

231. Norgroup was then using the depth to India, and with its base organisation being hurriedly prepared in the Calcutta area and up the Valley of the Brahmaputra, was able with what resources were available, to continue a harassing scale of bombing attack in Burma with some fighter action in the North. By the nature of the campaign and the shortage of warning, of aircraft, of equipment, and of maintenance, we were unable to maintain our 2 mixed Wings in Upper Burma and Akyab.

232. In the Burma campaign the main brunt of the fighting was borne by the P.40 Squadrons of the A.V.G. They were the first in the field with pilots well trained and with good fighting equipment. Their gallantry in action won the admiration of both services.

233. According to the records available in the Intelligence staff of Norgroup, 233 enemy fighters and bombers were claimed destroyed in the air in this campaign, of which the A.V.G. claimed 179 and the R.A.F. 54. Fifty-eight were claimed destroyed on the ground, 38 by the A.V.G. and 20 by the R.A.F. Seventy-six were claimed probably destroyed, 43 by the A.V.G. and 33 by the R.A.F. One hundred and sixteen were claimed damaged, 87 by the A.V.G. and 29 by the R.A.F.

234. From January 1st the cost in losses was 38 fighters shot down by the enemy in air combat. Of these 16 were P.40's and 22 Buffaloes and Hurricanes, but the majority of pilots were fortunately saved. I regret to report that there were 2 substantiated incidents when Japanese fighter pilots attacked and killed our fighter pilots while descending by parachute.

235. As regards bombers, 8 failed to return from operations.

236. Our losses on the ground due to enemy action were 51 aircraft, 17 fighters, 23 Blenheims, 4 Hudsons. The remainder were transport and communication aircraft.

237. Comparable with the total of 233 enemy fighters and bombers claimed to have been shot down in air combat by the A.V.G. and the R.A.F., the Allies' losses were 46. Thus an average of slightly more than 5 enemy aircraft were claimed shot down for each of our aircraft lost.

238. We destroyed more of the enemy's aircraft on the ground than the enemy destroyed of ours. We made no claim moreover in respect of enemy aircraft destroyed on the ground by bombing attack, the number of which must have been considerable.

239. The bomber action in close support of the Army has been described. Slight as the effort was, valuable results were achieved. Counter offensive bombing action to reduce the scale of attack made an effective contribution towards the maintenance of air superiority over Rangoon.

240. The evacuation of R.A.F. personnel from Burma by air and sea, with small parties by land, was completed without loss.

241. As regards stores, much valuable equipment was back loaded at the last moment from Rangoon. The majority of stores remaining in Burma were moved to the Lashio area, whence on the sudden and unexpected Japanese thrust in that region as much as possible was moved into China. The remainder was destroyed except for some large bombs which were rendered useless.

242. The task of supporting General Alexander's Army terminated on May 20th when it was withdrawn to India. Air operations based in Eastern India continue against the Japanese in Burma.

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