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AIR OPERATIONS IN SOUTH EAST ASIA 16th NOVEMBER, 1943 TO
31st MAY, 1944.

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 Air and Army despatches of the Burma campaign from 16th November, 1943 to 12th September, 1945.

The following despatch was submitted to the Secretary of State for Air on 23rd November, 1944, by AIR CHIEF MARSHAL SIR R. E. C. PEIRSE, K.C.B., D.S.O., A.F.C., Allied Air Commander-in-Chief, South East Asia.

PART ONE

INTRODUCTORY

1. As a result of the formation on 16th November, 1943, of South East Asia Command, I assumed operational control of all Air Forces in the South East Asia theatre, with authority to employ them in conformity with the policy of the Supreme Allied Commander, Admiral The Lord Louis Mountbatten, G.C.V.O., C.B., D.S.O., A.D.C. Thus I had at my disposal what had constituted R.A.F. India Command, and those American units in this theatre which comprised the 10th U.S.A.A.F. It was my task to ensure that these forces operated as a coherent body and that the best use was made of the potentialities of each.

2. In addition it was my continued responsibility to develop India as a base for future air operations, as a supply centre, and as a training area for R.A.F. and I.A.F. personnel. Such activities absorb a considerable proportion of the energies of the Command, and constitute a task of which the importance and results are not immediately apparent. I have therefore devoted Part Four of this Despatch to the progress that has been made in this direction.

3. Responsibility for operations on the North West Frontier and for the Indian Air Force was relinquished to the formation which

replaced the Inspectorate-General of the I.A.F. and to which was bequeathed the name Air Headquarters, India.

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4. To ensure the integrated operational control of Units in Bengal and Assam, a new Headquarters was set up under Major-General G. E. Stratemeyer, U.S.A.A.F., designated Eastern Air Command and located initially at Delhi. This formation, which had previously existed under the title Headquarters, U.S.A.A.F., India-Burma Sector, China-Burma-India Theatre, had administered and controlled the 10th U.S.A.A.F. and provided in addition base facilities for the 14th U.S.A.A.F. The new Headquarters consisted basically of the Operations Section of the old organisation with the addition of an R.A.F. element. This Command, and all those comprising the 10th which had formerly come under Bengal Command and all those comprising the 10th U.S.A.A.F. in the same area. These forces were subdivided into a Tactical Air Force under Air Marshal Sir John Baldwin, and a Strategic Air Force under Brigadier General Howard C. Davidson, U.S.A.A.F. I was authorised to effect such re-grouping of operational units that I considered necessary to achieve maximum operational efficiency, and as a result R.A.F. and U.S.A.A.F. transport units were merged on 15th December into one organisation which was given the title of Troop Carrier Command. This new formation was commanded by Brigadier General D. Old, U.S.A.A.F. Similarly R.A.F. and American photographic reconnaissance units were incorporated into one command which assumed the title of