

that they might make some stand in the Tiddim area. If they did so, their forces would be threatened by the advance of our troops down the Kabaw Valley.

76. The East Africans had advanced a further 15 miles down the Kabaw Valley towards Kalemyo, and had reached a point 26 miles south of Htinzin. Bad weather was a greater obstacle to their advance than the enemy.

Other East African troops had occupied Sittaung on the Chindwin on the 4th September and established a bridgehead on the eastern bank of the river. They were relieved in this area by an Indian formation at the end of the month.

77. *North Burma.* 36 British Division, moving down the Myitkyina-Mandalay railway, had entered Hopin unopposed on the 7th September. They found 500 Japanese bodies in the precincts of the village. By the end of September, patrols had reached Mohnyin.

Chinese troops in the Kazu area had advanced eleven miles south of the village.

78. *Order of Battle (Moves).* The last of the Long-Range Penetration Brigades of Special Force was withdrawn from Burma into India during the month.

17 Indian Light Division left 33 Corps for India.

2 British Division and 20 Indian Division were resting at Imphal; 7 Indian Division was at Kohima and 23 Indian Division at Shillong.

79. *Record of 33 Corps.* In the six months ending September, 33 Corps, which first took the field at Dimapur in April, had done sterling work. During an advance of nearly 300 miles to the Tiddim area and about 270 to Yazago in the Kabaw Valley, 9,746 of the enemy were killed and 459 Japanese and 331 J.I.F. prisoners taken. 81 guns and 1,284 vehicles had been captured.

80. *Revised Task for 15 Indian Corps.* On the 28th September, the Commander, Fourteenth Army, in view of the re-grouping of the Japanese forces in Arakan, issued a fresh Operation Instruction to 15 Indian Corps. The bulk of 55 Japanese Division had been transferred from North Arakan into the lower Irrawaddy Valley, leaving a force of approximately four battalions in the forward area. Three more enemy battalions belonging to 54 Japanese Division were on Akyab Island and in the lower Kaladan Delta, and five battalions were in the coastal area between the Barongas and Cheduba Island. Thus the enemy was in no position to launch a serious attack. The tasks allotted to 15 Indian Corps on the 4th September were, therefore, changed and the Commander was ordered—

(a) To secure the area Chittagong—Cox's Bazaar to prevent the enemy's interference with our preparations for a future airborne offensive.

(b) To secure the estuary of the Naf as a base for light coastal forces and landing craft.

(c) To carry out reconnaissance, bombardments and raids from the sea along the whole Arakan coast to force the enemy to lock up troops in this area.

(d) To exploit any withdrawal or thinning out of the Japanese forces in Arakan.

*Operation Instructions issued during October.*

81. On the 1st October, the Army Commander issued an Instruction to 33 Corps which stated that:—

(a) His intention was to concentrate Fourteenth Army eastwards in the Shwebo-Mandalay Plain, to bring the enemy to battle and destroy him.

(b) The tasks of 33 Corps were:—

(i) To capture the area Kalemyo-Kalewa.

(ii) To establish a bridgehead over the Chindwin at Kalewa.

(iii) To advance eastwards as quickly as possible and capture the Ye-U area with the object of establishing air strips.

(c) 4 Corps was concentrating in the Imphal area and would be flown into the Ye-U-Shwebo area at a later date.

The troops allotted to 33 Corps were 2 British Division, 5 and 20 Indian Divisions, 11 (East African) Division, and the Lushai Brigade, but 5 Indian Division would be withdrawn into Army reserve when Kalemyo had been captured.

221 Group R.A.F. would be responsible for air support, and air supply would increase progressively from 244 tons per day on the 1st October to 364 tons from the 1st November onwards.

82. On the 6th October, I told the Commander, Fourteenth Army, that 3 Commando Brigade (four Commandos) would be placed under his command from mid-October, and that they were to be employed to encourage the enemy to believe that amphibious operations were imminent on the Arakan coast.

83. I issued an important Instruction to the Commander, Fourteenth Army, on the 11th October, regarding Allied operations in Burma, 1944-45. In this, I repeated a Directive received from the Supreme Allied Commander, which stated that:—

"Allied Forces in South-East Asia Command will conduct concerted offensive operations with the object of destroying or expelling all Japanese forces in Burma at the earliest date. Operations to achieve this object must *not*, however, prejudice the security of the existing air supply route to China, including the air staging port at Myitkyina, and the opening of overland communications."

I confirmed in more detail the objectives for which I had ordered plans to be prepared in my Instruction of the 29th July.

The Fourteenth Army Order of Battle was:—

33 Corps—2 British Division, 5 Indian Division initially, 11 (East African) Division, 20 Indian Division, 254 Indian Tank Brigade, Lushai Brigade, 268 Indian Lorried Infantry Brigade (subsequently transferred to 4 Corps). 4 Corps—7 and 19 Indian Divisions, 50 Indian Parachute Brigade for a specific airborne operation. 255 Indian Tank Brigade, which was to move to Imphal in October. 28 (East African) Brigade, due to move to Imphal in November.

I have given the composition of each Corps, but the allotment of divisions to Corps was, of course, left to the Commander, Fourteenth Army.