to an extent which made it feasible to undertake Zipper in August and we anticipated the capture of Singapore by the end of 1945.

The shipping resources available were, as ever, strictly limited, and it was decided that the assault should be carried out by a Corps. 34 Corps, formed *in embryo* in India for the Phuket operation under Lieut.-General O. L. Roberts (see para. 94) was therefore allotted to the new task of undertaking operation Zipper. General Roberts and the Naval and Air Force Commanders examined the problem, and produced by the 23rd June an appreciation and outline plan. They divided the operation into three phases ; the securing of the bridgehead, the advance to the Johore Causeway and the assault on Singapore. The last phase was Mailfist, and the two projects were combined into one.

298. At a meeting with the Supreme Commander at Delhi on the 30th May I was reluctantly compelled to tell Admiral Mountbatten that the effects of repatriation on my units was such that I must request a postponement of Zipper from August to early September.

ft had been decided by the War Cabinet that the period of overseas service necessary to qualify for repatriation was to be reduced by four months, and this decision resulted in British units being decimated by wholesale departures of battle experienced men to the United Kingdom. Training and reorganization was essential, and the Supreme Commander, considering this and certain other factors, accepted my recommendation. General Slim (who had by now taken charge of Zipper planning —see para. 282) and his colleagues were so informed, and detailed examination led to the 9th September being selected as D-Day.

299. The appreciation of the Japanese resistance to be expected, led us to anticipate that the landing would be lightly opposed, and that the subsequent build-up against it would be at the worst three divisions, and at the best not more than two, in addition to the garrison of Singapore itself. Against this we were able to deploy two divisions and one brigade on D-Day, rising to three divisions and a Parachute brigade by D plus 8 and a fourth division by D plus 25. This force, plus non-divisional troops, comprised 34 Corps. My plan after the seizure of the bridgehead was based on making a rapid advance on Singapore in order to avoid if possible a serious battle for the Island. If opposition proved light, 34 Corps was to begin the advance south as soon as possible; and we estimated this might be possible by D plus 13. It would even then be necessary to leave two divisions to secure the Port Dickson/Port Swettenham area, but the build-up from India and Rangoon was to come in any case. My plan was to bring in 15 Indian Corps to take over rearward commitments, and thereby allow the Commander, 34 Corps, to devote his entire energies to the advance south. I planned also a series of amphibian hooks down the coast, in order to cut off the Japanese facing 34 Corps and to prevent them retiring on to the Singapore garrison. To control these diverse operations and to conduct the battle on the ground, General Slim and his Fourteenth Army Headquarters was scheduled to arrive with the second Corps.

300. The landing itself was to be covered by carrier-borne aircraft for the first 8 to 10 days, by which time a strip had to be operating ashore. It was essential also to capture a port through which stores could be landed to supplement the small amount which could be taken over the beaches. The conclusion reached therefore was that the main assault by three brigades should go in over the Morib beaches on D-Day, with the object of securing the airstrips in the area and also Port Swettenham. Also on D-Day, another brigade was to land at Sepang to seize the road bridges there ; this subsidiary landing would be a support to the main one. In addition, on D plus 3, three more brigades were to land on the somewhat obvious beaches by Port Dickson, with the object of enlarging the bridgehead and seizing another usable port.

301. The plan described in outline above, was in fact carried out subsequent to the Japanese capitulation, but its execution did not take place during the period covered by my Despatch. Furthermore the Japanese surrender caused certain alterations to it, and I have therefore decided that it would be undesirable to go into fuller detail myself. At this point therefore I shall conclude the Operational portion of my Despatch, and follow with Part II which examines the very vital Administrative aspect of the campaign in considerable detail.

PART II

ADMINISTRATION

SECTION XIX (paras. 302-310)—THE MAINTENANCE PROBLEM

The Northern, Southern and Air Lines of Communication generally: The size of the problem.

302. The Japanese failure to solve their administrative difficulties in their attempt to invade India led them to disaster at Kohima and Imphal. The fact that we overcame the difficulties of administration resulted in the reconquest of Burma. The problem that faced us was immense, and the effort that was put into its solution was as great. In the final analysis of military history this may be the outstanding feature of the campaign, and it is with this in mind, that I intend to go into this aspect more fully than is usual in a Despatch.

303. The outstanding administrative problem of an army is usually its maintenance ; that is, the unfailing supply of all the commodities which keep that army fighting in the field. The base for our operations was India. The railheads were at Chittagong (with short extensions to Dohazari and to the north for the Arakan coast) ; Dimapur (Manipur Road), railhead for Fourteenth Army ; and Ledo and Chabua for Northern Combat Area Command and the United States air ferry route to China. These railheads thus joined the only three road entries to Burma from the north. A certain degree of flexibility was provided between the Assam lines to Dimapur, Ledo and Chabua and the Eastern Bengal lines to Chittagong by the rail link between Lumding and Badarpur, though this link was of limited capacity owing to gradients. The whole system of communications between India and Burma has already been fully described by my predecessor, Gen-