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OPERATIONS IN BURMA AND NORTH-EAST INDIA FROM 16th NOVEMBER, 1943 TO 22nd JUNE, 1944.

NOTE.—A set of maps for this Despatch is on separate sale at 1s. 0d. net. This set of maps also covers the operations described in the other Army and Air Despatches of the Burma Campaign from 16th November, 1943 to 12th September, 1945.

The following Despatch was submitted to the Secretary of State for War on the 19th June, 1945, by GENERAL SIR GEORGE J. GIFFARD, G.C.B., D.S.O., A.D.C., Commander-in-Chief, 11 Army Group, South-East Asia Command.

PART I.—INTRODUCTION.

1. This Despatch covers the operations in Burma and North-East India between the 16th November, 1943, the date on which the Supreme Allied Commander,* South-East Asia, assumed responsibility from the India Command, and the 22nd June, 1944, the date on which our lines of communication from Manipur Road (Dimapur) to Imphal were re-opened, after the defeat of the Japanese forces at Kohima. By this date, also, the enemy had been cleared from the area north of Kamaing, Mogaung and Myitkyina by the Chinese-American forces under General Stilwell,† and a re-adjustment of our dispositions to meet monsoon conditions had been made in Arakan. Thus a definite phase of the campaign may be said to have ended. The Despatch also gives an account of the administrative situation and certain major changes in our organization during the period.

Forces allotted and assigned to South-East Asia Command (S.E.A.C.).

2. The formation of the South-East Asia Command necessitated a reorganization of the system of command of the land forces. Until then, the Eastern Army had been under the command of the Commander-in-Chief, India,‡

who was responsible for the conduct of operations in Burma and Assam. The assumption of command by the Supreme Allied Commander entailed the formation of 11 Army Group Headquarters and of Fourteenth Army Headquarters, which then assumed command of the operations which had, up to then, been directed by me as G.O.C.-in-C., Eastern Army.

I was appointed to command 11 Army Group and Lieut.-General W. J. Slim,* was selected for command of Fourteenth Army.

The undermentioned formations, etc., previously under India Command, were allotted to South-East Asia Command:—

FOURTEENTH ARMY.

4 Corps.

Lieut.-General G. A. P. Scoones.†

17 Indian Light Division.

20 Indian Division (less 32 Brigade—joined end of November).

23 Indian Division.

15 Indian Corps.

Lieut.-General A. F. P. Christison.‡

5 Indian Division (less 9 Brigade—joined in December).

7 Indian Division.

26 Indian Division (less 4 Brigade—joined in February, 1944).

81 (West African) Division (less 3 Brigade, allotted to Special Force).

* Now Vice-Admiral The Earl Mountbatten of Burma, K.G., P.C., G.C.S.I., G.C.I.E., G.C.V.O., K.C.B., D.S.O.

† The late Lieut.-General Joseph W. Stilwell, United States Army.

‡ General (now Field-Marshal) Sir Claude J. E. Auchinleck, G.C.B., G.C.I.E., C.S.I., D.S.O., O.B.E.

* Now Field-Marshal Sir William J. Slim, G.B.E., K.C.B., D.S.O., M.C.

† Now General Sir Geoffrey A. P. Scoones, K.C.B., K.B.E., C.S.I., D.S.O., M.C.

‡ Now General Sir A. F. Philip Christison, Bart., G.B.E., C.B., D.S.O., M.C.