

though not intended for this purpose, acted as administrative staff officers to the formations to which they were attached.

The big problem was the provision of supplies, more particularly rice. The collection and distribution of rice down to Chinese divisions was my responsibility and this task absorbed no less than 300 lorries in the Shan States alone. Forward of the divisional dumps, distribution was a Chinese responsibility. It will be appreciated that demands on the transport and petrol at my disposal were considerable.

The lack of administration was particularly noticeable on the medical side. The Chinese arrived with no medical stores or units. Later certain voluntary organisations such as Dr. Seagrave's Medical Mission appeared and a Burma Army C.C.S. and one staging section together with medical stores were made available by me for the Chinese armies. A certain number of Chinese sick and wounded were also admitted to British hospitals.

The gratitude of the Chinese for the attention given to their wounded in these hospitals was most marked. Nevertheless, the medical organisation was quite inadequate to deal with the large numbers of Chinese casualties incurred in the later stages of the campaign.

The ordnance situation was also unsatisfactory in that reserves of ammunition, clothing and equipment were practically non-existent. Here I was unable to help as the types of stores required were not common to both armies.

On the other hand, in the later stages of the campaign I was able to make available to the Chinese a considerable quantity of engineer stores and explosives.

To sum up, the administration of the Chinese forces worked reasonably well only so long as operations were not too fluid.

PART VIII. MISCELLANEOUS.

89. *Commandos and Levies.*

(a) *Commandos.* In Burma, the Bush Warfare School, so called for purposes of deception, trained selected officers and other ranks to form the nucleus of guerrilla units in China where they came under control of 204 Mission. Training was given in demolitions in order to fit the personnel for operations on the enemy's lines of communication.

Three commandos consisting entirely of British personnel were already operating in the Southern Shan States when I arrived and they remained there working in co-operation with the Chinese. These commandos undertook one or two operations on the Thai frontier but circumstances were such as to prevent their being any real threat to the enemy's lines of communication. I was therefore anxious to move these commandos to the Irrawaddy front but owing to the difficulties of collecting them from their scattered and dispersed positions I was unable to achieve this.

At the beginning of April, Colonel Wingate, who had had considerable experience in raising and organising units for deep penetration in Abyssinia, arrived at Maymyo. In order to form such units in Burma, Colonel Wingate required British personnel of high morale. Since the army was at this time cut off from India, the only source of

supply was the already depleted British battalions. Moreover, the success of deep penetration units depends to a large extent on their operating in a friendly country. This condition did not exist south and east of the Irrawaddy. Colonel Wingate therefore returned to India in order to raise deep penetration units there for possible operations later in the Chin country.

(b) *Levies.* The proposal to form Levies was first made in January when the army was still in Moulmein. Later, Mr. (now Lieut.-Colonel) Stevenson of the Burma Frontier Service who had been organising Levies in the Northern Shan States was deputed to do the same work in the Southern Shan States and Karenni and he was finally made responsible for all Levies in Burma.

Karen Levies were formed in the Mawchi area and were reinforced by a number of Karens specially released from the Burma Rifles. I have already mentioned the excellent work carried out by these Levies. To organise Levies in the Chin Hills I selected Lieut.-Colonel Haswell of the Burma Rifles but he had barely sufficient time to complete his organisation before the army withdrew from Burma. The Chin Levy Organisation has now been taken over by India and I see no reason why it should not have considerable success.

90. *Refugees.* The refugee problem in Burma was of a special character. Of the 14 million inhabitants of this country about one million were Indians and it was they who provided the reliable business element and who staffed most of the public utility undertakings. In these circumstances, the Indians were not popular with the Burmese and they realised that they depended for their security on the British "Raj." When this failed they felt they must get out or be murdered. In this they were probably right.

The Indian exodus from Burma had a two-fold result. It created a big refugee problem and, at the same time, it robbed the country of the very people who should have kept going the civil organisation.

The principal effect on military operations was the strain placed on the transport agencies, which were themselves beginning to break down. The strain was most severely felt in the period immediately following the fall of Rangoon when it was still hoped that the situation might be stabilised some distance south of Mandalay.

To my mind there can be no doubt that the needs of an army must come before those of refugees but, in Burma, the position was not straightforward since failure to evacuate the refugees would have caused a breakdown in all the utility services. Everything possible was therefore done by my staff in allotting transportation facilities to refugees. The exodus of the Indian population made labour, both skilled and unskilled, almost impossible to obtain. This was a hard blow in view of the shortage of technical units and the complete lack of military labour.

The civil organisation in charge of refugee evacuation in Burma did remarkably well and I should like particularly to mention Mr. Vorley, who was in charge of the evacuation from the Mandalay area, and Mr. Hughes,