

distributed from forward airstrips. Frequently it was necessary to get the cash to units by air-drop. With my approval, and the concurrence of the Commander-in-Chief, India, the accounts of British other ranks serving in South-East Asia Command and India Command were transferred from Meerut to Fixed Centre Paymasters in the U.K. This should have greatly facilitated the accounting procedure connected with release and repatriation.

SECTION XXVI (paras. 420-440) QUARTER-MASTER-GENERAL'S SERVICES MATTERS

Supplies: Ordnance Services: Electrical and Mechanical Engineers: Pioneers and Labour: Remounts and Veterinary Services: Postal, canteens and salvage: Major deficiencies of equipment.

420. I do not intend this to be in any way a technical report, nor that it should attempt to be complete. I will only mention a few matters which should be of general interest; many of the major aspects of administration affecting the Services, and their more outstanding achievements, have been referred to already.

421. A revised Field Service ration scale for Indian troops was introduced in November 1944. This was followed by a revised scale for British troops on the 1st March, 1945, and for African troops on the 1st May. These scales were not only of great calorific value but provided a more varied and palatable diet. Starting in November, 1944, 585 tons of frozen meat per month were delivered into Assam, Eastern Bengal and Arakan by nine aircraft sorties six days a week. A large proportion of British and African troops benefited from this scheme, though local distribution was still somewhat restricted by the full quota of insulated lorries not yet being available. From November also, 40 tons per month of frozen meat were being shipped to Chittagong, where two 16 ton cold storage plants had just been installed, and six others were in course of erection. Rail delivery of frozen meat into Assam began in January, and the fly-in of this commodity could then be stopped. Rail delivery into Eastern Bengal also began directly the cold storage plants in that area were ready (15th February). A 3,000 ton refrigerated store ship arrived from the U.K. in February, and was located at Chittagong as a floating store. A 500 ton cold storage plant was also installed at this port in March.

The above arrangements greatly improved the situation as regards British and African troops.

Meat issues to Indian troops were also increased, but not to the same extent. They rose from 2.87 issues per month in December to over eight in February. I should have liked to have improved on this figure, but several factors prevented further increase; the large number of Indian troops in the theatre compared with the available supply of goats, the apparent impossibility of increasing the supply of dehydrated meat from India, and, lastly, the religious susceptibilities of the Indian troops themselves.

422. Little opportunity has arisen so far in this Despatch to give any account of the work of the Ordnance services, and I will now remedy this omission. In November, 1944, the main Ordnance depots for the maintenance of the Allied forces were located as follows:— at Manipur Road, for the Northern L. of C., a Base Ordnance Depot and a Base Ammunition Depot, and at Chittagong for the Southern L. of C., similar depots. The position of these depots remained unchanged until February 1945, when instructions were issued for the switch of ordnance stores from Manipur Road to Chittagong, for the maintenance of Fourteenth Army and 15 Indian Corps from airfields in the Chittagong area. Large quantities of stores and ammunition were consequently transferred by rail to Chittagong, and also diverted to Chittagong from depots in India. All vehicles and heavy equipment still continued to be despatched through Manipur Road.

423. In March, two ammunition depots, each designed to support a Corps of two divisions, were switched from Manipur Road to Akyab and Ramree, and, from the 1st April, the ammunition supply of Fourteenth Army became dependent on these two depots. It was decided to close the Manipur Road Ordnance depot as soon as possible, in order to enable it to be reopened at Rangoon. To allow this, the formation of a Central Burma stockpile was begun at Myingyan. This was to consist of 15 days' reserve of certain essential ordnance stores. By early April, the Manipur Road Depot was considerably reduced and the Chittagong Depot assumed all responsibility for issues after the 15th. During this month no fewer than 7,800 vehicles were sent forward from Manipur Road to Fourteenth Army, to create the necessary reserve in Central Burma before the monsoon closed the road L. of C.

424. The following table shows the tonnages handled and vehicles issued from the main Depots on the Northern and Southern Ls. of C. in November 1944, and for comparison, April 1945.

Tonnages and Vehicles Handled

	M.T. Spares	Other Ordnance Stores	Ammunition	Vehicles
November, 1944—				
Northern L. of C.	1,100	6,200	4,000	1,325
Southern L. of C.	1,300	6,200	no record	450
April, 1945—				
Northern L. of C.	3,300*	7,500*	8,500*	7,900
Southern L. of C.	3,300	7,200	17,000	620

* Surplus tonnage backloaded to India.