

required to deal with civil needs. Thus it was only possible, initially, to distribute a very bare minimum of relief stores. A transport company was raised to assist in bringing the Civil Affairs stores from Manipur Road to Imphal, and from Imphal essential stores for North Burma were carried in transport aircraft, at an average rate of 75 tons per day.

446. During the period under report, demands for essential relief stores for the whole of Burma were placed by S.A.C.S.E.A. on India Command, to cover six months' military occupation. Estimated requirements included stores in the following categories: food, agricultural implements, medical and veterinary requirements, hospital equipment, stores and equipment for refugee camps, household goods, soap, clothing, footwear and newsprint. To tide over the inevitable delay before the arrival of these stores, a special urgent demand was placed for certain essential commodities. This special demand included food, and also sufficient stores for the immediate equipment of 21 hospitals and 73 dispensaries.

447. The demands mentioned in the previous paragraph, to cover six months' military occupation, could not be met wholly from India's resources. India Command accepted certain items and indented on the United Kingdom for the balance, where the War Office was already taking advance procurement action. To assist the War Office in selecting goods, the Principal Commercial Officer of the Civil Affairs Staff was sent to England, with the task of preparing specifications for such commodities as were available, and accepting alternatives when necessary. By early May, the position with regard to these stores demands was satisfactory. India's quota of wheat had been increased to enable her to supply flour and atta, and she was also supplying the majority of the other food items required. Other stores which India had arranged to supply included 850,000 lbs. of soap and 35,000,000 yards of cloth. Medical stores had already been shipped from the U.K. The results achieved on the medical side deserve special note. The number of hospital beds opened increased from 400 in November, 1944, to about 3,000 by May, 1945, and in addition, a large number of local dispensaries had been installed all over the country.

SECTION XXVIII (paras. 448-451)

CONCLUSIONS ON ADMINISTRATION

General conclusion: The vital necessity for air supply: The importance of Akyab and Kyaukpyu: The importance of the capture of Rangoon.

448. As I stated at the beginning of this part of the Despatch I have gone into the administrative aspects of this campaign in considerable detail, and what I have said should suffice to show the tremendous complexity of the problem and the difficulties involved; the need for the most careful administrative planning, improvisation and energy, and how magnificently all requirements were met by all ranks throughout Allied Land Forces, South-East Asia; and finally the success that was achieved without which the speed and the scope of the operations would not have been possible.

The main conclusions that I reach from this administrative survey are threefold; the vital necessity of air supply; the importance of

Akyab and Kyaukpyu; the importance of the capture of Rangoon.

449. Because we had to enter Burma by the "back door" the capacity of the undeveloped land Ls. of C. were totally insufficient to maintain the large modern army that was necessary to defeat the Japanese. The minimum requirements of Fourteenth Army averaged some 2,000 tons per day. The maximum tonnage that could possibly be carried on the Northern L. of C. into Central Burma, despite the tremendous amount of equipment, material and energy that was expended in its development, was only 700 tons a day. The balance, therefore, could only be brought in by air, and this fact shows quite clearly that the maintenance of operations at the scale finally achieved would have been quite impossible without air supply.

This air supply was used on a scale greater than in any other theatre of war. Its success was due to the splendid integration, co-operation and energy of the air forces concerned and the various ground organizations, all of which started from scratch with very little previous experience. This success has undoubtedly been one of the features of the campaign.

450. The capture of Akyab and Kyaukpyu and the rapid development of their ports and airfields were vital to the successful conclusion of the campaign, namely, the capture of Rangoon. It was only from the airfields at these two places that transport aircraft, operating at maximum economic range, could reach our forward troops in the railway corridor and the Irrawaddy Valley. Thus, although the operations of Fourteenth Army were inevitably the more spectacular, their triumph could not have been achieved without the success of the operations carried out by 15 Indian Corps in Arakan.

451. The capture of Rangoon, prior to the monsoon, was of great administrative importance. Not only did it cut the Japanese main line of supply into Burma, but it was the first step to enabling me to maintain Fourteenth Army by sea, thereby releasing the bulk of air transport (now required for essential rest and refit for future operations) and gradually liquidating that expensive administrative route, the Northern L. of C. The Air and Northern Ls. of C. would have been hard put to it alone to have maintained our forces in Burma during the monsoon.

In addition the capture of Rangoon enabled me to build up an advanced base from which future sea, land and airborne operations could be mounted and maintained.

PART III

SECTION XXIX (paras. 452-465)

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The Soldiers; Indian, Gurkha, British, American, African and Chinese: Fourteenth Army: 15 Indian Corps: The Navy: The Air Forces: Northern Combat Area Command: India Command: The Army Air Transport Organization: General Sir William Slim: Lieut.-General Sir Philip Christison: H.Q. Allied Land Forces, South-East Asia.

452. At the conclusion of an outstandingly successful campaign, it is impossible to pay adequate tribute everywhere it is deserved, since