

(b) The physical standard of young soldiers in the Indian Army has improved during the period under review, particularly in combatant units.

164. The Army Pathological Service suffers, in this Theatre, from the lack of laboratories. The importance of accurate laboratory diagnosis requires no stressing.

165. Dental facilities are altogether inadequate. The accepted ratio of dental officers to troops is one per 1,000 for British and one per 10,000 for Indian. The present ratio is one per 7,000 and 30,000 respectively.

166. The present standard of training of medical personnel in this Theatre does not compare altogether favourably with that in others, but, taking into consideration the expansion which the Medical Services have undergone, and the acute shortage of medical officers in India, it is, I am sure, as good as can be expected. Training is, I know, continuous and intensive in the India Command and the situation is improving.

167. The supply of medical stores, including drugs, has been most satisfactory. The consumption of mepacrine in Fourteenth Army as a malaria suppressive has reached twelve million tablets a month.

168. The problem of providing adequate medical supervision for the large amount of civilian labour employed in the Fourteenth Army area is being met at present, but it may become more difficult when civilian labour forces have to be moved into re-conquered territory as our troops advance.

169. The thirteen convalescent depots in 11 Army Group have proved their value as an essential link between hospital and reinforcement camp. The "patients" in the British Depot at Kohima played a notable part in the defence of that place during the siege, though such strenuous work had hardly been recommended as part of their convalescence.

Miscellaneous A.G. Points.

170. *Legal and Judicial.* (a) As a result of the Supreme Allied Commander's Proclamation No. 1 of 1944, under which he assumed control of re-occupied territory, British Military Administration Courts have been set up in Burma.

(b) Arrangements have been made with General Headquarters, India, for assistance to be given to Fourteenth Army in the prosecution of those suspected to be military traitors who fall into our hands. More detailed interrogation is now to be carried out at Forward Interrogation Centres and the majority of prisoners will be dealt with in forward areas.

171. *Leave.* (a) All British personnel have had to be restricted to fourteen days leave during 1944, owing to the lack of accommodation in suitable areas, and to transportation difficulties which can only be solved by the provision of more aircraft.

(b) Representations were made that British Service officers, both with British units and those seconded to the Indian Army, who were willing, should be granted home leave in lieu of repatriation. Many such officers have valuable experience in jungle warfare and their retention is most desirable.

(c) Transportation difficulties originally precluded the achievement of the target of twenty-eight days leave per annum for Indian ranks, but these have since been overcome.

172. *Morale and Welfare.* The large number of troops who have taken part in operations have gained confidence from their contact with the enemy. It is universally felt that the Japanese soldier, although a good infantryman, is no match for our well-trained and well-equipped troops, supported by a powerful air force.

173. The still inadequate but increased and, I may add, well deserved publicity now being given to this theatre of war, coupled with the introduction of more amenities such as mobile canteens, cinemas, wireless sets, sports equipment, a daily newspaper ("SEAC"), and also visits from "Ensa", have all contributed to the improvement in morale. Men are beginning to feel that they do not belong to "The Forgotten Army".

In all my efforts to improve the lot of the British rank and file, I am closely in touch with the Commander-in-Chief, India, whose troops share with mine in the severe handicaps of climate, homesickness, and the feeling that the Burma Border is not, at present, the decisive Theatre. In spite of all the steps that have been, and are being taken, the undercurrent of feeling against service in the East still persists, and many "grouses" are still in evidence, though the spirit of the troops in forward units is magnificent.

Among British troops, the most burning question has been, and is, that of repatriation. In particular, the disparity in the terms of overseas service between the Army and the R.A.F. is a continual source of grievance. The measures recently taken to improve this will, it is hoped, allay some of the feeling that has undoubtedly existed.

174. The chief anxiety of Indian troops, as always, is the welfare during their absence of their families, but the leave situation is now satisfactory. The effect of enemy propaganda on the Indian soldier has been negligible.

175. The work of philanthropic bodies such as the Red Cross, the Y.M.C.A. and Toc H has been most valuable and I am very grateful indeed to the large body of voluntary workers who have contributed so much to the welfare of the troops, both British and Indian.

The Lines of Communication.

176. I have already referred to the Northern and Southern Lines of Communication Areas, but there are in fact three lines of communication supplying Fourteenth Army:—

(a) *The Assam Line of Communication*, which has three railheads: that at Manipur Road, also called Dimapur, supplying the Imphal Front; and those at Ledo and Chabua which supply the Chinese-American forces operating in Northern Burma, and the air ferry route to China.

(b) *The Eastern Bengal Line of Communication*, which serves our bases in Eastern Bengal and the airfields in the Surma Valley, which are extensively used for air supply.

Some flexibility between the Eastern Bengal and Assam lines of communication