

a stout resistance, and the Commander 1 Burcorps put in an immediate counter-attack with the few troops at his disposal. Information of the attack on Monywa was received at Army Headquarters at 22.00 hours and orders were immediately issued for one squadron of tanks to move via Ondaw on Monywa, and during the night of 1st/2nd May the squadron of tanks which I had moved north of Shwebo for the protection of the left flank was also ordered to move on Monywa via Ye-U.

62. The situation created by the Japanese occupation of Monywa was serious since it cut off all the Imperial Forces west of the River Mu from the direct approach to Ye-U through Monywa and also prevented the move of any forces up or across the Chindwin. Further, there was no regular formation of Imperial Forces in position to oppose an enemy advance direct on Ye-U. The Commander 1 Burcorps at once ordered the 16 Infantry Brigade to move with all speed via Shwebo to cover the approaches to Ye-U from the south. The situation in Monywa, however, improved due to the prompt action of Commander 1 Burcorps and the courage and tenacity of the troops and by the morning of the 1st May the town was again temporarily in our hands.

63. Meanwhile, at 2045 hours on 30th April, orders were issued by 1 Burcorps for 1 Burma Division to advance on Monywa as quickly as possible. 63 Infantry Brigade was due to arrive by train at Chaungu early on 1st May and this Brigade and 48 Infantry Brigade at Myinmu were placed under command 1 Burma Division. Later, however, 48 Infantry Brigade was ordered to move via Shwebo on Ye-U.

Orders were also issued, in pursuance of the original plan, for 13 Infantry Brigade to cross to the west bank of the River Chindwin but this move did not prove possible and had to be abandoned.

64. Early on 1st May the enemy crossed the River Chindwin south of Monywa and, assisted by local guides, attacked H.Q. 1 Burma Division, capturing a wireless set. This somewhat disorganised the chain of command. The enemy also re-occupied Monywa. During the day 1 Burma Division, with 63 Infantry Brigade and one squadron 2 R. Tanks under command, advanced to the south-east outskirts of Monywa with a view to attacking on the morning of 2nd May. One squadron 7 Hussars moved via Ye-U to the north of Alon.

65. My Headquarters, Headquarters 1 Burcorps and Headquarters 17 Division moved to Ye-U on 1st May. Before leaving Shwebo I had arranged for General Stilwell to meet me at Ye-U at 1800 hours that evening in order to co-ordinate plans for the withdrawal from the Mandalay-Irrawaddy position. At this meeting, at which Commander 1 Burcorps was present, General Stilwell agreed that a withdrawal could no longer be delayed and the code words to put this into effect were issued at 1845 hours. General Stilwell also agreed that the situation at Monywa demanded the withdrawal of 7 Armoured Brigade from its position in support of 38 Chinese Division east of the River Mu and orders were therefore issued for 7 Armoured Brigade to move forthwith on the axis Ye-U—Monywa. General Stilwell informed me that he intended to withdraw the

Chinese Fifth Army to the Katha area but was uncertain of his further plans. Preparations were, however, in hand for a possible withdrawal to India.

I did not see General Stilwell again until his arrival at Dinjan at the end of May and, owing to the failure of his wireless, did not have any further communication with him.

66. On 2nd May, 7 Armoured Brigade, which had arrived south of Ye-U during the night of 1st/2nd May, attacked Monywa from the north assisted by improvised forces of infantry from 1 Glosters and F.F. Columns. 1 Burma Division attacking from the south-east cleared the outskirts of Monywa, but the attack was not pressed home since 1 Burma Division succeeded in moving round Monywa via Ettaw and in reaching the Ye-U road south of Budaln.

#### PART VI.—THE WITHDRAWAL TO INDIA.

67. *The Race for Kalewa.*—The operations had now developed into a race with the enemy for the possession of Kalewa. A warning was sent to General Wakely at Kalewa to establish local protection and to block the river approaches. As a result of this, a boom was constructed across the Chindwin to the south of Shwegyin and the detachment of Royal Marines, which had done such good work on the Irrawaddy, was despatched with Breda guns to cover this obstruction. G.H.Q. India were also requested to order air attacks on enemy craft moving up the Chindwin. I learned later that such attacks were made on the 3rd or 4th May and I have no doubt that they imposed considerable delay on the enemy's advance up the river. There was also the possibility that the enemy might land at some point short of Kalewa and cut in on the Ye-U—Kalewa road. The most likely point for this to happen was at Maukkadaw from which place a chaung gave easy access to the road at Pyingyaing. A detachment of the Bush Warfare School, reinforced by British infantry from the depot at Maymyo, was therefore sent to Maukkadaw. This detachment was later reinforced by two companies of Gurkhas. At this time I assumed that the 1 Indian Infantry Brigade was moving from Palel to Kalewa and I requested G.H.Q. India to hasten this movement, as I still had reason to believe that a Japanese force was advancing on Kalemio via the Myittha Valley. I learned on 5th May that 1 Indian Infantry Brigade would not move into Burma, as it was not considered possible to maintain it in Kalewa, in addition to the troops from Burma that would also be in that area.

68. *Co-ordination with the Chinese Rear Guard.*—On the morning of the 3rd May, I received a visit at my Headquarters at Kaduma from General Li Jen Sun, commanding 38 Chinese Division. This Division was ordered to act as rear guard to the Chinese Fifth Army. General Sun felt that his task was difficult and he was anxious that the movements of his Division should be closely co-ordinated with those of 1 Burcorps. I had already issued orders about this but as a result of General Sun's visit I again impressed on the Commander 1 Burcorps that he must not withdraw from the Ye-U area until the Chinese 38 Division had passed to the north of Shwebo. In view of the excellent manner in which General Sun had always co-operated with the forces under my