)
THE ACTION OF THE FLYING COLUMN PLATOONS (19 DEC 41)

156. It is now necessary to go back a week to recount the operations of the other Canadian battalion on the west side of the Island. On 18 Dec sub-units of Wpg Gren were in the positions which they had occupied on the outbreak of war (see para 80). As the battalion faced its new front towards the north-east, on the left flank were 2 R.S. in the Mt. Parish (209530) - Wan Chai Gap area, and a company of 1 Mx on Leighton Hill, linking up with 5/7 Rajput at Tai Hang and North Point. To the left rear, in the City of Victoria was 2/14 Punjab. No. 3 (M.G.) Coy H.K.V.D.C. held positions from Stanley Gap (234515) to Jardine's

* The formal capitulation of Stanley Force was not ordered by Brigadier Wallis until early on 26 Dec. He gives the following explanation of the delay:

On the arrival of the White Flag party, which consisted of Lt. Col. R.G. Lamb, R.E., and Lt. J.T. Pryor, Ft. H.Q. Staff, Brig. Wallis debated with himself as to whether he should accept their verbal instructions to surrender. "Could I trust these two excited officers? Surely the G.O.C. would have given me some confidential warning to enable me to destroy big guns and important equipment in time... After careful consideration I decided I could not surrender at a time when this action seemed to be locally unwarranted, without written confirmation." This happened at 2000 hrs. The Bde Major, Major Harland, 2 R.S., was despatched with the returning White Flag party to obtain confirmation or otherwise. He returned with written authority, and about 0230 hrs the Bde Comd ordered the hoisting of the White Flag and the Cease Fire for STANLEY FT.

(W.D. East Inf Bde, p. 82)

Lookout east of Wong Nei Chong Gap (Maltby Despatch, Appx "E", p. 1). On its return from operations on the Mainland "D" Coy Wpg Gren had resumed its former station with Brigade Headquarters at Wong Nei Chong, and the reserve "E" Coy had rejoined Battalion Headquarters at Wan Chai Gap. On Brigadier Lawson's orders flying columns had been organized from platoons of H.Q. Coy Wpg Gren to be available at a moment's notice (see para 105). These platoons were billeted in three houses (203520) on the lower Mt. Cameron Road, immediately south of Wan Chai Gap (Wpg Gren Report, p. 9).

157. Shortly after 2000 hours on 18 Dec the enemy was reported to be landing on force on North Point and in the Tai Koo area under cover of heavy clouds of smoke from burning oil tanks. Brigade Headquarters immediately advised Wpg Gren Battalion Headquarters and ordered the three flying columns to be sent out to reinforce the area of the landing in case of a break-through. A platoon under Lieut L.B. Corrigan proceeded to the road junction (218519) north-west of Wong Nei Chong Gap, where it remained throughout the night, coming under mortar and M.G. fire from Jardine's Lookout. Lieut G.A. Birkett led his platoon to Jardine's Lookout, reaching his objective shortly before first light. The small force was heavily shelled and attacked by superior numbers of the enemy, and forced to withdraw from the hill. The Platoon Commander was killed while covering the withdrawal with a bren gun. The third flying column, commanded by Lieut C.D. French, was ordered to Mt. Butler, a 1350-foot hill rising between Jardine's Lookout and Mt. Parker. Heavy enemy opposition repelled the attack, and the platoon withdrew to join "D" Coy at Wong Nei Chong. Lieut French was killed during the action (Ibid, p. 9).

WPG GREN OPERATIONS - (2)

"A" COY'S ATTACK ON JARDINE'S LOOKOUT (19 DEC 41)

158. At 0200 hours on the morning of 19 Dec "A" Coy, which was occupying defence positions at Little Hong Kong near the main Island Magazine, was called to Bde H.Q. Its posts were taken over by Royal Naval personnel from Aberdeen (Maltby Despatch, Appx "B", p. 35). One platoon in outlying positions towards Bennett's Hill (200507) was ordered to follow the rest of the company as rapidly as possible. In its place a platoon from "D" Coy was attached to "A" Coy. At 0500 hours the Company Commander, Major A.B. Gresham, was ordered by Brigadier Lawson to engage the enemy on Jardine's Lookout, with a view to making an ultimate move to Mt. Butler (Wpg Gren Report, p. 9). (It may be observed here that in both sectors of operations in which the Canadian battalions were engaged sub-units frequently received orders direct from the headquarters of the brigade in which their parent battalions were serving.)

159. Reports of the subsequent action are somewhat confused. It appears that part of "A" Coy pushed right through to Mt. Butler, and captured the top of the hill soon after first light, which was 0700 hours. The position was held for two or three hours, when a heavy enemy counter-attack forced a retirement towards Jardine's Lookout and Wong Nei Chong. Throughout the day large numbers of Japanese troops poured over Mt. Butler from the north and north-east, and the Canadian company was surrounded and heavily committed. Fighting continued well into the afternoon. Shortly after 1500 hours Major Gresham was shot down when attempting to surrender with the remnants of his force. All officers were either killed or severely wounded, and "A" Coy was virtually wiped out (Ibid. See also D.N.D. file H.Q.C. 5393-13, Statements of Survivors regarding the Death of C.S.M. John R. Osborn, 30 May 46).

160. During this ill-fated action of "A" Coy there occurred an example of self-sacrifice and heroism of the highest order. H 6008 Company Sergeant-Major John Robert Osborn led a part of his company, which had become separated from

* According to the Maltby Despatch a platoon of Wpg Gren reached a point (237524) between Jardine's Lookout and Mt. Butler. It is referred to as a platoon of "D" Coy Wpg Gren (see para 164) but, judging from the time given (0200 hrs 19 Dec) it is more likely to have been Lieut French's flying column. (Maltby Despatch, Appx "D", p. 2)

the main body, to the top of Mt. Butler, and captured the hill at the point of the bayonet, holding it for three hours. When the position became untenable, owing to the superior numbers of the enemy and a concentration of fire from an unprotected flank, the party fell back to rejoin the Company, while Osborn single-handed engaged the enemy to cover the withdrawal.

During the afternoon the Company... was completely surrounded by the enemy, who were able to approach to within grenade-throwing distance of the slight depression which the Company were holding. Several enemy grenades were thrown which Company Sergeant-Major Osborn picked up and threw back. The enemy threw a grenade which landed in a position where it was impossible to pick it up and return it in time. Shouting a warning to his comrades this gallant Warrant Officer threw himself on the grenade which exploded killing him instantly. His self-sacrifice undoubtedly saved the lives of many others.

(Honours and Awards, "C" Force, Citation, H 6008 Warrant Officer Class II (Company Sergeant-Major) John Robert Osborn, The Winnipeg Grenadiers)

His Majesty The King was graciously pleased to approve the award of the Victoria Cross (posthumously) to this gallant soldier. (Although the award of this V.C. was one of the last to be announced - April 1946 - C.S.M. Osborn was actually the first Canadian in the 1939-45 War to win the Empire's highest decoration for bravery.)

161. The remaining platoon of "A" Coy (Lieut A.W. Prendergast) on arrival at Brigade Headquarters was ordered to construct a road block near Tai Tam Reservoir. (The loss of "A" Coy was now realized at Brigade Headquarters.) The platoon met stiff fighting at the Japanese-occupied Police Station at Wong Nei Chong, where it was joined by a party of Royal Engineers under Lieut-Col R.G.Lamb, brought up from Little Hong Kong (Maltby Despatch, Appx "E", p. 2). After an unsuccessful attempt to reach the Reservoir, during which many casualties were suffered, the survivors of the platoon returned to Battalion Headquarters at Wan Chai Gap, where they arrived at 1300 hours on 19 Dec (Wpg Gren Report, p. 9).

WPG GREN OPERATIONS - (3)

THE ATTACK ON "D" COY AT WONG NEI CHONG (19-22 DEC 41)

162. As soon as it was learnt at Brigade Headquarters that Japanese forces had effected a successful landing, the Brigade Commander ordered the destruction of all important non-essential files and documents, and preparations were made for a move from Wong Nei Chong to a new headquarters which had previously been chosen on Black's Link (the track leading from Wong Nei Chong Gap to Wan Chai Gap). This alternative site was south of Mt. Nicholson (219515), about half a mile west of the Repulse Bay Road. At 1000 hours 19 Dec, by which time enemy troops were in positions on Jardine's Lookout and Mt. Nicholson overlooking Wong Nei Chong Gap, Brigade Headquarters at the Gap was evacuated ("C" Force H.Q. Report, p. 11). But in the withdrawal the majority of the

Headquarters staff became casualties.* It appears that at this time the Brigade Major, Major Lyndon, was the only staff officer with Brigade Headquarters. Some time earlier the Brigade Commander had sent the Staff Captain with verbal orders to "D" Coy's position, and the latter was instructed to remain with this Wpg Gren company to see that Brigade Headquarters had covering fire during its withdrawal up Mt. Nicholson (Ibid, pp 10, 11). Shortly afterwards (about 1000 hours) Brigadier Lawson reported to Fortress H.Q. that his own headquarters' shelters were overrun; that firing into them was actually taking place at point blank range, and that he was going outside to fight it out (Maltby Despatch, Appx "B" p. 36). He was killed outside his headquarters, either by a shell or by a sniper's bullet. (No eye-witness reports of the Brigadier's death are available. Information regarding the time and place have been supplied by Captain Bush. See also report of Hon Captain U. Laite, C.C.S., who describes finding Brigadier Lawson's body.)

163. From this time (1000 hours 19 Dec) Brigade control of the units in the west of the Island was lost until 1200 hours 20 Dec, when Colonel H.B. Rose, M.C., H.K.V.D.C., was appointed Brigade Commander, West Bde, by General Maltby (Maltby Despatch, Appx "A", p. 28). In the interval Wpg Gren took orders direct from Fortress H.Q. The move of the Canadian Bde H.Q. to Black's Link Road was never completed.

Major Lyndon, Bde Major, returned to "D" Coy, Wpg Gren shelters, on the night of 20 Dec 41. He had lain on the slope of Mt. Nicholson since the morning of the 19th, when Bde H.Q. was evacuated. He reported that Mt. Nicholson was occupied by the enemy and he had been unable to get through their lines. On his return to Bde shelters he had tried to communicate by phone to Battle H.Q. but the telephone had been destroyed beyond repair before evacuation. He then made his way to the Coy positions on the opposite side of the road...In the evening [of the 21st] Major Lyndon advised Lieut Blackwood he was going to attempt to get through the Japanese lines to Bn H.Q. at Wan Chai. But shortly after this Major Lyndon was killed at the position.

("C" Force H.Q. Report, p. 14,
Statement by Lieut T.A. Blackwood,
Wpg Gren)

164. On its return from the Mainland on 13 Dec "D" Coy had occupied the Wong Nei Chong company positions, placing outlying platoons (17 and 18) in the area north of the Gap -- between Stubbs Road and Sir Cecil's Ride. Early on 19 Dec the company was reinforced by a platoon of 20 men from Belcher Point, commanded by Lieut T.A. Blackwood. This platoon, "D" Coy H.Q. and 16 Pl were concentrated at the company's defence shelters (227514) across the road from Brigade Headquarters. At 0800 hours 19 Dec the two forward platoons engaged the enemy, but were outflanked and cut off from Company Headquarters. They continued to fight independently under their platoon commanders until their positions

* The Staff Captain's Report refers to these casualties:

Lieut. Blackwood and Q.M.S. Pacey A.P.T.S. (Army Physical Training Section) conducted a search through "Shelters" on E. side Bluepool Road and Bde H.Q. and had found some ammunition, together with Bren Guns. During this search of Bde shelters, Lieut Blackwood came across Capt. G.M. Billings, R.C.C.S. with some of his staff wounded. There was a number of wounded lying on the hill above Bde H.Q. (Mount Nicholson). These were collected and brought down to "Shelters."

("C" Force H.Q. Report, p. 12)

were overrun, whereupon survivors made their way back to Bn H.Q. at Wan Chai Gap (Wpg Gren Report, p. 10; see also Maltby Despatch, Appx "E", p. 1).²⁵

165. "D" Coy's main position was of vital importance to the entire defence picture as it commanded the only road across the Island. It now came under attack from three directions, -- frontally from Wong Nei Chong Police Station, on the right from Happy Valley west of Jardine's Lookout, and on the left from the slopes of Mt. Nicholson behind Brigade Headquarters. The Company Commander, Captain A.S. Bowman, was killed while successfully driving out enemy snipers from a troublesome position. When the Second-in-Command, Captain R.W. Philip, was wounded, the command devolved upon Lieut Blackwood. By midday the strength of all ranks in the "D" Coy position had been reduced to an estimated 50 or less ("C" Force H.Q. Report, p. 11). The garrison had besides its rifles four bren guns, two Thompson sub-machine guns and a plentiful supply of ammunition (Wpg Gren Report, p. 10). With these heavy casualties were inflicted on the enemy on Mt. Nicholson as the defence was continued during 20 and 21 Dec.

166. Two attempts by other companies of the battalion to relieve "D" Coy had failed (see paras 168 and 173). Early on the morning of 22 Dec (0500 hours) the enemy blew in steel doors and window shutters of the shelters with a 2" gun. Lieut Blackwood was again wounded, and several more other ranks became casualties. Ammunition was by this time very low, and permission was given to two small parties to retire to Battalion Headquarters. The withdrawals were completed successfully, although with casualties. (The Brigade Staff Captain and the Brigade Signals Officer, Captain G.M. Billings, both of whom had been wounded, had succeeded in making their way from Wong Nei Chong to Wan Chai Gap after dark on 20 Dec -- "C" Force H.Q. Report, p. 13.) At 0700 hours 22 Dec, when ammunition, food and water were exhausted, and with 37 wounded men in the position, Captain Philip decided to surrender what was left of "D" Coy (Wpg Gren Report, p. 11).

167. It is estimated that "D" Company's heroic stand cost the attacking forces more than two hundred dead, and certainly the overall casualties inflicted by this small body of men must have proved a serious drain on the enemy. The denial to the Japanese of the use of the Repulse Bay Road was of material assistance in **prolonging** the defence of the Island generally. For their gallant and skilful direction of "D" Coy's stand Captain Philip and Lieut Blackwood were awarded the Military Cross. Three other ranks of "D" Coy won the Military Medal in the same action (See Appx "J"). Of this action, Major-General Maltby, Commander of Hong Kong is quoted as saying:

"A company of Winnipeg Grenadiers fought so magnificently the Japanese believed the sector was held by two battalions. When it was over, the Nips would not believe they had been opposed by only one company. They were incredulous and indignant, and they showed it by slapping the faces of the Canadian officers of that Company when they interrogated them."

(Honours and Awards, "C" Force,
Citation, Captain R.W. Philip)

WPG GREN OPERATIONS - (4)
COUNTER-ATTACKS ON WONG NEI CHONG (19-21 DEC 41)

168. On the afternoon of 19 Dec, after the failure of "A" Coy's attack on Jardine's Lookout, H.Q. Coy Wpg Gren was ordered to attack Wong Nei Chong Gap in an attempt to relieve "D" Coy, which was heavily engaged there. Immediate objectives were enemy positions in the Gap and at the Police Station, and an ultimate break-through to Mt. Parker was to be attempted (Wpg Gren Report, p. 10). This counter-attack was part of a general advance ordered by Fortress H.Q., with the objective the line Middle Spur (2249) - Wong Nei Chong

²⁵ See footnote to para 157

Reservoir (229512) - Jardine's Lookout. Attacking troops were Wpg Gren on the right and 2 R.S. on the left. On the extreme left two companies of 2/14 Punjab would co-operate by exploiting northwards from Leighton Hill to relieve the North Point Power Station, which was being desperately held by the "Hughesiliers" - a small group of business men whose age (55 or over) had precluded their admission to the ranks of H.K.V.D.C. (W.D. Fortress H.Q., p. 14; Maltby Despatch, Appx "A", p. 25, and Appx "L", p. 1). H.Q. Coy Wpg Gren was stationed at the time with Battalion Headquarters at Wan Chai Gap, but with its numbers considerably under strength. Three platoons had already been detached as flying columns (see para 156). Only 40 Grenadiers and eight British soldiers were immediately available to the Company Commander, Major E. Hodgkinson. It was arranged that "C" Coy Wpg Gren, which was at Aberdeen, would supply a platoon, and that a company of 2 R.S. would be attached for the operation. A rendezvous at Middle Gap (212516) was arranged for 1530 hours (Wpg Gren Report, p. 10). (The Maltby Despatch speaks of two companies of 2 R.S. - "B" Coy and a composite H.Q. Coy - following H.Q. Coy Wpg Gren, with the intention of joining up with the rest of their battalion, which was advancing along Stubbs Road towards Wong Nei Chong Gap - Appx "E", p. 3.)

169. The Royal Scots were late in reaching the rendezvous and the composite force moved off in open formation along Black's Link without them. One platoon (Lieut Corrigan's) was detached to proceed over Mt. Nicholson and thus cover the left flank, while the main party proceeded down the trail under enemy fire. Owing to the difficult climb and the heavy casualties inflicted by the enemy the flanking platoon reached the summit of Mt. Nicholson with only five unwounded men, but with this small group Lieut Corrigan made his way down to a point about 300 yards from the road through the Gap. Here they opened fire on the enemy, and continued to engage him until dusk, when, with ammunition exhausted, they retired around the north slope of the hill. The remnants of the platoon reached Wan Chai at 0200 hours the next morning (Ibid).

170. In the meantime the main force proceeding along Black's Link surprised a party of some 500 Japanese troops being fed and inflicted heavy casualties on them with L.M.G. fire. Later (1745 hours) the force was held up at a point (225513) 100 yards short of the Repulse Bay Road, the Royal Scots party having reported in the meantime. Wong Nei Chong Gap was assaulted from the south and the south-west by the "C" Coy platoon under Lieut R.A.H. Campbell. At the same time Major Hodgkinson personally led a detachment of four O.Rs. with a 2" mortar over the south-east spur of Mt. Nicholson, to work in through the evacuated Brigade Headquarters on the left flank and launch an attack from the north. A roadblock was cleared and a footing was obtained in the Gap, and held with seven effectives and twenty wounded personnel. Contact was made with "D" Coy H.Q. and Major Hodgkinson received telephone orders from Fortress H.Q. to reduce the Police Station and then attack Mt. Parker (Ibid, p. 11).

171. The attack on the Police Station was organized to begin at 2200 hours. Major Hodgkinson's plan provided for a frontal assault by a small patrol, led by himself, to precede a major flanking attack by the remainder of the Company. Additional fire support came with the arrival from Fortress H.Q. of two armoured cars mounting Vickers machine-guns, and, although these were rendered immobile by accurate enemy fire which landed under the front axles of both vehicles, the weapons were of use in providing covering fire in the assault. The attack was nevertheless broken up by machine-gun fire and grenades before the assaulting party had reached the top of the slope leading to the Police Station. Major Hodgkinson was seriously wounded and most of his men became casualties (Ibid). But his daring plan succeeded in part, and the flanking company reached its objective, to bring damaging fire to bear on the enemy, whose strength was estimated at one battalion. Major Hodgkinson was awarded the Distinguished Service Order (Honours and Awards, "C" Force, Citation, Major E. Hodgkinson.)

172. The unfortunate lack of co-ordination of planning and action that existed among the various sub-units in the Wong Nei Chong area during this period when Brigade control was absent is reflected in the fact that on the night of 19/20 Dec no less than three separate company attacks were directed at the Japanese-held Police Station within five hours, and one at Jardine's Lookout - each one being independently organized and mounted on the respective

company commander's own initiative. The Wpg Gren attack at 2200 hours (19 Dec) just described was followed at 0200 hours by an unsuccessful assault on the Police Station by "B" Coy 2 R.S., which had previously become separated from the Canadians on Black's Link. An hour later still a composite company of 2 R.S. (Captain Ford's), which had also followed H.Q. Coy Wpg Gren along Black's Link, repeated the fruitless attempt to drive out the enemy. "Ford had learnt, earlier, that Hodgkinson was preparing to attack the Police Station, but as he had heard nothing happen he decided to stage an attack with his composite company". In the meantime "C" Coy 2 R.S. had unsuccessfully attacked from Stubbs Road towards Jardine's Lookout (Maltby Despatch, Appx "E", Account of Events in the Jardine's Lookout - Wong Nei Chong Gap Area, p. 4). Had it been possible to co-ordinate these individual efforts into a single plan of concerted and simultaneous attack it seems not improbable that the objective set by Fortress H.Q. might have been reached. As events transpired, the daily situation report for 20 Dec issued by H.Q. China Command appears unduly optimistic in declaring:

Yesterday afternoon we launched a successful counter-attack against enemy in neighbourhood of Wong Nei Chong Gap. Japanese were thrown back from this keypoint which had previously been in their hands for a short period and we have since maintained our line.

(HQMS 8902, Tel 59713, Troopers to Defensor, 23 Dec 41)

173. One more attempt by Canadian troops was made to relieve "D" Coy. At 1000 hours on 20 Dec "B" Coy Wpg Gren, which was manning its defence positions at Pok Fu Lam on the west side of the Island, received telephoned orders from Lt-Col Sutcliffe to move to Battalion Headquarters for a counter-attack on Wong Nei Chong Gap (Wpg Gren Report, p. 12). "B" Coy reached Wan Chai Gap in the afternoon, and at 1730 hours moved off to Middle Gap, where the Company Commander, Major H.W. Hook, disposed his platoons for the attack. 11 Pl (Lieut R.J. Hooper) accompanied by a 3" mortar detachment was sent around the north side of Mt. Nicholson; 10 Pl (Lieut H.E. MacKechnie) and Coy H.Q., with part of 12 Pl (Lieut H.J. Young) in reserve, followed Black's Link along the south side of the hill. The plan of attack was that the two parties would advance to pre-arranged points on either side of Mt. Nicholson opposite its peak, and would there take up positions for the night, preparatory to launching a joint assault at 0700 hours on the 21st.

174. There is evidence to show that Fortress H.Q. had considered the possibility of the impending Wpg Gren operation forming the western thrust of a joint attack on Wong Nei Chong by both brigades (see para 137). But difficulties were experienced in co-ordinating the times for the start of the operation in the two sectors.

Col Rose's best advantage lay in attacking in the half light and he had fixed the hour for 0700 hours. There were obvious advantages in the two brigades attacking simultaneously, but Brigadier Wallis was unable to organize his troops and start his attack before 0900 hours. After consultation with the G.S.O.1 it was decided that the attackers were too far apart geographically in the initial stages to have any effect on each other. Accordingly it was decided that West Bde should attack at 0700 hours and East Bde at 0900 hours.*

(W.D., Fortress H.Q., p. 19)

* It should be noted that the West Bde attack here referred to was that delivered by the single company of Wpg Gren.

175. At last light on 20 Dec, 10 and 12 Pls ran into enemy opposition on Black's Link near the point (219513) that had been chosen for the night position. The party retired to Middle Gap, and "a very miserable night was spent in the pouring rain with a high cold wind blowing through the Gap. Everyone was soaked and nearly frozen" (Wpg Gren Report, p. 12). During the night a count revealed the loss of two officers and 20 men. Lieut Young was placed in charge of 10 Pl, which was reinforced from 12 Pl, a reserve being dispensed with. The advance was resumed at first light, but the leading section ran into mines on the road, and the platoon was attacked and driven back. In this as in other actions the Japanese inflicted many casualties on the attackers by dropping hand grenades on them from higher positions on the hillside. While the party on Black's Link was in action, 11 Pl could be seen on the north shoulder of Mt. Nicholson heavily engaging the enemy with L.M.G. and mortar.

176. The attack having failed Major Hook ordered a withdrawal to Middle Gap. Here the remnants of "B" Coy came under fire from snipers on Mt. Nicholson, and heavy enemy shelling. The withdrawal was continued along the north side of Mt. Cameron to Battalion Headquarters at Wan Chai Gap. Casualties in the night's operations had been heavy. All officers of "B" Coy were either killed or wounded, as were 29 of the 98 all ranks who had participated in the action. Among the fatal casualties were the Platoon Commanders of 11 and 12 Pls and the Commander of the mortar detachment, Lieut J.A.V. David. Of "B" Coy's unsuccessful attempt the daily communique from H.Q. China Command reported:

Counter-attack by company of Wpg Gren to retake Wong Nei Chong Gap [also] failed in face of enemy concentrated mortar and L.M.G. fire.

(Tel 301, Admiralty to Defensor, op cit)

WPG GREN OPERATIONS - (5)
THE ACTION ON MT. CAMERON (21-22 DEC 41)

177. With Mt. Nicholson in the hands of the enemy a Japanese attack on Mt. Cameron, the next hill to the west, was to be expected. Mt. Cameron, 1340 feet in height, overlooked Wan Chai Gap, the site of H.Q. West Bde and Wpg Gren Bn H.Q. Its retention was of the utmost importance. 2 R.S. north of Mt. Nicholson had been driven back towards Wan Chai Gap, and any further westward penetration by the enemy would result in the isolation of the troops (detachments of 1 Mx, 2/14 Punjab and 5/7 Rajput) still holding on in the Leighton Hill and Happy Valley area (W.D., Fortress H.Q., p. 20). Accordingly, on the morning of 21 Dec Major (later Lt-Col) G. Trist, Second-in-Command Wpg Gren, was ordered by the Battalion Commander to gather all available men and to hold the hill against Japanese advance (Wpg Gren Report, p. 13). Major Trist mustered approximately 100 all ranks. At 1300 hours, after a hazardous ascent by way of a steep water-course (through 204519) on the west side of the hill, during which the party was harassed by continuous fire from Japanese heavy mortars and mountain artillery, positions were occupied on a ridge immediately behind the crest. During the afternoon and evening Major Trist's force came under intermittent but accurate enemy fire. Casualties were inflicted, however, upon Japanese troops on Mt. Nicholson, and an enemy mortar position there was put out of action by artillery fire directed from a forward observation post established on Mt. Cameron. "It was extremely difficult to get ammunition and rations up to the positions owing to the steep, difficult climb, and the fact that Chinese carrying parties employed dropped their loads and disappeared immediately the Japanese began shelling the water course. Consequently the men had very little or no food during the operation" (Ibid).

178. On the morning of 22 Dec a platoon of Royal Engineers, 20 in number, was added to Major Trist's command, and the force on Mt. Cameron was reorganized on a two-company basis. The R.E. platoon and two platoons of Wpg Gren were placed on the right under the command of Lieut H.L. White, while on the left

were three platoons of Grenadiers under Captain N.O. Bardal (A/O.C. "A" Coy). During the afternoon the enemy opened a heavy artillery and mortar bombardment on the positions on the hill, and a number of casualties were sustained. A report to Fortress H.Q. from Commander West Bde stated that "the Canadian troops in the Mt. Cameron area were being badly dive-bombed and mortared. They had no tools with which to dig in (although the rocky ground made this in any case almost impossible), no 3" mortars or bombs, and there was no shelter, and nothing to do except stick it out with small arms fire from behind the rocks" (Maltby Despatch, Appx "B", p. 54).

179. The barrage was resumed after dark, when the right flank came under M.M.G. and L.M.G. fire. Shortly after 2200 hours some of the enemy succeeded in breaking through on the extreme right, and began working their way north along the rear of the Canadian positions, using a captured L.M.G. and 2" mortar with deadly effect. The positions on Mt. Cameron were evacuated under cover of darkness, and shortly afterwards all troops at Wan Chai Gap fell back to Mt. Gough (Wpg Gren Report, p. 15). Reports from West Inf Bde to Fortress H.Q. early on 23 Dec, however, defined the situation as follows:

At the same time (0120 hrs) WEST INF BDE reported the loss of MOUNT CAMERON. Our troops were coming back in disorder. WAN CHAI GAP was being held by RE and details 2 R.S. An effort was being made to rally the troops at MAGAZINE GAP and MOUNT GOUGH...At 0415 hrs Commander WEST Inf Bde reported troops two hundred and twenty strong back at MOUNT GOUGH somewhat disorganized...At 0440 hrs Lt-Col. Field reported Canadians rallying at GOUGH HILL Police Station.

(W.D., Fortress H.Q., p. 24)

WPG GREN OPERATIONS - (6)
THE FINAL DEFENCE LINE (23-25 DEC 41)

180. While the action on Mt. Cameron was taking place, "C" Coy, the only company of Wpg Gren which had not yet been fully involved in operations, was holding its defence positions to the south in the Aberdeen area around the Reservoirs and at Bennett's Hill (see para 80). (One platoon, commanded by Lieut Campbell, had been withdrawn from "C" Coy to participate in H.Q. Coy's attack on Wong Nei Chong on 19 Dec -- see para 168. A further platoon, Lieut Nugent's, had gone to assist in the defence of Mt. Cameron.) At midnight 22/23 Dec the O.C. "C" Coy, Major J.A. Bailie, received information that Mt. Cameron had been taken by the enemy and that the Brigade was falling back to Mt. Gough for a last stand position (Wpg Gren Report, p. 15). This enemy occupation placed "C" Coy's position at Aberdeen under direct observation and fire, and left the company's left flank exposed. It will be recalled that Pok Fu Lam, to the rear of "C" Coy, had been vacated by "B" Coy on 20 Dec (see para 172), and this fact added to the precariousness of "C" Coy's position.

181. In these circumstances Brigade Headquarters telephoned Major Bailie to evacuate "C" Coy to Aberdeen Village that same night (22/23 Dec), suggesting that insufficient darkness remained to reach Mt. Gough. At 0230 hours 23 Dec detachments of all defence forces in the Aberdeen area rendezvoused at a road junction just north of the village. The party consisted of 102 all ranks and included "C" Coy Wpg Gren (34), R.A.F. (14), R.N. (10), Dockyard Defence Corps (43) and one officer of Royal Marines. Major Bailie and the naval and D.D.C. details decided to push on to Mt. Gough that same night; the R.A.F. detachment returned to its headquarters at the Aberdeen Industrial School. As the Wan Chai Gap - Aberdeen road was under direct observation from Mt. Cameron for its entire length, the route chosen to Mt. Gough was along the Island Road by way of Pok Fu Lam (Ibid). The composite force reached Pok Fu Lam at first light, where Major Bailie immediately telephoned Fortress H.Q. notice of his

action. He was answered by Major-General Maltby, who gave orders for the Aberdeen positions to be reoccupied. On being told of the impossibility of such action (the 34 survivors of "C" Coy were exhausted and without transport) General Maltby gave orders for the company to take over the Pok Fu Lam position and hold it at all costs (Ibid, p. 16; and W.D., Fortress H.Q., p. 24).

182. At 1530 hours on the next afternoon (23 Dec) the O.C. Wpg Gren was ordered to reoccupy the Aberdeen area at last light, linking up with 2 R.S. positions in the Wan Chai Gap area (Wpg Gren Report, p. 16; Notes on Interview, Lt-Col H.B. Rose, M.C., 8 & 9 Jun 46, p. 6). At 2000 hours "C" Coy, reinforced by a party of 80 men under Captain Bardal, took over its former positions at Aberdeen Reservoirs and Bennett's Hill, establishing contact with R.N. detachments on its right flank. There was no enemy opposition to this move, the Japanese apparently having failed to take advantage of "C" Coy's withdrawal of the previous night. The company's line now ran south from the south slope of Mt. Cameron to the south slope of Bennett's Hill. The position protected the Aberdeen - Wan Chai Gap road, the sole remaining cross-Island road not in Japanese hands. Orders were given that the line was to be held at all costs. A second Wpg Gren composite company, commanded by Major Hook, was apparently on "C" Coy's left flank, although contact between the two companies was not established (Wpg Gren Report, p. 16; W.D. Fortress H.Q., p. 27). Bn H.Q. Wpg Gren returned to Wan Chai Gap, the reserve company of the battalion being placed at Magazine Gap (198526) with Bde H.Q.

183. Fighting for possession of Mt. Cameron continued. The enemy was relying upon his artillery and aerial attacks to wear down the defenders. The positions at Magazine Gap and Wan Chai Gap were unenviable. The surrounding topography at every "gap" was such that local defence was bound to be restricted and confined to the gap itself, which thus became an excellent target for hostile aircraft. (These positions had originally been prepared to stop enemy exploitation after a south shore landing.) (Maltby Despatch, Appx "B", p. 60.) A survey of the general situation at midday 23 Dec reported:

Enemy has slightly improved his position in the last 24 hours but lines held generally as yesterday. Troops are very tired indeed, but spirit generally good and it is understood that every day's resistance is of value to Allied cause...Very heavy shelling, mortaring and dive bombing all morning, and extremely difficult to maintain communications. Further fighting will be uncontrolled and confined to centre of resistance of units as (or and) sub-units. No water in hand and all men physically exhausted after days of continuous fighting. Very heavy mortaring and dive bombing of Mount Cameron just reported, with incendiaries setting all that countryside alight.

(HQMS 8902, Tel 740, Admiralty
to Defensor, 25 Dec 41)

184. At midnight 23/24 Dec dispositions of West Inf Bde were as follows. At the north end of the line the 1 Mx company, although down to 40 effectives, was still holding Leighton Hill with six M.M.Gs. On their right was a composite company of 5/7 Rajput, very much reduced in numbers. Alongside them at the south-east end of the Race Course were the remnants of a company of 2/14 Punjab (Major Kampta Prasad's) only 8 strong with two light automatics. 2 R.S., with H.Q. at Wan Chai Gap, were holding the northern and western slopes of Mt. Cameron, the crest of which was in enemy hands. Wpg Gren extended the line, southwards to the Aberdeen Reservoirs and Bennett's Hill. "C" Coy 1 Mx (Major H. Marsh) was still holding out at Little Hong Kong in an almost isolated position, and ammunition lorries were still getting through to the Magazine there. A new reserve line manned by No. 4 and No. 7 Coys H.K.V.D.C. had been established from Mt. Kellet to Mount Gough (Maltby Despatch, Appx "B", pp 60, 61.)

185. On the afternoon of 24 Dec a further sitrep reported that:

Enemy have continued heavy attacks with grenades, mortars, artillery and dive bombers. Royal Scots were driven off the top of Mount Cameron during the night, but are holding ground on lower western slopes in spite of increasing enemy fire and numbers on their front.

(HQMS 8902, Tel 751, N.O.I.C. Hong Kong to Defensor, 26 Dec 41)

The gallant resistance of the Leighton Hill garrison came to an end in the late afternoon as a strong enemy attack was launched on the position after it had come under heavy dive bombing and artillery bombardment. There was now the danger of a Japanese drive along the north face of the Island, between the town of Wan Chai and the Gaps (Maltby Despatch, Appx "B", p. 64).

186. In that part of the line held by Wpg Gren two Japanese attacks were experienced on 24 Dec. At 0930 hours the enemy attempted to take a small trench system which was being held on the south slope of Mt. Cameron by a group of Grenadiers in platoon strength under Lieut Corrigan. The attackers were driven off after 30 minutes of severe hand-to-hand fighting, in which heavy casualties are believed to have been inflicted on the enemy (Wpg Gren Report, p. 17. See also "C" Force - Individual Stories, Lieut L. Corrigan, Wpg Gren). Late on Christmas Eve a Japanese attack, preceded by the usual preliminary heavy shelling, was directed against Bennett's Hill, and one platoon was driven out of its defences and forced to retire to the Reservoir area. A platoon under Lieut. W.F. Nugent, however, held its position on the Hill with great tenacity, repelling the main force of the enemy attack and inflicting heavy casualties. A counter-attack at first light on Christmas morning regained the lost ground (Ibid). For the bravery, leadership and ability exhibited by Lieut Nugent during his platoon's action he was awarded the Military Cross (Honours and Awards, "C" Force, Lieut W.F. Nugent).

187. A third and final enemy demand for surrender was made to the Governor of Hong Kong early on Christmas Day, "and answered briefly in the negative" (HQMS 8902, unnumbered Tel, Admiralty to Defensor, 26 Dec 41). But by early afternoon the situation confronting the G.O.C. was indeed desperate. The water supply for the city of Victoria had been cut off now for more than two days, and the fighting troops were feeling the shortage (Maltby Despatch, Appx "B", p. 57). At noon on Christmas Day only six guns of the mobile artillery remained in action with an average of only 60 rounds per gun available (W.D., Fortress H.Q., p. 31). Communications between unit headquarters were disrupted, as field cables were burnt up when incendiaries set the hillsides on fire. The link with East Inf Bde H.Q. at Stanley had now been severed, and consequently no information was obtainable from that sector of the Island (Maltby Despatch, Appx "B", p. 68). At midday a concerted Japanese drive began against all the positions held by West Inf Bde. In the north Mount Parish fell, and the enemy began infiltrating through A.R.P. tunnels that led towards Fortress H.Q. Wan Chai Gap was taken, and Magazine Gap was holding out with difficulty (W.D., Fortress H.Q., p. 31). Bennett's Hill was surrounded and forced to surrender, and the Canadian line north of the Hill compelled to give ground (Maltby Despatch, Appx "B", p. 62).

188. In these circumstances General Maltby was forced to advise the Governor that no further effective military resistance could be made.

This advance by the enemy along the line of Gaps, the possession of these Gaps by him, thus giving him an open line of advance to the Central District, the fall of Bennett's Hill, the isolation of the forces in Stanley, the deployment by the enemy of such superior forces and armament, the exhaustion after

sixteen days of continuous battle with no reliefs for any individuals, our vulnerability to unlimited air attack, the impossibility of obtaining any more ammunition for the few mobile guns I had remaining, 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 retaliations on the large civilian population and could not affect the final outcome. The enemy drive along the North Shore was decisive.

(Ibid)

189. At 1515 hours a white flag was run up from the Police Station at Mt. Gough. The O.C. Wpg Gren was notified by Brigade Headquarters that the garrison had surrendered and that troops were ordered to cease fighting (Wpg Gren Report, p. 18). On orders from Command H.Q. ammunition dumps were destroyed and the battalion was concentrated at Mt. Austin Barracks for the night. After various moves during the next few days from one building to another in Victoria, the battalion was sent, on 30 Dec, across to the Mainland, to take up quarters in Sham Shui Po Camp (Ibid).

OPERATIONS, "C" FORCE SIGNALS

190. The majority of the Signals personnel of "C" Force saw action both on the Mainland and on the Island. Prior to the arrival of the Canadian Force at Hong Kong in November, the Signals organization for the Colony's defence consisted of the Hong Kong Signal Company (6 officers, 175 other ranks, 96 civilian employees), and the Fortress Signal Company H.K.V.D.C. (2 officers, 13 British O.Rs, 100 Chinese Jointers and Linemen). The latter unit in the main consisted of employees of the Hong Kong Telephone Company. In the revised defence scheme the Canadian detachment became the Kowloon Infantry Brigade Signal Section (Maltby Despatch, Appx "C", W.D., Chief Signal Officer, p. 1). The period between the arrival in Hong Kong and the outbreak of war was spent in intensive training. Despatch riders familiarized themselves with the country, but were forced to do this in a station wagon, as motorcycles were not released from Ordnance until 8 Dec (Force "C" Signal Report, p. 2). Instruction in the operation of No. 18 W/T Sets was given to selected personnel from 2 R.S., 2/14 Punjab and 5/7 Rajput. R.C. Sigs linemen were detailed to various Royal Signals Line Sections, where their work was carried out under Royal Signals supervision. On 7 Dec the Canadian Signal Officer, Captain G.M. Billings, was given warning of a "manning exercise" to be held next day with the Mainland Brigade (Ibid).

191. As Japanese aeroplanes were bombing Kai Tak Aerodrome the "exercise" went into effect as an operation. W/T communication using No. 11 Sets was established between Bde H.Q. in Kowloon and the three battalions in the line. A D.R. service operated successfully between Bde H.Q., unit H.Q. and the ferry terminals. Line communications were maintained at high efficiency by Royal Signals personnel assisted by Canadian linemen. On the evacuation of the Mainland all signals personnel, equipment and vehicles -- with the exception of the W/T Set with the Rajputs, which was destroyed at Customs Pass -- were withdrawn safely to the Island. The Canadian Signals Section assembled at the Island Signal Pool at Casa Bianca, on Deep Water Bay (Ibid, p. 3).

192. On 14 Dec Captain Billings with approximately fourteen D.Rs. and operators took over the West Bde Signal Office at Wong Nei Chong Gap. No. 11 Sets detachments were sent to the various unit headquarters in the west half of the Island. The W/T net included a Royal Signals set at Fortress H.Q. An extensive system of buried line communications was already installed (see para 78). These lines were often blown up, but were quickly repaired. The D.R.L.S. already in operation was extended by the use of the Canadian despatch riders from the Mainland. The system was regular and efficient although the riders were

constantly troubled by fifth column sniping, a situation that grew so bad that D.Rs. eventually had to be used in pairs (Ibid, p. 4). When it was decided to move Brigade Headquarters back from Wong Nei Chong to a position on Black's Link (see para 162), lines and instruments were installed in the alternative position, and all signal personnel not required at Bde H.Q. were sent to the new site.

193. The Black's Link position was not used. On the morning of 19 Dec, as Brigade Headquarters was attempting its evacuation, Captain Billings became a casualty, and spent the next two days with "D" Coy Wpg Gren in their isolated position. When Black's Link became untenable the signals detachment there withdrew to Wan Chai Gap, to join the main Royal Signals body which had by this time evacuated Casa Bianca. The villa in which they were quartered at Wan Chai was destroyed by a shell, which killed four Canadian signalmen. All signals personnel were then sent to Victoria Barracks, where they were joined by Captain Billings. Here preparations were made for a last stand, and various remnants of Brigade Headquarters staff, including R.C.A.P.C., R.C.O.C. and R.C.A.S.C. personnel, were allotted positions for the defence of the area under the Signal Officer. These positions were manned up to the time of surrender on Christmas Day (Ibid, p. 6).

ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES

194. It is necessary now to turn back a week or two for a quick survey of the work of the Canadian administrative services during the Hong Kong operations. It will be recalled that at the request of the War Office a number of specialists from various corps had been included in the establishment of "C" Force Brigade Headquarters. Administration of these detachments came under the Senior Administrative Officer, Colonel Hennessy and his staff (see para 11). At the outbreak of war the Administrative Office had been set up near H.Q. China Command (see para 79). The various brigade details were in general attached to appropriate British units and sub-units, where they temporarily merged their Canadian identity with that of the Imperial troops whose duties they shared. Only in the case of the Canadian Chaplain Service, the Postal and Pay Services, and the C.M.S.C. personnel, was the work carried on under immediate Canadian administration.

195. This administrative control was exercised by Colonel Hennessy and his staff until 20 Dec 41. On that day No. 8, "The Peak", the house which had been assigned as office and sleeping accommodation for the S.A.O., the Field Cashier and their respective sub-staffs, received a direct hit from a large-calibre shell. Captain R.M. Davies, the Field Cashier, was killed instantly, and Colonel Hennessy was so severely wounded, both legs being shattered, that he died on the way to the hospital ("C" Force H.Q. Report, Report on Death of Colonel Hennessy - Q.M.S.V.J. Myatt, W.O. i/c S.A.O. Details, p. 2). This unfortunate incident, coming as it did within 24 hours of the death of Brigadier Lawson and the disruption of Brigade Headquarters at Wong Nei Chong, put a virtual end to Canadian administrative as well as operational control above a battalion level during the remainder of the operations on Hong Kong Island.

196. The story of the work of the members of the Canadian Chaplain Service during the operations on the Island is one of cheerful and courageous devotion to duty in the most trying circumstances. Of the three Chaplains of "C" Force, two (Protestant) were attached to the infantry battalions, H/Captain J. Barnett to R.R.C. and H/Captain U. Laite to Wpg Gren. H/Captain F.J. DeLoughery (R.C.) remained with Brigade Headquarters and was assigned to duty at the Bowen Road Military Hospital ("C" Force Chaplains' Report, H/Captain F.J. DeLoughery, p. 2). In the days preceding the Japanese landings, as long as road communications allowed, the padres visited the various defence positions, holding services and talking to the men off duty and assisting them with their personal correspondence. As enemy shelling and bombing began to send casualties into the hospitals, visiting the wounded became part of the daily routine, and there were frequent calls to officiate at the burial service.

197. After 18 Dec the demands upon the Canadian chaplains became more exacting. Their work among the wounded assumed more and more of a physical aspect, as they undertook the tasks of stretcher bearers and hospital orderlies. On the east side of the Island Captain Barnett took up his post at St. Stephen's College Emergency Hospital (250467) outside Stanley Village. During the last four days of the siege the hospital was shelled frequently, and from the morning of the 24th it formed part of the front line of defence. On 26 Dec, after having undergone the exhausting nervous strain that accompanied the surrender on the previous day, as Japanese soldiers bayoneted the wounded men in their hospital beds, the R.R.C. Chaplain was forced by the enemy to organize the cremation of the bodies of the dead. "I think I cremated about 170 bodies, some from the hospital, and some from the battle field." ("C" Force Chaplains' Reports, H/Captain J. Barnett, pp 3, 4)

198. No less striking was the contribution of the Wpg Gren Chaplain, who was with the beleaguered "D" Coy at Wong Nei Chong from 19 Dec until its surrender on the 22nd (see para 166). During that time, in the absence of any medical officer, Captain Laite tirelessly ministered night and day to the needs of the wounded officers and men in the company's crowded cookhouse shelter -- 37 casualties confined in a space fourteen feet by twelve feet. His efforts in interceding with the Japanese after the capture of the post undoubtedly saved the lives of many of the wounded who were taken prisoner. The citation which accompanied the award of the Military Cross to Captain Laite closes with the words:

In every respect this good man possessed the finest qualities of his Corps and cannot be too highly commended for his courage and selfless devotion to duty.

(Honours and Awards, "C" Force, Citation, H/Captain U. Laite)

199. As with the C.C.S., the R.C.A.M.C. story of the Hong Kong operations is one in which officers play the principal part. R.C.A.M.C. personnel who accompanied "C" Force to Hong Kong consisted, as requested by the War Office, of four medical officers and two nursing sisters (see para 12). From the report of the senior Canadian medical officer, Major J.N.B. Crawford, it would appear that there was a divergence between this British request and the requirements expressed by the Hong Kong medical authorities.

The medical people, the "M" Branch, had been asked what they wanted. They had requested the two medical officers who would remain connected with their two regiments, plus a number of male nursing orderlies. That is all they wanted. They did not want any equipment at all, and they did not want any additional officers...We landed in with four medical officers and two sisters.

(Force "C", Reports of Medical Officers, Major J.N.B. Crawford, 8 Nov 45)

200. There were two military hospitals in the Colony, the British Military Hospital at Bowen Road, in Victoria, and the Combined Military Hospital in Kowloon (for Indian troops and for European troops suffering from infectious diseases). Plans were complete, in the event of war, to open emergency hospitals at St. Stephen's College in the Stanley Peninsula, and at St. Albert's Convent and the Hong Kong Hotel in Victoria, to serve as annexes to the Bowen Road institution. On arrival in Hong Kong two medical officers (Major J.N.B. Crawford and Capt C.M. Banfill) remained for a time at Sham Shui Po Barracks attached to the two battalions with which they had served; one (Capt G.C. Gray) went to the Combined Military Hospital; the remaining officer (Capt J.A.G. Reid) and the two nursing sisters were posted to Bowen Road (Ibid).

201. Medical arrangements in the field were carried out by the Hong Kong Field Ambulance (which in peace time was the Medical Company of H.K.V.D.C.). Its work was to clear all casualties from the line back to the regular and emergency hospitals. The Field Ambulance was organized on an area basis into a Headquarters Company and some twenty or thirty sections, or medical positions, which were located in shelters in various parts of the Island. The task of these sections was to bring back casualties from the pill boxes and other front line positions to the medical shelters, where they would receive attention before being evacuated to hospital in ambulance cars under the control of H.Q. Coy.

202. Early in December the A.D.M.S. posted Major Crawford to the Field Ambulance as Second-in-Command. On the outbreak of hostilities, in order that Canadian troops might have a Canadian medical officer in each of their areas without the pre-arranged organization being disturbed, Captain Reid was sent to the Aberdeen Reservoir position of "C" Coy Wpg Gren, and Captain Banfill established a small first aid post with two medical orderlies of R.R.C. at Lye Mun Barracks. Captain Gray continued to serve in the Bowen Road Military Hospital. Captain Reid remained with the Wpg Gren company until Christmas Eve (Force "C", Reports of Medical Officers, Captain J.A.G. Reid, 31 Oct 45).

203. On 13 Dec, when Lye Mun Barracks had been evacuated because of the increasing bombardment from the Mainland, Captain Banfill moved to the outskirts of Sau Ki Wan, where he established a medical centre in the Silesian Mission (265533), a building which housed the Central Medical Stores of China Command. The building also contained a Civilian Aid Post organized for the Sau Ki Wan area. The position was one of the first to be taken by the Japanese. It was occupied early on the morning of 19 Dec. All R.A.M.C. and civilian male personnel were shot or otherwise killed, including the Canadian medical orderlies. Captain Banfill alone survived. (Ibid, Captain C.M. Banfill, November 1945)

They kept Banfill alive because he was an officer and was going to be useful to them in pointing out the positions of land mines, and they dragged him barefoot up hill and down dale for two days with his hands tied behind him and a rope around his neck, stopping every few hours.

(Ibid, Major J.N.B. Crawford, op cit)^z

204. From the evening of 19 Dec, by which time Japanese penetration had cut the Island in two, Canadian casualties in the R.R.C. area were being evacuated to St. Stephen's Hospital, which was British staffed (see para 197). It soon became necessary to increase hospital facilities on the west side of the Island. By the 22nd two more civilian hospitals (Queen Mary Hospital and the War Memorial Hospital) were pressed into service. Headquarters of the Hong Kong Field Ambulance moved three times, as the Japanese made deeper inroads into the northern sector. Its final location was at the War Memorial Hospital on the north slope of Mt. Kellet. By this time, as may be readily understood, administrative control of the Canadian medical officers by this headquarters had virtually ceased (Ibid, Major J.N.B. Crawford, op cit).

^z Captain Banfill's report gives a detailed account of his experience at the hands of the Japanese in the Mt. Parker - Wong Nei Chong area on 19-20 Dec. During the night 19/20 Dec he was held at the Wong Nei Chong Police Station with a group of Canadians captured on Mt. Parker.

Wong Nei Chong was occupied by a concentration of Japanese troops... I was there and there was certainly a Battalion and there may have been a Brigade.

(Force "C" Reports of Medical Officers, Captain C.M. Banfill)

205. Personnel of the R.C.A.S.C. detachment on the establishment of "C" Force Brigade Headquarters, which included the Supply Section and the M.T. Section, were attached for all purposes to No. 12 Company R.A.S.C. shortly after their arrival at Hong Kong. Supply personnel (four other ranks) worked at the Queen Street Depot in Victoria until its evacuation on 9 Dec because of bombing (see para 106). For the next ten days from the new location of the Supply Depot at Deep Water Bay (219500) rations were issued to a total of 59 units on the Island with a combined ration strength of 8639 ("C" Force H.Q. Report, Supply Section R.C.A.S.C. p. 1).

206. After the withdrawal from the Mainland the small staff worked long hours daily under almost continual artillery fire and frequent bombings. On 19 Dec, the morning after the enemy landings on the Island, the Deep Water Bay Supply Depot was evacuated, with an estimated 80 tons of food being left behind (Ibid, p. 2). The Supply Depot was re-established at Pok Fu Lam, and for the next three days units in the west half of the Island drew their rations here. Observation by enemy planes was followed by a series of air raids which considerably damaged the roads in the immediate area, thereby increasing the difficulties that attended the movement of supplies. A third move was made on the night of 22/23 Dec, when some 200 tons of food supplies were transferred to Hong Kong University. This proved to be the Supply Depot's final location, and it was here that the surrender took place on Christmas Day (Ibid, p. 3).

207. The M.T. Section, R.C.A.S.C., comprising one officer (Capt H.W. Hickey) and eleven O.Rs. (with two R.C.O.C. personnel attached), worked at general R.A.S.C. duties from 16 Nov until 8 Dec, awaiting the arrival of the Canadian vehicles. On the commencement of hostilities all mobile equipment and transport was moved to the Hong Kong Hotel Garage and Happy Valley Race Track in accordance with pre-arranged plans. The Garage was used as a heavy repair shop and the Race Track became the headquarters of the Vehicle Control Centre. The R.C.A.S.C. officer was placed in charge of a Heavy Workshop unit at Shouson Hill, near Little Hong Kong. On 19 Dec enemy movements forced the evacuation of these three locations, and the workshops, and later the V.C.C., were re-established at Stone Manor, in the Pok Fu Lam area. On the morning of 23 Dec all personnel and services were removed to Hong Kong University, where work was continued until the capitulation. Among the casualties suffered by the R.C.A.S.C. Section was the O.I.C., Captain Hickey. He had been taken to St. Stephen's Hospital, when wounded in the arm, and was killed by the enemy when they overran the hospital early on Christmas morning ("C" Force H.Q. Report, M.T. Section R.C.A.S.C., pp 1, 2; see also "C" Force Chaplains' Reports, H/Captain J. Barnett, p. 3).

208. Special significance attaches itself to the work of the Vehicle Control Centre in view of the arrival of "C" Force at Hong Kong without any mechanical transport. The lack of vehicles with the battalions meant that many of the carrying duties normally performed by unit transport had to be assumed by the central Pool (see para 106). As soon as war broke out trucks and cars were collected by the V.C.C. from civilian contractors and auxiliary workers, and by the evening of the first day more than 100 vehicles had been supplied. Subsequently, a large number of commercial vehicles were acquired, as new trucks were requisitioned from automobile agencies in Kowloon and Victoria, and taxicabs were commandeered from local garages ("C" Force H.Q. Report, V.C.C., p. 1). To operate these vehicles the V.C.C. had a small staff of R.A.S.C. and R.C.A.S.C. drivers, supplemented by a few trained personnel supplied from other units, but in the majority of cases it was necessary to use Chinese drivers. As was to be expected these Chinese civilians showed little enthusiasm for their work when exposed to bombing, shelling, sniping or other forms of enemy attack. There were numerous cases of native drivers deserting and taking their vehicle keys with them ("C" Force H.Q. Report, p. 9. See also para 112).

209. A considerable number of vehicles were put out of order by saboteurs.

The first signs of sabotage discovered. Chinese fifth columnists disabled approximately 40 vehicles by damaging batteries, etc.

(Ibid, V.C.C. Report, p. 1)

Approximately 1900 hours (18 Dec) three passenger vehicles in open Brigade shelters caught fire, and after about three quarters of an hour of fire fighting the fires were extinguished...Fifteen minutes later two other cars caught fire...This appeared to be the work of fifth columnists, and completely gutted five cars.

("C" Force H.Q. Report, p. 9)

Twenty taxicabs were taken over from the Reliance Motors (on 18 Dec), and out of the twenty, due to sabotage, only six were successfully repaired for service.

(Ibid, V.C.C. Report, p. 2)

210. In addition to receiving a certain amount of aid in their transportation problems from the V.C.C., the two Canadian battalions were each issued with six civilian trucks to carry on normal transport work. These were driven by Chinese, as up to the outbreak of war the local civil authorities refused to issue operator's licenses to the qualified drivers in the Canadian units (HQC 5393-13, Report on Transport Operations at Hong Kong, Lieut R.W. Queen-Hughes, Transport Officer, 1 Bn Wpg Gren, 11 Feb 46, p. 1). When the war broke out additional vehicles were commandeered from the streets of Kowloon in order that regimental stores could be transported from Sham Shui Po Barracks to the Island (Ibid, and HQC 5393-13, Report on Transport, Capt W.A.B. Royal, Transport Officer, R.R.C., 8 Jan 46). When Chinese drivers deserted, these vehicles were manned by qualified unit personnel. While R.R.C. never had more than twelve trucks at one time (Capt W.A.B. Royal's Report, op cit), Wpg Gren fared slightly better.

From that point (9 Dec 41) on until 20 Dec (on that date the Transport Section was converted into a fighting platoon), I was able to provide an efficient transport service on the west end of the Island. From Battalion H.Q. I operated over 30 vehicles. We supplied six lorries with drivers to the Civilian Food Control for moving stores for the benefit of the civilian population. In addition to regular battalion transport we provided all of the emergency transport for West Brigade.

(Lieut Queen-Hughes' Report, op cit, p. 2)

211. The battalions were considerably less successful in obtaining substitutes for their missing carriers. Shortly after the arrival in Hong Kong arrangements were made for 2 R.S. to supply one carrier to each of the two Canadian units for training purposes. (At that time it was not realized that Canadian vehicles would not be forthcoming.) A considerable amount of repair work was done on both these vehicles, and they were retained by the Canadian battalions when fighting started (Ibid, and HQC 5393-13, Major T.G. MacAuley, O.C. H.Q. Coy, R.R.C., to Major Nicholson, 5 Jan 46). The Wpg Gren carrier was used "during the assault against Wong Nei Chong Gap" (HQC 5393-13, Major E. Hodgkinson, O.C. H.Q. Coy Wpg Gren, to Major Nicholson, 21 Feb 46). In the R.R.C. field of operations the carrier supplied by 2 R.S. was placed, with a R.R.C. crew, under command of an officer of H.K.V.D.C. (Lieut Edwards), who was in charge of two other carriers (see para 105). The carriers performed useful service in the action near Tai Tam Crossroads on 21 Dec (see para 124), but later on the same day the two H.K.V.D.C. carriers were knocked out at Repulse Bay (Interview with Major C.A. Young, O.C. "A" Coy, R.R.C., 22 Mar 45). The R.R.C. carrier continued to operate with the battalion until capitulation (Major T.G. MacAuley, op cit).

212. It is in the light of these reports of participants in the Hong Kong operations that the conclusion regarding mechanical transport reached in the Duff Report must be examined. While, as previously stated, the provision of a full scale of vehicles to "C" Force might have done little to change the final outcome (see para 43), there can be little doubt that the effectiveness of the resistance against the enemy was somewhat hampered by the handicap thus imposed upon the Canadian units. The absence of carriers was perhaps the loss keenly felt, as the Hong Kong terrain was such as generally to restrict movement by any kind of armoured vehicle to the roads, where opportunities for employment were necessarily limited (Ibid). But the situation with regard to transport vehicles was a different matter. With so widespread an area to be covered by the companies of each battalion, it was frequently necessary to move men quickly over comparatively long distances. In the existing circumstances this had more often than not to be done on foot. "Marching men up and down hilly roads was a fatiguing process, and too often the troops arrived at their destination in no fit condition to hurry into action (Interview with Lt-Col J.H. Price, O.C., R.R.C., 22 Mar 46).

CANADIANS IN JAPANESE HANDS, 1941-45

213. For the first month following the capitulation the Canadian force was divided. Wpg Gren and "C" Force H.Q. were at Sham Shui Po Camp (see para 189). R.R.C. personnel were interned with a large number of British troops at North Point Camp (23Q55Q), -- a camp built by the Hong Kong Government in 1939 to house Chinese refugees who were flocking to the Colony after the occupation of Canton by the Japanese (Report of Conditions Affecting Canadian Prisoners of War at Hong Kong, p. 8). At the end of January 1942 the Canadian and all Naval personnel were moved from Sham Shui Po to North Point, and all British and Indian troops and the H.K.V.D.C. went from North Point to Sham Shui Po (Ibid, p. 2). The transfer of Naval personnel to Sham Shui Po in April left North Point a purely Canadian camp, with the exception of the crew of a Dutch submarine who remained with the Canadians until about a year later, when they were sent on draft to Japan. North Point was closed on 26 Sep 42, and the Canadians moved across to join the British at Sham Shui Po ("C" Force Chaplains' Reports, H/Capt F.J. DeLoughery, p. 5).

214. In August 1943 twenty senior Canadian officers were moved to Argyle Street in Kowloon, to a camp which had originally been built to hold soldiers from the Chinese Army, interned upon entering the then neutral Colony. The condition of independent Canadian command which had existed from the beginning of the period of internment came to an end. Canadian officers were separated from their men, who were placed in groups under N.C.Os. and came directly under the orders of a British Liaison Officer* (Report of Conditions, op cit, p. 4). Four drafts of Canadian prisoners of war were sent from Sham Shui Po to Japan. The dates of their departures and the numbers involved were as follows: 19 Jan 43, one officer (Capt J.A.G. Reid, R.C.A.M.C.) and 662 men; 15 Aug 43, 376 other ranks; 15 Dec 43, 98 O.Rs; 29 Apr 44, 47 O.Rs. These personnel were taken to a number of centres in Japan where they were employed in various industries, chiefly mining (Notes on Atrocities in Japanese Prison Camps, War Crimes Investigation Section, 8 Jan 46, p. 3). There were no Canadians on the ill-fated "Lisbon Maru" draft of September 1942, when over 800 prisoners of war were lost as a result of submarine activity and Japanese barbarity (Report of Conditions, op cit, p. 28).

215. Canadian officers returned to Sham Shui Po from Argyle Street in May 1944, but were kept in a specially partitioned section of the camp which segregated them from any contact with their men (H/Capt DeLoughery's Report, op cit, p. 10). There were no further moves of the Canadian prisoners. On 16 Aug 45, as word came of the cessation of hostilities, the Japanese authorities were requested by the Officers' Camp Executive to hand over Internal Camp

* This Liaison Officer, Maj Cecil Boon, R.A.S.C., was court-martialled and acquitted in London in August and September 1946 on charges of having voluntarily aided the Japanese while a prisoner of war in Sham Shui Po Camp (The Times, 29 Aug to 21 Sep 46).

Administration. This request was complied with, and the next day the senior British officer took over administration of all prisoner-of-war camps in the Hong Kong area, as the Union Jack was raised over Sham Shui Po. On 30 Aug a relieving British fleet arrived. With it was H.M.C.S. "Prince Robert", and the first officer to enter the camp was a Canadian naval commander. The Canadians remained at Sham Shui Po until 9 Sep 45 when they embarked on the S.S. "Empress of Australia" for evacuation to Manila, en route for home (Report of Conditions, p. 7; see also Appx "G").

216. The story of the three years and eight months spent by the Canadians in Japanese prisoner of war camps lies outside the scope of the present report. Valuable material concerning this phase of the history of "C" Force has been recorded in reports compiled by surviving individual, and committees of, Canadian officers. These include a 66-page documents, Report of Conditions Affecting Canadian Prisoners of War at Hong Kong, which was compiled in Sham Shui Po Camp by a committee of officers appointed for the purpose by Lt-Col W.J. Home, the senior surviving Canadian officer. In addition, the reports of the Chaplains attached to "C" Force contain much information with regard to living conditions and activities in the prison camps ("C" Force Chaplains' Reports, op cit). The reports prepared by the medical officers of "C" Force deal at length with the technical aspects of the Canadian incarceration, and furnish a comprehensive picture of the adverse conditions of diet and sanitation with which Canadians had to contend (see Interviews with Medical Officers of "C" Force, Lt-Col C.A.R. Gordon, Medical Historian). Of particular value for its account of conditions in Japan is Capt Reid's Report, as he was the only Canadian officer to be transferred to a prisoner of war camp in the Japanese homeland.

CASUALTIES

217. At the time of writing this preliminary report (November 1946) final tabulations have not been prepared covering casualties incurred by "C" Force personnel. The difficulty, in several instances, of obtaining confirmation and place of casualty will be appreciated (HQ 54-27-22-3 (DR4), Director of Records to D.H.S., 26 Jan 46). The statement of casualties appended to this report (see Appx "H") is therefore subject to amendment. It is correct to 31 Jul 46. Schedule I of the appendix deals with the numbers of those who died by enemy action and as prisoners of war. The only figures available regarding wounded personnel are given in Schedule II.

These statements show that of the 1973 all ranks of "C" Force who disembarked at Hong Kong on 16 Nov 41, a total of 27 officers and 530 other ranks failed to return to Canada. Of these, 23 officers and 267 O.Rs. were killed or died of wounds at Hong Kong, including those who were murdered soon after capture and four prisoners shot without trial after attempting to escape. Four officers and 260 other ranks died while prisoners of war (four officers and 124 O.Rs. in Hong Kong, 136 in Japan); two O.Rs. died subsequent to their release - one in Japan, the other en route home. (D.H.S. File 2-8-3, folio 63 amended, Hong Kong Casualties compiled by War Service Records, D.V.A.; H.S. 4 File 593.065 (D2) "Nominal Rolls of P.W. at Camps in Japan and List of Deaths at Hong Kong", amended 3 Oct 50). (H.S. 4 File 593.065(D3) "Stats Hong Kong Casualties" dated 11 Dec 50 amended 16 Dec 50)

In March 1946 announcement was made of royal approval of awards in recognition of gallant and distinguished services in the defence of Hong Kong in 1941". Heading the list was the posthumous award of the Victoria Cross to the heroic Company Sergeant Major of the Wpg Gren (see para 160). The Canadian decorations included two Distinguished Service Orders, seven Military Crosses, two Distinguished Conduct Medals, and twelve Military Medals. Six officers and 23 other ranks were Mentioned in Despatches (see Appx "J"). The citations to many of the Canadian awards show that gallantry displayed upon the field of battle was succeeded by a less spectacular, but none the less meritorious, devotion to duty and spirit of self-sacrifice that were vital factors in maintaining morale during the difficult days of the prison camp.

CONCLUSION

219. It is fitting that the story of "C" Force should end on this note of tribute to the bravery of its representative officers and men. It is true that "virtus non satis", and in many respects the Canadian battalions were ill-prepared for what they had to face at Hong Kong. Despatched to the Far East to serve as garrison troops, at a time when immediate war was apparently considered unlikely (above para 3), they suddenly found themselves plunged into action without having undergone the concentrated and rigorous battle training which was later to fit Canadian troops for operations in Europe. But whatever the state of training might have been there could inevitably be only one conclusion to the operation. Hong Kong was doomed from the moment of the initial Japanese attack. "We lost Hong Kong", wrote the East Infantry Brigade Commander. "Nothing the A.R.C. might have done could have averted that end" (W.D., East Inf Bde, p. 108).

220. The defence of Hong Kong was a part of the wide plan of Empire strategy. As a member of the British Commonwealth the Dominion of Canada was proud to participate in the operation. It is against this broad background that the unfortunate setbacks which culminated in the loss of the Colony must be viewed. Strategical demands elsewhere prevented the provision of sea, air and land forces adequate to hold Hong Kong. The unexpected rapidity with which Japan gained control of Asiatic waters sealed the fate of the isolated outpost. Yet the heroic defence of the Colony, short-lived though it proved to be, was not without value to the Allied cause. In the words of the Garrison Commander:

I submit that although I and my forces may have been a hostage to fortune, we were a detachment that deflected from more important objectives, such as the Philippines, Singapore, or perhaps even Australia, an enemy force that consisted of two first line divisions, one reserve division, Corps artillery, about eighty aircraft and a considerable naval blockade force. Strategically we gambled and lost, but it was a worth while gamble.^x

(Maltby Despatch, p. 4)

221. This report was compiled by Major G.W.L. Nicholson, C.I.C. Major R.J.O. Hamilton, Gen List, contributed to the preliminary account of the organization of "C" Force.

for G.W.L. Nicholson Major
(C.P. Stacey) Colonel
Director Historical Section
Canadian Military Headquarters

^x According to War Office intelligence reports supplied by the Military Attaché, Chungking, Japanese forces mounted for the Hong Kong operation consisted of 18 and 104 Divs, supplemented by 2000 storm troops and artillery organized on an army basis. The whole force seems to have gone under the name of the Twenty-third Army, and was commanded by Lt-Gen Sakai (see para 110). It is estimated that there were one and a half Japanese divisions on Hong Kong Island at the time of the surrender. (Information supplied by Capt. W. Miles, Offices of Cabinet, London, 25 Sep 46)

R E P O R T N O . 1 6 3

H I S T O R I C A L S E C T I O N

C A N A D I A N M I L I T A R Y H E A D Q U A R T E R S

C A N A D I A N P A R T I C I P A T I O N I N T H E D E F E N C E O F H O N G K O N G , D E C E M B E R , 1 9 4 1

A P P E N D I C E S

WG. 442/4.

Copy on C.M.H.Q. file 3/Cdn Ops/1

CYPHER TELEGRAM

FROM DOMINIONS OFFICE

To the Government of

CANADA

Sent 6.36 p.m. 19th September, 1941.

No. 162 MOST SECRET

In consultation with late General Officer Commanding who has recently arrived in this country we have been considering the defences of Hong Kong. Approved policy has been that Hong Kong should be regarded as an out-post and held as long as possible in the event of war in the Far East. Existing army garrison consists of four battalions of infantry and although this force represents the bare minimum required for the task assigned to it we have thought hitherto that it would not ultimately serve any useful purpose to increase the garrison.

Position in the Far East has now however changed. Our defences in Malaya have been improved and there have been signs of a certain weakening in Japan's attitude towards us and the United States. In these circumstances it is thought that a small re-inforcement of the garrison of Hong Kong, e.g. by one or two more battalions, would be very fully justified. It would increase the strength of the garrison out of all proportion to the actual numbers involved and it would provide a strong stimulus to the garrison and to the Colony, it would further have a very great moral effect in the whole of the Far East and would reassure Chiang Kai Shek as to the reality of our intention to hold the island.

His Majesty's Government in Canada will be well aware of the difficulties we are at present experiencing in providing the forces which the situation in various parts of the world demands, despite the very great assistance which is being furnished by Dominions. We should therefore be most grateful if the Canadian Government would consider whether one or two Canadian battalions could be provided from Canada for this purpose. It is thought that in view of their special position in the North Pacific the Canadian Government would in any case have wished to be informed of the need, as we see it, for the re-inforcement of Hong Kong and the special value of such a measure, even though on a very limited scale, at the present time. It may also be mentioned that the United States have recently despatched a small re-inforcement to the Philippines. It would be of the greatest help if the Canadian Government could co-operate with us in the manner suggested and we much hope that they will feel able to do so.

If the Canadian Government agree in principle to send one or two battalions we should propose to communicate with you again as to the best time for their despatch having regard to the general political situation in the Far East.

Copy to:-

Dominions Office

Secretary of State

Sir E. Machtig

Mr. Holmes

Major Withington

Cabinet Office

Offices of the

War Cabinet

Colonel Hollis

HEADQUARTERS FORCE "C"

War Establishment -- Personnel

(Condensed from Cdn IV/1940/175/1)

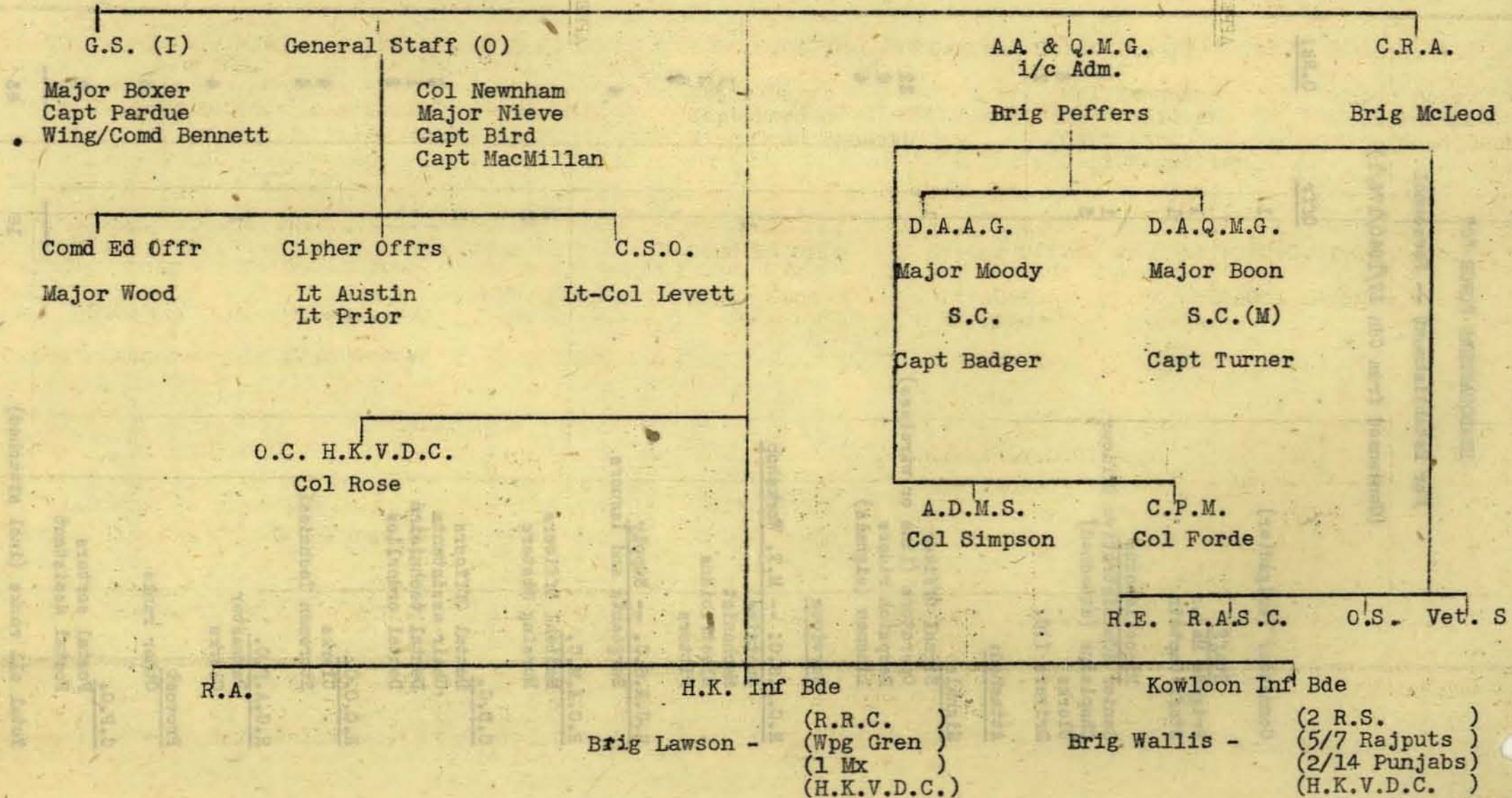
	<u>Offr</u>	<u>O.Rs.</u>	<u>Total</u>
Commander (brigadier)	1		1
<u>Staff</u>			
Brigade Major	1		1
Staff Captain	1		1
<u>Miscellaneous</u>			
Senior Administrative Officer	1		1
Chaplains (attached)	3		3
Clerks		6	6
Drivers I.C.		2	2
<u>Attached:</u>			
<u>Signals</u>			
Signal Officer	1		1
Operators (line or wireless)		22	22
Despatch riders		6	6
Linemen (signals)		4	4
<u>Services</u>			
<u>R.C.A.S.C. -- M.T. Workshop</u>			
Captains	1		1
Mechanist		1	1
Electricians		2	2
Fitters		8	8
<u>R.C.A.S.C. -- Supply</u>			
Sergeants and Issuers		4	4
<u>R.C.A.M.C.</u>			
Medical Officers	2		2
Nursing Sisters	2		2
<u>C.D.C.</u>			
Dental Officers	2		2
Chair assistants		2	2
Dental technician		1	1
Dental orderlies		2	2
<u>R.C.O.C.</u>			
Clerks		4	4
Storemen Technical		4	4
<u>R.C.A.P.C.</u>			
Paymaster	1		1
Clerks		4	4
<u>Provost</u>			
Other ranks		8	8
<u>C.P.C.</u>			
Postal sorters		2	2
Postal assistant		1	1
Total all ranks (incl attached)	16	83	99

("C" Force Report, 13 Oct -
7 Dec 41, p. 19A.)

OUTLINE OF CHINA COMMAND H.Q.

Comd in Chief & Governor of Colony - Sir Mark Young

G.O.C. - Maj-Gen Maltby M.C.



STRENGTHS OF ALL SERVICES IN HONG KONG GARRISON

(As shown in "C" Force Report, 13 Oct - 7 Dec 41, p. 23)

	<u>British</u>	<u>Indian</u>	<u>Chinese</u>	<u>Total</u>
H.Q. China Comd	26			26
H.Q. R.A.	13			13
Fin Advisor 2 Ech Gen List	10			10
8 Coast Regt R.A.	313	233	38	584
12 Coast Regt R.A.	217	188	44	449
5 A.I.A. Regt R.A.	267	332	111	710
1 H.K. Regt H.K.S.R.A.	44	900		944
965 Def Bty R.A.	59	98	12	169
22 Fortress Coy R.E.	221		72	293
40 Fortress Coy R.E.	128		147	275
R.E. Services	73			73
2 R.I.S.	768			768
1 Mx	763			763
R.C. Sigs	184			184
H.Q. "C" Force	103			103
Cdn N/S	2			2
R.R.C.	958			958
Wpg Gren	911			911
5/7 Rajputs	10	975		985
2/14 Punjabs	15	1022		1037
H.K. Mule Corps	3	256		259
H.K.V.D.C.*	1690			1690
R.A.F.	87			87
Army N/S	122			122
R.N., R.N.R., R.M.) D.D.C., H.K.R.N.V.R.)*	1294	330		1624
Naval N/S	11			11
R.A.O.C.	137			137
R.A.S.C.	211			211
R.A.V.C.	5			5
R.A.M.C.	185			185
A. Dental C.	10			10
R.A.P.C.	32			32
R.A. Ch. Dep.	6			6
Indian Med Services	6			6
Military Provost Staff Corps	2			2
C.M.P.	18			18
A.E.C.	8			8
St. John's Amb Bde.	6		176	182
Army Physical Training Corps	1			1
Indian Med Dept		11		11
Indian Hosp Corps		44		44
R.I.A.S.C.		13		13
H.K. Chinese R.			55	55
Chinese Servants			5	5
	<u>8919</u>	<u>4402</u>	<u>660</u>	<u>13981</u>

* It should be noted, however, that the H.K.V.D.C. and the H.K.R.N.V.R. included a large number of Chinese and other non-British personnel. Of the total strength shown above, it is estimated by the G.O.C. China Command, that a maximum of 11,000 were "fighting troops" (Notes on Interview, Maj-Gen C.M. Maltby, at C.M.H.Q., 25 Jun 46).

COPY OF PROPAGANDA LEAFLETS DROPPED BY THE
JAPANESE OVER HONG KONG

You British Nationals!

Be awakened immediately to the actual situation of the world!

Millions of Imperial Troops are already advanced to India, and the Rising Sun Flags are already flying in such major cities of the Far East as Manila, Batavia, Bangkok, Singapore, Rangoon, etc. The cry for co-prosperity is raised all over the whole of those areas. In Europe the German Army has occupied Moscow the Red capital, its violent attacks threatening to extend to the Ural regions. London the British capital is in a most perilous situation. The American Pacific Fleet, which has been leading the camp of democracies, has been heavily damaged by the Japanese Navy and is now solely devoted to the defence of its own country. You British officers and men who are encamped in Hongkong and Kowloon! Stop continuing to offer futile resistance within the narrowly limited areas without the knowledge of the changed international situation. Your strategic establishments are sure to collapse before the serious attacks by the Imperial Army. You panic-stricken citizens on the solitary island in helpless isolation!

In order to save Kowloon and Hongkong from the scene of mutual slaughter of human lives and also to avoid the loss of your fathers, husbands and children as well as your properties, bring pressure upon the government authorities to deliver Hongkong and Kowloon without bloodshed and resistance. We firmly believe you will choose this wise measure without fail.

SHOULD YOU DESTROY THE IMPORTANT ESTABLISHMENTS AND MATERIALS IN HONGKONG AND KOWLOON IN ORDER TO PREVENT THEIR UTILIZATION BY THE IMPERIAL ARMY, AFTER THEIR OCCUPATION THE JAPANESE ARMY WILL SURELY ANNIHILATE ALL BRITISH NATIONALS IN RETALIATION.

To all Chinese emigrants in Hongkong

Commander of the Japanese Army

Now the Japanese Army tightly sieged Hongkong where you live and where you accumulate your wealth, and the occupation of Hongkong by the Japanese Army close at hand. But what the Japanese Army long for is not the destructions of your lives and properties or of Hongkong but the destruction of the influence of English.

But if you let the English to resist in vain being used as their tool and run away giving up your house and property, all your properties will be robbed by the mob and the White, and still more the Japanese Army also will be forced to **destroy** your lives with the Hongkong Island. You should trust to the faith of the Japanese Army and let the English surrender to the Japanese Army giving up their resistances, and wait for the Japanese Army protecting your properties by your own hands. When reached, the Japanese Army would assure you of your lives and properties moreover would assert to help your prosperities in future.

WAR OFFICE APPRECIATION OF HONG KONG SITUATION 15 DEC 41
(HOMS 8902, Tel GS 2877, Camilitary to Defensor, 15 Dec 41)

MOST SECRET

LONDON 15TH DECEMBER, 1941.

G.S.2877

REQUEST STRICTLY LIMITED CIRCULATION.

MAJOR GENERAL KENNEDY DMO AND P HAS OUTLINED HONG KONG SITUATION AS FOLLOWS:

SEVERE INITIAL SET BACK TO BOTH NAVAL AND AIR FORCES ALLOWS JAPANESE FREEDOM OF ACTION FOR THE MOMENT IN WHOLE OF FAR EAST. INITIAL DISPOSITIONS OF TROOPS WERE CONSIDERED INADEQUATE FOR WAR WITH JAPAN BUT COULD NOT BE INCREASED WITHOUT SERIOUS REDUCTION OF EFFORT IN MIDDLE EAST POSSIBLY LEADING TO CANCELLATION OF THAT CAMPAIGN. REINFORCEMENT OF HONG KONG AND DESPATCH OF PRINCE OF WALES AND REPULSE TO SINGAPORE WERE INTENDED TO BE DETERRENTS ONLY AND WERE NOT EXPECTED TO BRING TOTAL FORCES UP TO SIZE REQUIRED FOR OPERATIONS. HONG KONG HAS ALWAYS BEEN REGARDED AS AN OUTPOST WHOSE RETENTION HAD BOTH MILITARY AND POLITICAL SIGNIFICANCE. FROM STRICTLY MILITARY POINT OF VIEW VALUE OF RETENTION DEPENDED ON BEING ABLE TO RELIEVE IT WITHIN REASONABLE TIME AND THEN USE AS ADVANCED BASE FOR FURTHER OPERATIONS. YOU WILL APPRECIATE POLITICAL SIGNIFICANCE WITHOUT FURTHER COMMENT. DECISION WAS TAKEN THEREFORE THAT HONG KONG SHOULD BE HELD AND IF RELIEF SHOULD PROVE IMPOSSIBLE GARRISON WAS TO INFLICT MAXIMUM DAMAGE ON JAPANESE. PRESENT GARRISON IS OF STRENGTH CONSIDERED PROPER TO HOLD ISLAND ONLY AND SHOULD BE CAPABLE OF PROLONGED RESISTANCE. AS STATED MY G S 2868 RESERVES FOR 130 DAYS ARE AVAILABLE AND MOST SERIOUS WEAKNESS OF SITUATION IS PRESENCE OF 750,000 CHINESE IN CITY OF VICTORIA. POSSIBILITY OF EARLY RELIEF CONSIDERED REMOTE SINCE SITUATION IN MALAYA EXPECTED TO DETERIORATE SERIOUSLY RATHER THAN IMPROVE. GENERAL KENNEDY EMPHASIZED JAPANESE FREEDOM OF ACTION IN WHOLE AREA WHICH PERMITS THEM TO REINFORCE ANY PARTICULAR OPERATION AT WILL. THIS ADMITTED TO BE PURPOSELY GLOOMY VIEW OF WHAT IS UNDOUBTEDLY SERIOUS SITUATION BUT KENNEDY EMPHASIZED FACT THAT SITUATION COULD ONLY BE IMPROVED BY MAKING AVAILABLE THE NAVAL AND AIR FORCES REQUIRED FOR ADVANCE FROM SINGAPORE AND IT IS UNLIKELY THESE CAN BE PROVIDED.

CAMILITRY

CALENDAR OF EVENTS 25 DEC 41 - 30 AUG 45

(Report of Conditions Affecting Canadian Prisoners of War at HONG KONG, p. 25)

1941

- Dec. 25 All troops in Victoria surrender at 1600 hours.
 25 All troops at Stanley Fort surrender at 2045 hours.
 30 30 Canadian Officers and 555 O.Rs. are transferred from Stanley Fort to North Point P.O.W. Camp
 19 Canadian Officers and 586 O.Rs. are transferred from Victoria to Sham Shui Po P.O.W. Camp.

1942

- Jan. 23 23 Canadian Officers and 590 O.Rs. are transferred from Sham Shui Po Camp to North Point.
 25 3 Canadian Officers and 65 O.Rs. are transferred from Argyle Street Camp to North Point Camp.
 Feb. 1 North Point Camp strength: 62 Canadian Officers and 1410 O.Rs.
 Bowen Road Hospital strength: 200 Canadian all ranks.
 8 First copy of "Hong Kong News" received.
 Mar. 11 First Canteen is brought in.
 Apr. 3 Officers receive their first pay.
 18 Navy personnel transferred from North Point Camp, which now becomes an all-Canadian Camp.
 77 Canadian O.Rs. are transferred from Sham Shui Po Camp to North Point Camp.
 May 17 First Canadian P.O.W. radio broadcast recorded.
 Jun. 1 Camp garden started.
 3 First mail (550 letters) despatched.
 15 Outside working parties start.
 Aug. 20 Four Canadian O.Rs. escape from Camp.
 26 All personnel parade in the rain during an all-night muster parade.
 Sep. 26 58 Canadian Officers and 1373 O.Rs. are transferred from North Point Camp to Sham Shui Po Camp.
 Oct. 27 A few Canadian Red Cross messages received.
 29 Red Cross bulk supplies first issued.
 Nov. 29 One Red Cross parcel per man issued.
 Dec. 20 Working parties suspended.
 25 Each Canadian receives Y10.00 from Canadian Government.

1943

- Jan. 10 Canadian Camp strength: 63 officers and 1360 O.Rs.
 19 Draft of 1 Canadian M.O. and 662 O.Rs. to Japan.
 Feb. 13 Second Red Cross parcel issued.
 Mar. 20 First large Canadian mail released.
 Apr. 10 Working parties start again.
 29 Third Red Cross parcel issued.
 May 18 Canadian Red Cross Padre transferred to Argyle Street Officers Camp.
 Jul. 1 Sgt. Routledge, R.C.C.S., taken out of Camp by Japanese Gendarmerie.
 Aug. 15 Draft of 376 Canadian O.Rs. to Japan.
 19 17 Canadian Senior Officers are transferred to Argyle Street Officers Camp.
 Sep. 1 Officers net pay increased.
 14 All-day search of Camp by Japanese.
 Dec. 15 Draft of 98 Canadian O.Rs. to Japan.

1944

- Jan. 15 Canadian Camp strength: 48 Officers and 284 O.Rs.
Apr. 29 Draft of 47 Canadian O.Rs. to Japan.
May 4 All officers from Argyle Street Camp transferred to especially partitioned section of Sham Shui Po Camp.
Aug. 26 Canadian Red Cross parcels issued: 3 2/3 parcels per man.

1945

- Jan. 29 71 Canadian O.Rs. leave on special working party to Hong Kong.
Feb. 19 Canadian Camp strength (O.Rs. Section): 49 Officers and 268 O.Rs.
Mar. 3 1 2/3 British Red Cross parcels issued to each man.
23 Bowen Road Hospital patients all transferred to Sham Shui Po Camp. This included 37 Canadian O.Rs.
Apr. 10 34 Canadian O.Rs. transferred to new C.B.S. Hospital in Kowloon.
38 Canadian Officers transferred to Officers section of Camp.
May 8 News of German surrender received.
Jun. 1 "Hong Kong News" stopped by orders from Tokyo.
Aug. 7 News received of use of the "atomic bomb".
9 News received of entry of Russia into war in Far East.
11 First rumours received of Japan's capitulation.
16 Japanese requested by Officer's Camp Executive to clarify the situation and hand over Internal Camp Administration.
17 Senior British P.O.W. Officer takes over administration of all P.O.W. Camps in district.
Union Jack raised over Sham Shui Po.
30 Relieving Forces first appear at Camp.

CASUALTIES "C" FORCE

APPENDIX "H"

Schedule I Statement of fatal casualties from all causes. Compiled from comparison of lists supplied by Director of Records, H.Q., 54-27-22-3 (DR 4), 26 Jan 46 and "C" Force Nominal Rolls of Casualties submitted by Lt-Col W.J. Home.

	<u>(Supplied by Records)</u>				<u>(Supplied by Lt-Col Home)</u>		<u>Difference</u>		<u>Total</u>	
	Deaths by enemy action at Hong Kong		Deaths other than enemy action while PW		Died at Hong Kong while PW		Presumed died in Japan while PW			
	Offrs	O.Rs.	Offrs	O.Rs.	Offrs	O.Rs.	Offrs	O.Rs.	Offrs	O.Rs.
Bde HQ	4	16	-	13	-	9	-	4	4	29
Wpg Gren	12	128	4	119	4	57	-	62	16	247
R.R.C.	7	123	-	129	-	59	-	70	7	252
TOTALS	23	267	4	261	4	125	-	136	27	528

CASUALTIES "C" FORCE (Contd)

Schedule II Statement of wounded casualties. (Information supplied by Director of Records, H.Q. 54-27-22-3 (DHS-1) D. 4 Nov 46). Amdt 9 Oct 50; same basis as amdt to Schedule I.

	Lieu of Wounds or Battle Injuries (Not PsW)		Died of Wounds or Battle Injuries received at time of capture (PsW)		Wounded PsW escaped or liberated	
	Offrs	O.Rs	Offrs	O.Rs	Offrs	O.Rs
Bde HQ	1	3	-	-	3	12
Wpg Gren	-	6	1	3	2	-
R.R.C.	-	12	-	2	1	4
TOTALS	1	21	1	5	6	16

SUMMARY

	Offrs	O.Rs	All Ranks
Total fatal battle casualties not PsW	22	258	280
Total fatal battle casualties whilst PsW	1	9	10
Total fatal ordinary casualties whilst PsW	4	260	264
Total PsW liberated or escaped Died after liberation	69	1347 2	1416 2
Total Hong Kong Casualties	96	1876	1972

CASUALTIES "C" FORCE

APPENDIX "H"

Schedule I Statement of fatal casualties from all causes. Compiled from comparison of lists supplied by Director of Records, H.Q. 54-27-22-3 (DR 4), 26 Jan 46 and "C" Force Nominal Rolls of Casualties submitted by Lt-Col W.J. Home.

Amendment - 9 Oct 50: Eased or: D.H.S. File 2-8-3, folio 63 (amended); H.S. 4 File 593.065(D2) "Nominal Rolls of PW at Camps in Japan and List of Deaths at Hong Kong", supplied by Col J.N.B. Crawford; telephone conversation Capt Morrison - E.A. Allan, War Service Records, D.V.A., 9 Oct 50.

	(Supplied by Records)				(Supplied by Lt-Col W.J. Home)		Difference		TOTAL	
	Deaths by enemy action at Hong Kong		Deaths other than enemy action while PW		Died at Hong Kong while PW		Presumed died in Japan while PW			
	Ofirs	O.Rs	Ofirs	O.Rs	Ofirs	O.Rs	Ofirs	O.Rs	Ofirs	O.Rs
Bde HQ	4	16	-	14	-	9	-	4	4	30
Wpg Gren	12	128	4	117	4	57	-	62	16	245
R.R.C.	7	123	-	129	-	58	-	70	7	252
TOTALS	23	267	4	260	4	124	-	136	27	527

CASUALTIES "C" FORCE (Contd)

Schedule II Statement of wounded casualties. (Information supplied by Director of Records,
H.Q. 54-27-22-3 (DHS-1) d. 4 Nov 46)

	Died of Wounds or Battle Injuries (not PsW)		Died of Wounds or Battle Injuries received at time of capture (PsW)		Wounded PsW escaped or liberated	
	Offrs	O.Rs	Offrs	O.Rs	Offrs	O.Rs
Bde HQ	1	3	-	-	3	12
Wpg Gren	-	6	1	3	2	-
R.R.C.	-	13	-	1	1	4
TOTALS	1	22	1	4	6	16

SUMMARY

	Offrs	O.Rs	All Ranks
Total fatal battle casualties not PsW	22	259	281
Total fatal battle casualties whilst PsW	1	8	9
Total fatal ordinary casualties whilst PsW	4	260	264
Total PsW liberated or escaped	69	1349	1418
Total Hong Kong Casualties	96	1876	1972

RESTRICTED

CASUALTIES "C" FORCE

Amendment No. 2 to Appendix "H" of CMHQ Report No. 163, East. Sect., C.M.H.

Amended: Based on D.H.S. File 593, 665 (D3) "Stats Hong Kong Casualties"

dated 11 Dec 59 amended as of 16 Dec 50

	FATAL BATTLE CASUALTIES				FATAL BATTLE CASUALTIES WHILE P.O.W.				FATAL CASUALTIES				FATAL ORDINARY CASUALTIES				TOTAL FATAL CASUALTIES										
	PRESUMED KILLED IN ACTION		KILLED IN ACTION		DIED OF WOUNDS		PRESUMED KILLED WHILE P.O.W.		DIED OF WOUNDS RECEIVED AT TIME OF CAPTURE		DIED OF INJURIES		DIED OF DISEASE WHILE P.O.W.		DIED OF DISEASE ACCIDENTALLY KILLED		DIED OF DISEASE PROCEEDING TO HONG KONG		DIED OF DISEASE IN JAPAN AFTER RELEASE *		DIED OF DISEASE RETURNING TO CANADA AFTER RELEASE *		OFFRS		O.Rs		ALL RANKS
H.Q. "C" FORCE	3	3	10	1	3	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	4	29	33
Wpg. Gren.	2	9	83	6	6	4	4	2	3	0	0	4	114	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	16	248	264
C.R.C.	1	6	73	12	2	0	0	0	2	0	0	123	6	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	7	253	260
TOTALS	3	18	166	1	21	4	4	3	5	0	0	4	249	8	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	27	530	557	

RESTRICTED

CASUALTIES "C" FORCE

Amended: Based on D.H.S. File 593.065 (D3) "Stats Hong Kong Casualties"
dated 11 Dec 50 amended as of 16 Dec 50

Sheet

APPENDIX

	NON FATAL CASUALTIES																	
	NON FATAL BATTLE CASUALTIES				PRISONERS OF WAR										GRAND TOTALS			
	WOUNDED PRIOR TO CAPTURE**		BATTLE INJURY PRIOR TO CAPTURE**		WOUNDED AT TIME OF CAPTURE		UNWOUNDED AT TIME OF CAPTURE		UNWOUNDED AT TIME OF CAPTURE REPATRIATED UNDER GENEVA CONVENTION		TOTAL NON FATAL CASUALTIES							
Oftrs	O.Rs	Oftrs	O.Rs	Oftrs	O.Rs	Oftrs	O.Rs	NURSING SISTERS	O.Rs	Oftrs	N.S.	O.Rs	All Ranks	Oftrs	N.S.	O.Rs	All Ranks	
H.Q. "C" FORCE		4			3	12	3	41	2	1	6	2	58	66	10	2	87	99
Wpg. Gren.	6	158	1	4	3	12	23	615			33		789	822	49		1037	1036
R.R.C.	7	109		3	2	33	33	635			42		780	822	49		1033	1032
TOTALS	13	271	1	7	8	57	59	1291	2	1	81	2	1627	1710	108	2	2157	2267

*Two other ranks who died after release are included in Prisoners of War

**13 Officers and 271 other ranks reported wounded prior to capture and 1 officer and 7 other ranks reported battle injury prior to capture are included in Prisoners of War.

TOTAL HONG KONG FORCE WHICH SAILED FROM CANADA - 1,973.

HONOURS AND AWARDS - "C" FORCE

(Bracketed numbers indicate the paragraph of the preceding Report which refers to the action in which the award was won.)

VICTORIA CROSS

H 6008 W.O.II (C.S.M.) John Robert Osborn, Wpg Gren
(Killed in Action) (160)

DISTINGUISHED SERVICE ORDER

Maj Wells Arnold Bishop, E.D., C.I.C. (123)
Maj Ernest Hodgkinson, C.I.C. (171)

MILITARY CROSS

Capt Frederick Temple Atkinson, C.I.C. (122)
H/Capt Uriah Laite, C.C.S. (198)
Capt Robert William Philip, C.I.C. (167)
Lieut Thomas Alexander Blackwood, C.I.C. (167)
Lieut Collinson Alexander Blaver, C.I.C. (125)
Lieut William Francis Nugent, C.I.C. (186)
Lieut Francis Gavan Power, C.I.C. (139)

DISTINGUISHED CONDUCT MEDAL

F 29812 C.Q.M.S. Colin Alden Standish, C.I.C. (121)
H 6235 Cpl Derek Everard Rix, C.I.C. (164)

MILITARY MEDAL

E 30021 C.Q.M.S. Stanley Walter Wright, C.I.C. (144)
E 30269 Sgt Emile Bernard, C.I.C. (148)
E 30144 Sgt Selden Grant Stoddard, C.I.C. (125)
H 6048 Sgt Cecil Thomas Whalen, C.I.C. (161)
E 21892 L/Sgt Murray Thomas Goodenough, C.I.C. (147)
K 83926 Cpl Lionel Curtis Speller, R.C. Sigs (192)
H 6905 L/Cpl Ronald Edward Atkinson, C.I.C. (164)
H 20683 L/Cpl Meirion Price, C.I.C. (167)
B 24237 L/Cpl John Leslie Varley, C.I.C. (While Prisoner of War)
E 30245 Rfn Ernest Irwin Bennett, C.I.C. (121)
H 6132 Pte William Morris, C.I.C. (167)
H 6436 Pte Gordon Edward Williamson, C.I.C. (167)

MENTIONS IN DESPACHES

Maj Henry William Hook, C.I.C.
Maj Malcolm Thomas Gordon MacAuley, D.C.M., E.D.,
C.I.C.

JAPANESE TACTICS

The following notes on tactics used by the enemy are taken verbatim from Major-General C.M. Maltby's Despatch, Operations at Hong Kong, 8 - 25 Dec 1941 (pp. 5, 6).

The salient points of the Japanese tactics were:-

(a) NIGHTWORK

The division which made the initial advance over the frontier and those troops that first landed on the Island had reached a high standard of efficiency in Nightwork. All were provided with rubber soled boots that made movement very silent, systematically they used the smallest of paths and avoided all the more obvious lines of advance and their patrols were very boldly handled.

(b) RAPIDITY OF ADVANCE

The pace of the advance was surprisingly fast, the troops were lightly equipped and must have been very fit to accomplish the marches undertaken.

(c) AGENTS AND SPIES

It was obvious from all sources that agents and spies had been placed both on the mainland and the Island well beforehand. Spies led the leading elements on the mainland disguised as innocent labourers or coolies. Their patrols advanced by paths which could have been known only to locals or from detailed reconnaissance. Armed agents in Kowloon and Hong Kong systematically fired during the hours of darkness on troops, sentries, cars and despatch riders, but little damage was done thereby beyond straining the nerves of a number of the men. After the landing on the Island had been effected, penetration to cut the Island in half was assisted by local guides who led the columns by most difficult routes. The possession of these agents and guides with such intimate knowledge counteracted the first great advantage the defence normally has over the attack, i.e., familiarity with the ground.

(d) INTELLIGENCE

It was obvious that the enemy system of intelligence was most complete. Marked maps found on dead officers gave a surprising amount of exact detail, which included our defences and much of our wire. Every officer seemed to be in possession of such a map, which was a lithographed reduction of our own 1/20,000 map. They seemed to be in possession of a very full Order of Battle and know the names of most of the senior and commanding officers.

(e) ARTILLERY CONCENTRATION

Artillery and heavy mortar concentrations were very heavy and correctly placed. Those fired before landing on the Island and for the capture of Leighton Hill were as heavy as any experienced in France during the war of 1914-18. The range of the heavy mortar must have been about 1300 yards as they fired across the harbour with accuracy and effect. The blast and noise of the bursting bomb was considerable but the killing power was not high. On occasions artillery fire was most accurate, e.g., all the pill boxes on the north shore where the landing was effected, were systematically destroyed.

(f) MAINTENANCE OF THE OBJECTIVE

This principle seems to have been well understood by their junior leaders. The advance to cut the Island in two was carried out regardless of cost to life.

(g) AIR FORCE

The efficiency of the enemy air force was probably the greatest surprise to me. Their opening attack on Kai Tak aerodrome by low level attack down to 60 feet was carried out with skill and marked boldness. Subsequent high level bombing proved to be most accurate, and they confined their attention to military objectives with marked results, such as the naval base at Aberdeen and the Island water supply mains. Their evasive tactics and use of low cloud displayed a high standard of training. My general impression at the time was that either the Japanese pilots had reached a surprisingly high standard of training, or that German pilots were leading their flights.

MENTIONED IN DESPATCHES (Cont'd)

Lieut William Barker Bradley, C.I.C.
Lieut John Edward Dunderdale, C.I.C.
Lieut James Forsyth Ross, C.I.C. (Killed in Action)
Lieut Arthur Beresford Scott, C.I.C.

E 30547 Sgt Maurice D'Avignon, C.I.C.
A 9220 Sgt George Stuart MacDonell, C.I.C.
H 6118 Sgt Kenneth Edward Porter, C.I.C.
K 35468 Sgt Charles John Sharp, R.C. Sigs (Killed in Action)
E 30270 Sgt Leslie Robert Stickle, C.I.C.
H 6104 Sgt James Murray Thom, C.I.C.
H 6090 Sgt Charles Watson, C.I.C.
E 21822 Cpl John Joseph Fitzpatrick, C.I.C. (Killed in Action)
E 29957 Cpl Edwin Harrison, C.I.C. (Killed in Action)
E 30092 Cpl Lorne Rayburn Latimer, C.I.C. (Killed in Action)
H 6838 Cpl Ernest Charles McFarland, C.I.C.
E 29951 Cpl George William McRae, C.I.C. (Killed in Action)
H 6341 Cpl Sydney Albert Sheffer, C.I.C.
H 6101 L/Cpl Edwin George Smith, C.I.C.
H 6851 Pte Frank Brown, C.I.C.
E 30659 Rfn Bernard Castonguay, C.I.C.
D 3385 Sgmn Robert Damant, R.C. Sigs (Killed in Action)
E 30077 Rfn Morgan Isaac Davies, C.I.C.
K 85488 Pte Aubery Peacock Flegg, C.I.C.
H 6186 Pte Nelson Carlyle Galbraith, C.I.C.
H 6044 Pte Norman Charles Matthews, C.I.C.
F 40323 Rfn Lloyd Logan Roblee, C.I.C.
F 29945 Rfn James Austen Wallace, C.I.C.

HONG KONG AND THE NEW TERRITORIES

MAP A



HONG KONG

MAP B

