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OPERATIONS IN BURMA FROM 12th NOVEMBER, 1944, TO 15th AUGUST, 1945

NOTE.—A set of maps for this Despatch is on separate sale at 1s. 0d. net. This set of maps also covers the operations described in the other Army and Air Despatches of the Burma Campaign from 16th November, 1943 to 12th September, 1945.

The following Despatch was submitted to the Secretary of State for War on the 4th February, 1947, by **LIEUTENANT-GENERAL SIR OLIVER LEESE, Bart., K.C.B., C.B.E., D.S.O.,** *Commander-in-Chief, Allied Land Forces, South-East Asia.*

INTRODUCTION

1. This Despatch covers the period from the 12th November, 1944, on which date I assumed the appointment of Commander-in-Chief, Allied Land Forces, South-East Asia, to the 15th August, 1945, when the Japanese surrendered and when I relinquished my appointment. I have included the planning for subsequent operations, as it was initiated and carried on during the period under consideration. But these plans are given in outline only, because their execution is outside the period of my command and because the Japanese capitulation caused many modifications of the basic plan.

I have divided my Despatch into three parts. Part I is concerned with the course of operations and the planning and strategy which determined them. In Part II I have gone into some detail of the administrative aspect, which in this campaign assumed such importance that it justifies this separate treatment. In Part III I have given some appreciations of the contributions made by those who took part in the campaign. It may be that, for the general reader, a perusal of Parts I and III will suffice to produce an adequate overall picture, but for the military student the importance of the administrative side of the campaign needs special emphasis.

Finally, I have attached a table of contents of the Despatch and two other Appendices to which reference is made in the body of the Despatch.

PART I

NARRATIVE OF OPERATIONS

SECTION I (paras. 2-18) THE SITUATION ON TAKING OVER COMMAND

Location of my H.Q.: Constitution of the command: Note on the topography and climate of Burma: The task: Strategic plans already in existence: The new directive.

2. I took over 11 Army Group from General Sir George Giffard on the 12th November, 1944, with the new title of Commander-in-Chief, Allied Land Forces, South-East Asia. This appointment had just been created following the decision to place the American and Chinese troops in South-East Asia under my control. Since the 20th June, 1944, after the capture of Kamaing (in the Mogaung Valley), Northern Combat Area Command had been under the direct operational control of the Supreme Allied Commander (Admiral The Lord Louis Mountbatten, later Earl Mountbatten of Burma). This arrangement had its origin in the refusal of General J.W. Stilwell, who in addition to commanding Northern Combat Area Command was Deputy Supreme Allied Commander, to serve in a subordinate capacity to the Commander-in-Chief, 11 Army Group, although he had agreed to act under the operational control of the Commander, Fourteenth Army, for a limited period, that is, until the capture of Kamaing. When General D. I. Sultan, General Stilwell's successor, came under my command on the 12th November, a