

Division made on 11th March an attack to clear the villages of Shwegyin and Madouk. This operation, which was carried out by the 1 Burma Rifles and the 5/1 Punjab Regiment, was successful, and on its completion 1 Burma Division, less 13 Infantry Brigade, was withdrawn to the area north of Kanyutkwin.

17. In reorganising my forces it was necessary to have more strength in the Irrawaddy valley. I therefore arranged for the Chinese Fifth Army to relieve the 1 Burma Division on the Toungoo front so that this Division could be brought across into the Irrawaddy valley, and concentrated there with the 17 Division. The date on which this could take place was dependent on the moves of the Chinese Fifth Army and it was not until the third week of March that the relief of the 1 Burma Division could be effected. Up to that time the 1 Burma Division, which had been covering the concentration of the Chinese, fought a delaying action back on Toungoo. It would have been possible, had the Chinese agreed, to have handed over to them a large area south of Toungoo. They were not however willing to go south of that place and it became necessary to give up this area or to abandon the concentration of the Imperial Forces in the Irrawaddy valley. This I could not afford to do.

18. During the same period, the 17 Division, in order to conform with the gradual withdrawal of the 1 Burma Division, commenced to move back towards the Prome area. To keep touch with events on the Toungoo front, columns from Frontier Force units were stationed in the Pegu Yomas to give warning and to prevent any Japanese infiltration through this area. Other light forces were also stationed west of the Irrawaddy to intercept enemy penetration on this bank of the River. Advanced detachments consisting of tanks and lorry-borne infantry were ordered to operate southwards along the Prome road towards Rangoon to delay and harass any Japanese forces moving north. The only engagement of any note which took place was an attack by the 1 Glosters supported by tanks against forces of Japanese and traitor Burmans at Letpadan on the 19th March. This attack was successful in capturing the town and inflicting losses on the enemy.

19. *Formation of a Corps Headquarters.* The concentration of the Imperial Forces now necessitated the formation of a Corps, especially as at this stage I was nominally in command of all Chinese forces operating in Burma. I therefore requested G.H.Q. India to supply me with a Corps Commander and a skeleton Corps Headquarters. The Corps Commander, in the person of Lieut.-General W. J. Slim, M.C., arrived on the 19th March and took over Command of the Corps (1 Burcorps) but, owing to the limitations of air transport, a skeleton Corps Headquarters could not be provided from India and the staff and signals had to be found from Burma Army resources.

20. *Arrival of General Stilwell.* On the 12th March I went to Maymyo, now the centre of the Civil Government, which had been selected as the only suitable location for my headquarters. On the 14th March General Stilwell of the American Army arrived and informed me that he had come to take over command of the Fifth and Sixth Chinese Armies.

General Stilwell had only a small staff and no signal communications of his own, so that this arrangement did not appear very satisfactory. It was, however, the Generalissimo's order and I could not interfere, but I informed G.H.Q. India by telegram of this new development.

21. *My Visit to Chungking.* At this time I decided to go to Chungking for the purpose of paying my respects to the Generalissimo Chiang Kai-Shek, to explain to him the military situation in Burma, and to ensure that he was satisfied with the administrative arrangements which had been made for his troops. Accordingly I left Maymyo by air on the 24th March. I was warmly received by the Chinese and had several very satisfactory talks with the Generalissimo, at the last of which he expressed the wish for unity of command of the Imperial and Chinese Forces in Burma, and asked me to accept the command of all his troops in that country. On my return to Maymyo I informed General Stilwell of the Generalissimo's wishes and he readily agreed to serve under me as Supreme Commander in Burma. I should like to take this opportunity to add that General Stilwell and his American staff could not have been more loyal or more co-operative throughout the campaign. General Stilwell had my complete confidence. He was obviously liked and trusted by the Chinese, and he understood them and spoke their language.

22. *System of Command of the Chinese Armies.* Nevertheless, I must state here that the system of command of the Chinese forces in Burma was far from satisfactory. Nominally, I commanded all the Allied Forces. General Stilwell commanded the Chinese Fifth and Sixth Armies but he had to issue all his orders through a Chinese commander, General Lo Cho-Ying. There was, however, a system of liaison officers working under the Generalissimo and it appeared that no orders of a major nature issued by myself, by General Stilwell or by General Lo could be carried out unless they had the sanction of the Generalissimo, which had to be obtained through the latter's Liaison Mission, whose head was General Lin Wei at Lashio, and who in turn had a forward liaison officer in General Hou at Maymyo. Such an arrangement was obviously quite unsuitable for modern war since quick decisions for the employment of the Chinese forces were impossible to obtain and this, together with the almost total lack of knowledge of staff duties which existed in the Chinese forces, caused considerable delay in the execution of vital movements.

23. *Concentration of 1 Burcorps.* The move of 1 Burma Division, on relief by the 200 Chinese Division, to the Irrawaddy front commenced on the night of 21st-22nd March. Owing to the difficulties of communication between the Toungoo and Irrawaddy valleys, the bulk of the 1 Burma Division was despatched by rail and road via Pyinmana and Taungdwingyi. The 5 Burma Rifles proceeded by march route from Toungoo to Prome over the Yomas. On the 25th March the newly formed 1 Burcorps issued orders for the concentration of the Corps in the area Allanmyo-Prome with 1 Burma Division in the area Dayindaibo - Kyankpadaung - Allanmyo - Thayetmyo, 17 Division in area Wettigan-Prome-Shwedaung-Sinde, 7 Armoured Brigade in the area of Tamagauk in Corps reserve. The