

other causes, the Burma Navy, like the "Burma Army" largely disappeared but not before it had done most valuable work.

36. *Naval Assistance.* Except for one visit by a sloop of the R.I.N. sent by Commander-in-Chief East Indies in response for an urgent request for naval assistance, and the despatch of a most welcome reinforcement of 100 Marines, naval operations proper were almost entirely confined to the escort of convoys. Towards the close of the period, however, another sloop of the R.I.N. was successful in intercepting and capturing off the mouth of the Rangoon River a party of some 35 of the Free Burma Army under the leadership of a Japanese officer.

37. *Evacuation.* The successful evacuation by sea of the whole of the rear parties and protection troops left to carry out the demolitions in Rangoon, carried out under the very nose of the enemy, was highly creditable to all concerned, including the R.A.F., who afforded air cover during the passage of the dangerous waters south-west of Rangoon.

38. *Enemy Action.* The fact that not a single transport was ever attacked by either surface craft, aircraft or submarine during the whole of the operations is a proof of the success achieved in timing the arrival and departure of convoys and the provision of air cover and seaward reconnaissance. This was not of course achieved without detriment to air operations elsewhere, and imposed a severe strain on the small air forces available.

That co-operation was so successfully achieved was largely due to the practice of holding daily, or twice daily, meetings of the three commanders and to the effort to ensure that as far as possible all communications with higher authority on major policy were sent either as from the combined commanders or else were the subject of inter-service agreement before despatch.

39. *Higher Command.* Finally it is necessary to point out that the fact that Burma was included in the sphere of the Commander-in-Chief Eastern Fleet and subsequently transferred to that of Commander-in-Chief East Indies rendered it especially difficult to obtain naval support or guidance as to naval policy. For a considerable period the exact definition of responsibility was very vague.

40. *Inshore Operations.* A further matter that deserves future consideration was the absence of any organisation, or of suitable craft, for inshore operations on the coast line from India to Malaya. The possibilities of such action, in close co-operation with troops or marines especially trained in boat work, was very considerable, and it is suggested that it should in future be recognised as a special branch of naval activities. Attempts were made to develop an organisation of this kind based on the detachment of 100 marines referred to above. Before they had completed their training, however, the evacuation of Rangoon rendered it necessary to withdraw them up the River Irrawaddy where they have since done most valuable work.

VI. ARMY ADMINISTRATION.

41. *Lack of Preparation.* The following remarks are virtually a summary of administrative difficulties and of the reasons for admin-

istrative shortcomings during the period of the campaign under review. That there has not been an administrative breakdown is, in my opinion, entirely due to the efforts of my Major-General in charge of Administration, Major-General E. N. Goddard, and his staff, to keep the machine working in circumstances of almost insuperable difficulty which persisted throughout the campaign.

A gloomy picture is portrayed, which is nevertheless considered to be accurate. If the campaign had been an advance, instead of a withdrawal, many of the defects and shortcomings would not have been evident (e.g. poor discipline) and others would have been of less importance.

The course of the campaign should be a warning that the civil and military administration must come on to a war footing before hostilities commence. It is unfair to the troops, to the civil population, in fact unfair to everybody, to expect our loosely knit peace time system of civil and military administration to adapt itself quickly to war conditions.

The main administrative lesson of the campaign during the period is to prove once again that unless the administrative conception from the outset is sufficiently broad operations will be hampered. This is particularly true in a withdrawal.

42. *Basis of Administrative Plan.* After I arrived in Burma, the War Office laid down that administrative preparations were to be made on the basis of a force of four divisions. Demands were made therefore for L. of C. administrative and ancillary units, including a Corps H.Q. on this basis, but owing to the passage of events none of them materialised before the loss of Rangoon. Large amounts of equipment and personnel which had been urgently demanded by Burma before my arrival, were also sent out by the War Office, but practically all failed to arrive in time. Administrative difficulties were greatly accentuated by the necessity of giving fighting units the preference in the allotment of shipping, and also by the fact that certain ships had to be turned back owing to inability to handle them in Rangoon.

43. *Insufficiency of Administrative Units.* At no time during the campaign has there been an adequate number of administrative units; transport, supply, medical, transportation, provost, rest camps and mess, ordnance, and labour units have all been less than the number required to administer the force. Improvisation has been necessary on a scale which has made confusion inevitable. The problem would have been less complicated if the administrative layout had been set up before active operations commenced.

44. *Civil Departments.* The whole conduct of the military administration has been complicated by A.H.Q. having to deal with numerous civil departments and agencies who do not realise how quickly events move in war and are thus unable to realise that it is necessary to have unified control well ahead of any likely emergency. The civil railway and inland water transport agencies could not be persuaded, until it was too late, that it was vital to have unified control and to form some military operating units. The result was a breakdown in railway transportation which prevented the