

414. There can be few campaigns in history, fought under such adverse conditions, in which the general health of large armies was maintained at such a high level. It must not be forgotten that the primary function of the medical services is officially defined as the maintenance of health and prevention of disease, a function which in popular esteem tends to get lost sight of or overshadowed by the glamour of their other duties in tending the sick and wounded.

415. Turning to the other services, our Provost resources were seriously strained during the period under review, and great difficulty was experienced in the provision of trained personnel and of certain items of stores, particularly traffic control and signal equipment, also of vehicles of the correct type. With the rapid advance over difficult terrain, and the opposed crossings of the Chindwin and Irrawaddy, the control of traffic became a major problem. It was largely solved by the use of light aircraft under the direction of the Assistant Provost Marshal. Communications between ground and air were successfully maintained and outstanding results were achieved.

416. The question of Welfare was one to which I devoted much time and thought. Its importance was great, particularly owing to the total lack of amenities or even civilization to be found in the majority of the operational areas. Furthermore, short leave was a greater rarity in this theatre than in others owing to the length of time it took to send parties to and from India. Its importance was great for the numerous Indian troops, but even more so for the British and African soldiers serving in a land other than their own.

Leave hostels and camps were established for all ranks at suitable centres in India, through the efforts of India Command and the numerous voluntary workers who helped to run them. Further, many residents in India extended the hospitality of their homes to both officers and other ranks. I should like here to pay tribute to all those who helped in these ways.

Leave centres and clubs were planned for future establishment in Burma at such places as Maymyo, Mandalay and Rangoon, as were Amenity Store Depots which enabled troops whether British, Indian or African to purchase essential and other articles, which the country in which they were fighting could not supply. A great deal of welfare work was necessary in Rangoon; and careful forethought and planning was needed to ensure that sufficient personnel and equipment were brought in at once, by sea and air, to open several welfare centres within a few weeks of the capture of the city.

A large and increasing number of officers were employed by the Welfare Service, and results were continually more apparent. The introduction of the various women's services was both popular and successful, and the work done by the Women's Voluntary Service, the Women's Auxiliary Service (Burma) and by welfare workers of the First Aid Nursing Yeomanry was greatly appreciated by the troops of all the Allies.

Many philanthropic bodies sent their representatives to this theatre of war and did excellent work catering for the needs of the troops. Units of the Soldiers', Sailors', and Airmen's Families Association and of the Incorporated Soldiers' Sailors' and Airmen's

Help Society looked after the troops' personal interests in connection with their family affairs in the United Kingdom. I would like to mention, in particular, the Y.W.C.A. without whose work it would have been impossible to bring many women helpers of other organizations concerned into Rangoon.

There was a steady increase in the number of artistes sent out by E.N.S.A. for "live" entertainment and the standard was improved. That many "Stars" came out, was usually the result of personal letters to them. The Faiye Dilhust Shabah organized by India Command provided live entertainment for Indian troops. The transport for entertainment parties, including air transport represented considerable effort. It was difficult to bring cinema shows up to the standard I should have liked, for many reasons. Indian films were provided for the Indian troops.

Radio distribution vans were of value in broadcasting music and records to isolated units. Broadcasting was supplied at first from Delhi and later from Radio SEAC, but unfortunately the supply of wireless sets failed by thousands to reach the entitlement figure fixed by the War Office.

An adequate supply of reading matter was of first importance. Daily news was catered for by the newspaper SEAC, whose paid sales exceeded 20,000 a day in Fourteenth Army alone. A weekly magazine "Phoenix" started publication in February. The first consignment of 11,300 copies of Sunday newspapers from the United Kingdom was flown in in the Spring of 1945, and was very popular, troops being able to read their home papers only 7 days after publication. Reading matter for Indian troops presented special difficulties owing to differences of language.

Of welfare equipment generally, sports gear was satisfactory as a great amount was made in India, but gramophones, wireless sets (as already mentioned) and musical instruments were always in short supply and were many thousands below the target figure laid down.

417. The work of registration and concentration of the graves of battle casualties was kept well up to date. The Graves Registration Service had the important task of tracing missing and deceased prisoners of war, and a start was made to clarify the situation regarding Rangoon gaol, in which many Allied prisoners were held captive.

418. Army Educational Corps personnel have been primarily concerned with the production of daily news-sheets including some in the vernacular, which have kept the troops informed about their own and other war fronts, and in touch with home news and developments. Tackling the important task of the primary education of Indian troops has, of course, only been possible when formations have been withdrawn from active operations. A start was also made on post-war education to assist the soldier in learning or re-learning trades for civil life.

419. Finally, I will add a note on the work of the Royal Army Pay Corps and its Indian equivalent. Their task has been no easy one. During the Burma campaign, neither banks nor treasuries were available, and all the cash required for the Forces had to be taken into the country. The bulk of this was flown in and