

outlying detachments from the area west of the Zibyutaung Range. 33 Division had been forced back east of the Chindwin; it seemed probable that this Division would fight a series of delaying actions along the Kaing—Ye-U road, but there was as yet no indication that they would attempt a firm stand on any particular line. The depleted 31st Division was in Fifteenth Army reserve in the Ye-U area.

53 Division was in the Naba—Katha area. This Division, together with the 15th, 31st and 33rd mentioned above, comprised the Japanese Fifteenth Army. 14 Tank Regiment, which had suffered heavily in the retreat, was believed to be refitting in the Shwebo area.

Facing Northern Combat Area Command and the Chinese Expeditionary Force, there were 56, 2 and 18 Japanese Divisions, disposed between Bhamo and the Salween River. These formed Thirty-third Army, but 2 Division was only on loan and was to return to Burma Area Army reserve.

The Japanese Burma Area Army reserve consisted of 49 Division, in the Pegu Area. The Japanese were known to be particularly sensitive to the threat of sea-borne attack, and our deception schemes were designed to increase their fears. It was therefore unlikely that they would move troops from South to North Burma unless the situation there became critical. This also applied to 72 Independent Mixed Brigade at Moulmein.

In addition to the formations listed above, the Japanese had about 100,000 L. of C. troops. The fighting qualities which these administrative units displayed against General Wingate's brigades earlier in the year proved them to be a factor which could not be ignored. Experience in the Pacific theatre had shown that Japanese base troops were capable of stubborn and suicidal defence. The enemy also had at their disposal two "Indian National Army" divisions, each 6,000 strong, and seven battalions of the "Burma National Army." Both these forces had a considerable potential nuisance value.

To summarise, therefore, the enemy had, in November, ten divisions and two independent mixed brigades in Burma, disposed as follows:—33 Army (three divisions) facing Northern Combat Area Command in the north-east; 15 Army (four divisions) in the centre extending from the Railway Corridor, through the Zibyutaung Range, to the River Irrawaddy; 28 Army (two divisions) in the coastal sector; and a division in reserve.

23. The situation of our own forces during the latter part of November was briefly as follows.

In 15 Corps, in Arakan, 25 Indian Division (Major-General G. N. Wood) was in contact with the enemy in the general area of Maungdaw and the Maungdaw—Buthidaung road, the eastern portion of which, including Buthidaung, was in enemy hands. Our troops were actively engaged in clearing features of tactical importance prior to the coming main offensive in December.

26 Indian Division (Major-General C. E. N. Lomax) had one brigade forward at the head of the Kalapanzin River, in the area of Bawli, Taung and Goppe Bazaars, and two brigades in reserve. It was in process of being relieved

by the newly-arrived 82 (West African) Division (Major-General G. Mc I. S. Bruce) and was about to concentrate for training at Chittagong, in preparation for the sea-borne assault on Akyab in February.

In the upper Kaladan, elements of 81 (West African) Division (Major-General F. J. Loftus-Tottenham) had by-passed the enemy positions in the Paletwa area (Paletwa itself was found deserted on the 17th November) and were advancing south down the Pi Chaung. Their patrols, on the 30th November, were within two miles of Kaladan village, which lies some eight miles south-south-east of Paletwa.

3 Commando Brigade was concentrated at Teknaf and was responsible for the security of the Naf Peninsula.

50 Indian Tank Brigade had not concentrated by the 30th November, and 22 (East African) Brigade did not arrive till the end of December.

33 Corps was leading the advance of Fourteenth Army, with 5 Indian Division on the right, and 11 (East African) Division on the left. 5 Indian Division, which had advanced *via* Tiddim, was concentrating in the Kalemmyo area prior to being relieved. (Kalemmyo itself had been entered by the leading elements of 11 (East African) Division on the 15th November.) Between the 1st July and the 30th November, 5 Indian Division had killed fifteen of the enemy for every one of its own men killed. The actual casualty figures, excluding the Lushai Brigade area, and only including fresh bodies and wounded which the enemy were actually seen to remove, were:—

	<i>Killed.</i>	<i>Wounded.</i>	<i>Missing.</i>	<i>P.O.W.</i>
Japanese	1316	533	—	53
5 Indian Division	88	293	22	—

11 (East African) Division was advancing on Kalewa from the west and north. Two brigades moving along the Myitha Gorge, supported by tanks, were meeting strong opposition some six miles west of Kalewa. The third brigade was advancing south down both banks of the Chindwin and had reached a point seven miles north of the town by the 30th November.

2 British Division and 20 Indian Division, which had been in rest areas further north, had begun to concentrate forward, the former in the Yazagyo area and the latter about Htinzin. (Yazagyo and Htinzin lie in the Kabaw Valley, about 26 and 35 miles north of Kalemmyo respectively.)

The Lushai Brigade formed an Intelligence screen on the right flank of 33 Corps. By the end of November, the Brigade had cleared the area to the south of 5 Indian Division and was successfully harassing the enemy as far east as the Myittha River, with patrols penetrating as far south as Tilin.

Headquarters, 4 Corps, had reopened at Imphal on the 1st November, after a period of rest in India. On the 6th November, the Corps had been ordered to detail a brigade of 19 Indian Division (Major-General T. W. Rees) to capture Pinlebu and reconnoitre routes from the Chindwin eastwards to the railway, with a view to the move of larger forces on the general axis Sittaung—Indaw. Early reports received from both ground and air forces indicated that