

quire to get to Aqsu and back. The tanks were filled; 428 gallons was considered to be the necessary amount.

While the drivers were putting the drums of petrol onto the lorries one or two soldiers entered the yard and demanded on the highest authority that all the petrol we had should be taken. Luckily, YEW and HUMMEL had just returned from the sick-bed. With impressive calmness YEW declared:

»You won't get one drop more than General MA needs.»

»We've orders; they must be obeyed.»

»General of cavalry MA has just fixed the amount that is to be taken. Go and ask him if it is true.»

The soldiers hurried off. When they came back they began to unload all the superfluous petrol.

Our yard was now swarming with Tungan soldiers. The gate stood wide open. They came and went, bringing machine-guns, old field-pieces, rifles and ammunition on horses, mules or carts. The lorries were loaded up with the stuff as it came in. Several officers stood round and superintended the work.

AIR BOMBING

It was twenty-three minutes to twelve when an ominous organ tone was faintly heard from the north, and someone called out:

»Three aeroplanes are coming!«

And sure enough, there they were, flying at a height of perhaps 800 m but slowly descending to 500 m or lower. Now they were hovering over the town. Three minutes later a heavy explosion was heard to the south of our quarters. It was tragi-comic to watch the soldiers round the cars. They looked up in the air, and in a few seconds the yard was empty. They had vanished as if by magic.

BERGMAN spread out our largest Swedish flag in the middle of the yard. Then he and all our men went and sat down under the willows in the large back-yard adjoining ours. A few minutes passed before the next bomb exploded, also to the south of us. Then seven bombs fell at short intervals, most of them to the north. We guessed that they were meant for the cross-roads where the high road to Kucha turns off, and where there were crowds of fleeing soldiers, carts, horses and mules laden with wounded, ammunition and supplies.

The next six bombs fell to the south of our position. Then came the detonation of a bomb in the northern outskirts of Korla. The machines were coming nearer to us. The seventeenth and eighteenth bombs burst to the north, only a few hundred meters away. One fell on an outhouse, which blew up in a dark brown cloud of dust and smoke. The three next were still nearer to us. The airmen