

backloading of valuable and vital stores from Rangoon to the extent that would otherwise have been possible; and great confusion and waste of effort in the Irrawaddy Flotilla Company.

45. *The Base.* The base must be far enough in rear of the zone of operations to obviate the need to move it. Rangoon was too far forward. Base installations should have been sited in Upper Burma before the outbreak of war.

The force was too highly equipped with M.T. for the terrain which in the main demanded a very comprehensive employment of pack transport.

The tendency of many Burma units, including administrative units, to disintegrate has caused administrative confusion and inefficiency apart from the effect on operations. Owing to demands for administrative units in the Middle East and elsewhere, Burma was advised to raise as many of such units as she could from available indigenous material. This is not generally possible under war conditions and the personnel available were quite unreliable.

46. *Transport* Units landed without their transport which had to be improvised. Improvised transport impaired fighting efficiency and was instrumental in lowering morale. As the theatre of operations approached Rangoon it was essential that transport should sail in the same ship (or the same convoy) as the unit to which it belonged. As it was troops had to go into battle as soon as they landed, without transport, and much equipment was lost in consequence.

Transport has been very short and but for 620 lorries presented by the Generalissimo from Lease-Lend the force would have been immobilised.

Transport for supplying the Chinese armies was obtained by taking up large amounts of civilian transport employed on the Burma road. A complete firm with its staff, workshops, spares and lorries was eventually taken over as an army unit and proved invaluable. The drivers, however, were local civilians who proved of very doubtful quality.

47. *Discipline.* The continued withdrawal and the inevitable straggling resulting from fighting in thick jungle undoubtedly affected discipline to a considerable extent. The presence of a large number of young officers and soldiers accentuated this.

It is a mistake to "make units up" with recruits and young officers just before they go on service. It would be better to send them into their first battle below strength and to make them up gradually later when the trained men have become accustomed to war conditions.

Similarly it would be better to send units into battle on a low scale of equipment and transport than to make them up to a new scale to which they are unaccustomed, when they are just on the point of embarkation.

48 *Provost, etc* The lack of Provost, Rest Camps and Mess Units has all tended to break down administration and, therefore, to impair discipline.

The units from India were undoubtedly handicapped owing to the lack of interpreters or liaison personnel who could speak the local

language. Every effort was made to remedy this deficiency which had not been foreseen in pre-war plans.

The composition of brigades and divisions has constantly been changed which is not conducive to the maintenance of an esprit de corps. Great stress is laid in India on this factor during training, and it is regrettable that owing to unavoidable causes, the shortage of troops and of reinforcements, and heavy casualties, brigades and even units had to be broken up.

49. *Disembarkation* One of the best administrative achievements during the period has been the disembarkation arrangements, especially during the period subsequent to the 21st February. Lack of civilian dock labour, frequent changes of orders, a virtual breakdown of transportation all tested the embarkation staff to the full. Lieut.-Colonel Hallett, the chief embarkation staff officer, is to be congratulated on a very fine achievement in that disembarkation was so quickly and successfully carried out under most difficult conditions.

50. *Medical.* Medical staff had to be created and although medical conscription had been accepted it had not been enforced to any considerable extent by a committee appointed by the Burma Government. Many potential medical officers were thus lost.

The Indian Hospital Corps (I.H.C.) have been satisfactory. The Burma Hospital Corps (B.H.C.) poor originally in quality and quantity, has failed badly in the time of stress owing to mass desertions. The B.H.C. was eventually in danger of disintegrating altogether.

Sweepers, cooks, water carriers and washermen were difficult to find after the bombing of Rangoon.

Lack of transport has been a serious handicap. Two Motor Ambulance Sections arrived with no cars. One improvised Motor Ambulance Section has never had more than 15 cars. All were Fords and all broke their backshafts. Field ambulances arrived without transport.

Every medical unit must have transport of some kind included in its War Equipment Table (W.E.T.). Field medical units must be self mobile. It is impossible to get transport from any pooled sources in a crisis, and so valuable equipment is lost.

All existing medical services were badly handicapped by the cheeseparing policy adopted when they were raised. Burma Army units were raised on a reduced scale totally inadequate for their work.

Two improvised Ambulance Trains were provided initially. They were not good, being non-corridor, but they have been of great value and have saved the situation many times. Number 3 Train was made up just before the crisis and was fortunately kept where it was intended, on the Prome line. This has time and again proved its value. Without these trains medical evacuation would have collapsed.

The initiative and resources of some members of all classes of the medical services, especially British, Indian and Karen, have been excellent on many occasions, and have frequently surmounted considerable difficulties and kept the service going.