

12. *State of Warning of Air Attacks.*—It was hoped, however, to develop our telephone system in the Karenni Hills and the Valley of the Salween, and with R.D.F. to bring warning to a state where it would be practicable to base bombers and fighters at all these airfields. We asked India for the necessary equipment and personnel, including a W/T screen of 35 posts.

13. *Airfield Accommodation.*—Consequently, from the point of view of airfields, there was nothing to prevent the reception of considerable reinforcements as long as we held Rangoon.

14. As regards communications, a good telephone system connected all our airfields, while point-to-point wireless was in course of being put in to parent Stations.

15. *Burma Observer Corps.*—I found the Burma Observer Corps under the command of Major Taylor to be, over the area covered, an efficient warning system. As long as main centres of communications and telephone lines were not closely threatened by land attack the system functioned devotedly and satisfactorily.

16. In respect of aerodrome defence I found that outlying Station airfields such as Tavoy and Mergui had garrisons while detachments of troops for land defence and anti-sabotage precautions had been provided at occupied airfields.

17. *A.A. Defence.*—A.A. defence was weak, with an initial strength of but one battery of locally raised troops, whose equipment had only arrived at the end of December, 1941. The later arrival of British and Indian light and heavy batteries rendered it possible to organise a weak scale of defence for the important vital points. Although the A.A. defence did yeoman service they were never in sufficient strength to provide adequate defence for all the vital points and areas—let alone our airfields. Except for a weak airfield detachment the A.A. Artillery was deployed in defence of vital points in Rangoon and of our troops so that some cover against enemy bomb attacks in forward areas could be provided. Later during the withdrawal they provided such close protection as was practicable for our columns. General Alexander has remarked upon this phase of the operations in his Despatch.

18. *L.A.A. Defence.*—For light automatic defence against low-flying aircraft, detachments of the B.A.F., each equipped with 10 to 12 .5 Browning machine guns on A.A. mountings, were stationed at Mingaladon and Zayatkwint and later at Magwe. They were manned entirely by Burmese personnel mainly of the 12th Burma Rifles. Their training was of necessity hurried and their numbers were generally much under strength. Elements of the R.A.F. regiment arrived too late to be of much service although they were in action at Akyab.

19. *Headquarters' Staff.*—The position as regards Headquarters and Station Staffs was not good. Only a nucleus H.Q. staff existed and Mingaladon was the only airfield having a Station H.Q. All other airfields had care and maintenance parties.

20. A store holding unit and an explosives depot existed but there was no repair organisation.

Air Appreciation—Strength of the Air Force in Burma.

21. On the 14th January I completed my appreciation of the situation. Copies of this paper were forwarded to Headquarters, ABDA Command, India and the Air Ministry. The object of this paper was to appreciate the likelihood of a determined attack being made by Japan on Burma and from this to deduce the form and scale of air attack; and thus the fighter force necessary to secure our interests against this attack and the bomber counter-offensive force that would also be necessary. From this it will be noted that I considered that the Japanese Air Force would attempt a "knock-out" blow against Rangoon in the event of the fall of Singapore and that the scale of attack might reach as much as 600 aircraft a day at maximum intensity.

22. *Air Defence.*—The air defence system necessary to secure our interests in Burma against an attack of this kind required that the fighter force should be on a 14 Squadron basis—9 beyond the 5 Squadrons already on programme. (These 5 Squadrons were 67 Squadron and the 4 Squadrons of 267 Wing, which had been allocated in the first place to India for Burma—Trooper's telegram 57543 of 12.12.41.) One of these Squadrons—232 Fighter Squadron—was later diverted from Burma. The fact that the Hurricane force comprised only 3 (which only reached a strength of 2 Squadrons) instead of 4 Squadrons during the initial phase of the campaign, had a serious effect on the operations.

23. Further heavy and light A.A. Artillery was necessary together with a Balloon defence for the City and Port of Rangoon. More R.D.F., G.C.I. and Observer Corps and W/T. posts were required for strengthening the warning system.

24. *Bomber Counter-offensive.*—As regards the Bomber offensive, I considered that the 7 Squadrons on programme would be sufficient (i.e. 60 Squadron already in Burma plus 6 reinforcing Blenheim Squadrons promised from the Middle East—Trooper's telegram 58315 of 16.12.41) until vigorous attacks against Japan from bases in China became necessary.

25. *Security of Sea Communications.*—The 1 Hudson Squadron on programme, provided we had a force of 2 Torpedo Bomber Squadrons to call on at seven days' notice would, I considered—together with the Bomber force—go a long way to secure our line of sea communications from attack by Japanese war vessels in the Northern portion of the Bay of Bengal and the Gulf of Martaban. Apart from one or two patrol craft there were none of H.M. ships present in these waters. Thus the burden of anti-submarine protection, anti-bomber security and the attack of enemy surface vessels in the Bay and the Gulf would rest for some time on the Bomber, G.R. and Fighter aircraft of my command.

26. *Reinforcement requested.*—After agreement in the Joint Commanders' Sub-Committee I accordingly telegraphed ABDA Command and the Air Ministry requesting reinforcements to the scale (A.418 of 18/1) recommended in