

Our casualties from North Burma (36 British Division) were also flown back, at first by light aircraft and later by returning heavy transport planes, to our forward base hospitals in the Ledo area.

150. The organization needed when large numbers of casualties are moved by air was being studied during the past six months. A start was made to reduce the wasteful "ribbon" distribution of hospitals, which had hitherto had to be maintained along the L. of C. solely for transit purposes, and to concentrate beds in large hospital centres. This policy, as it develops, will allow a much larger number of cases to be retained in the Fourteenth Army area until they are fit to return to their units, and thereby avoid the many drawbacks in their evacuation to base hospitals in India.

151. The following is a summary in round figures of casualties moved between the 25th June and the 12th November:—

	Within Fourteenth Army	Ex- Fourteenth Army	TOTAL
By Road ...	26,300	—	26,300
By Rail ...	22,300	—	22,300
By Air ...	29,800	3,000	32,800
By Sea ...	9,500	15,100	24,600
By River ...	3,900	12,800	16,700
	91,800	30,900	122,700

Note.—All casualties are sent by river to the railheads of the India Command.

152. *Incidence of Disease.* The period June to November has witnessed a steady fall in the sick rate. The daily rate per

thousand of 4.2, at the peak period in June, compares favourably with the peak figure of 6.0 in 1943. In November, the incidence was only 3.0 compared with 5.0 per thousand in the same month last year. This reduction was mainly due to the fall in the malaria rate, which is due to a steady improvement in malaria discipline.

153. D.D.T. had not been used on a scale adequate to show its capabilities, but experiments were being made.

154. Apart from malaria, there were two other somewhat serious outbreaks of disease; dysentery, which reached its peak in June and July, and scrub typhus, which caused much sickness between August and October. The dysentery died down in October, but emphasised once more the necessity for maintaining a high standard of sanitation. Effective preventive measures against scrub typhus have been discovered by the medical officer who was lent to South-East Asia Command by the Colonial Office and attached to my headquarters.

155. Since my first Despatch, the consulting physician, surgeon, malariologist and psychiatrist have arrived at this Headquarters and their advice has proved most valuable.

156. *Casualties.* The following table gives a summary of our battle casualties from the 1st July to the 1st November and, for comparison, a statement showing the Japanese casualties during the same period. The numbers of enemy killed are those whose bodies were actually counted and they do not include the casualties inflicted by our air action:

CASUALTIES 1ST JULY, 1944 TO 1ST NOVEMBER, 1944.

	Killed	Wounded	Missing
<i>Fourteenth Army fronts.</i>			
British	583	2,001	110
Japanese	8,859	—	234 prisoner
<i>Northern Combat Area Command</i>			
British*	513	1,389	47
Japanese†	3,724	—	246 prisoners

* Special Force and 36 British Division.

† Figures include casualties inflicted by American and Chinese forces.

The Japanese losses in killed alone exceeded our total losses in killed, wounded and missing.

Welfare and Morale.

157. *British Troops.* The morale of the troops has reached a high level, for they have shown their superiority over the Japanese.

The main interest of the British troops is centred in repatriation. Service in a distant Eastern Theatre is unpopular and the British soldier looks forward to going Home. The handling of this important question by the Government appeared in the eyes of the men unsympathetic, but the reduction in the period of service overseas has convinced the men of the sincerity of the Government.

The grant of Japanese Campaign Pay and War Service Increment and the White Paper on Release were generally welcomed.

158. "Mail" and "Rations" improved greatly; the film situation also improved and additional Kinema Sections were allotted to

South-East Asia Command. "Live Entertainment" remained inadequate, for there were too few E.N.S.A. shows and Indian Concert Parties. Radio entertainment was increased to thirty hours per week. The newspaper "S.E.A.C." grew in popularity, its circulation by November having reached some 30,000 copies daily. Travelling facilities for men going on leave continued, however, to be bad, in spite of strenuous efforts that were made to improve them. Shortage of railway equipment and rolling stock caused many of the difficulties.

159. I wish to mention three institutions in Imphal which did much to alleviate conditions in the forward area:—

(a) An Officers' Club was opened, the popularity of which proved that it filled a long felt want.

(b) Toc H Canteen, known as "The Elephant Arms", had an average nightly attendance of 1,000 British soldiers. The attached leave hostel was also popular.