

be commensurate with the expenditure in manpower and material which had been employed. These operations:—

(a) Did not affect the launching of the Japanese offensive against Assam.

(b) Had but little effect on the enemy's lines of communication to Assam. They delayed for one month up to three battalions of 15 Japanese Division, which might otherwise have reached the Imphal Front earlier.

(c) Although they severed the rail communications of 18 Japanese Division for about three months, only one battalion (from the 18 Divisional Reserve) was actually diverted from the front of General Stilwell's forces and that only for about a month.

(d) On the other hand, the Japanese were compelled to collect troops to meet the threat but they did not amount to more than twelve battalions at any one time, although the number of enemy battalions which were employed at one time or another added up to sixteen. The concentration of twelve battalions was not complete until two months after the original landings.

115. 16 L.R.P. Brigade, which had originally marched in from Ledo, was evacuated by air early in May. On the 17th May, the three remaining brigades of Special Force came under the command of General Stilwell in the Northern Combat Area Command and subsequently operated, in a normal infantry rôle, in the Kamaing—Mogaung—Myitkyina sector.

"Dahforce", which was composed of Kachin Levies, was flown in with Special Force and later amalgamated with three columns of 111 Brigade, the whole being re-named "Morrisforce" (already briefly mentioned in paragraph 103).

Before leaving the subject of Special Force, I wish to pay tribute to its gallant commander, Major-General Wingate, whose death occurred in a flying accident late in March. He was that rare combination of the dreamer and the man of action and his example and spirit will remain an inspiration to the men he trained. He was succeeded by his Second-in-Command, Major-General W. D. A. Lentaigne, C.B., C.B.E., D.S.O.

Lessons of the Campaign.

116. The following important facts emerge from a study of the operations undertaken during the first six months of 1944:—

(a) The reinforcements received were well trained, thanks to the training arrangements made by the Commander-in-Chief, India, and our troops, both individually and collectively, were able to engage the Japanese with confidence.

(b) Our ability to make full use of air supply by virtue of our air superiority has fundamentally altered the tactical picture, and enabled our troops not only to operate in country hitherto considered impassable and so attack the enemy, but also to hold positions when the enemy has cut their lines of communication.

(c) The operations have shown that ordinary formations can be transported quickly by air. They have also shown the need, for fighting under Far Eastern conditions, of a "Standard Infantry Division" which can be readily transported by rail, sea, M.T. or air.

(d) The urgent need for plenty of infantry in this theatre of war has again been emphasised. All divisions, except 19 Indian Division which was the only reserve at the disposal of the Commander-in-Chief, India, were engaged in the course of the fighting and no proper relief of formations was possible. The relief of tired troops is most important and it was not solved satisfactorily owing to shortage of troops.

Some of my divisions had, by last June, been in the forward areas for twenty-eight months. I need not stress the mental and physical strain which jungle warfare, under adverse climatic conditions, imposes on the soldier.

Naval Operations.

117. I wish to acknowledge the assistance given by coastal forces in the Arakan operations, which carried out valuable raids against vulnerable points on the coast, and were protection against possible small sea-borne raids by the enemy.

In March, 3 Commando Brigade (No. 5 Commando and No. 44 Royal Marine Commando) carried out successfully a small amphibious operation in the Alethangyaw area from St. Martin's Island, with the object of containing the enemy in that area and preventing the movement north of reinforcements during our main attack on the Maungdaw—Buthidaung road.

Although there was no large-scale naval activity in conjunction with land forces during the period under review, it was the ever present threat of amphibious operations which tied nearly two Japanese divisions to coastal areas.

Air Co-operation.

118. *Tasks.* The general tasks performed by Eastern Air Command during the first six months of the year were as follows:—

(a) Strategic air offensive to destroy enemy forces, transportation, and maintenance installations.

(b) Support of Fourteenth Army operations.

(c) Air defence of Calcutta and the adjacent industrial areas and, also, of the airfields used by the American Air Transport Command in North-East Assam for the China ferry service.

(d) Air transportation for airborne and air transit forces.

(e) Photographic reconnaissance.

119. *Strategic Air Force.* I am, of course, chiefly concerned with the air transport and tactical support given to Fourteenth Army, but I wish to acknowledge the assistance rendered by the Strategic Air Force. Their attacks on Rangoon and Bangkok, and, also, those on Saigon by 14 U.S.A.A.F. from China, have greatly impeded the flow of Japanese reinforcements and material into Burma. In fact, up till the time when monsoon conditions reduced air activity, Rangoon was practically denied to the enemy as a port. Operations against enemy-held ports have been supplemented by constant attacks against coastal shipping and, most important from my point of view, against rail communications and military installations. On