

covering approaches and centres of communication and to have behind these defended localities hard-hitting mobile forces available to counter-attack the enemy should he attempt to surround the defence. When this method was tried in the battle south of Prome it was already too late, for by that time supplies were too scarce to be risked in any large quantity in the forward area and the fear of being cut off was already too deeply implanted in the minds of the soldiers.

95. *Morale.* Properly to appreciate the achievements of the Burma Army, it is necessary to know something of its experiences before my arrival. At the battle of the Sittang the 17 Division was cut off and had to swim the river. The equivalent of a brigade was lost and the remainder arrived on the west bank practically naked, with no equipment and with only some of their personal weapons. It is a high tribute to the Commanders in this formation that the Division was reformed and re-equipped and with the addition of the 63 Infantry Brigade fought gallantly for another three months before withdrawing into India. The 1 Burma Division suffered constantly from the disintegration of its indigenous units but it in turn reorganised to include battalions brought in from outside, and remained a fighting formation to the end. This clearly illustrates the influence which a few really good Commanders can exercise.

Practically every formation in these two Divisions had at one time or another been surrounded by the enemy and had fought its way out. This had a cumulative effect.

Further, the 17 Division fought for five months without rest and practically without reinforcement and for only one period of three days did it have another formation between it and the enemy. This was a big strain.

The loss of air superiority also had a moral effect out of all proportion to the damage done by enemy air attacks.

One of the biggest factors which influenced morale was the sense of being cut off from the outside world. This had an influence on the soldier which I did not appreciate until the closing stages of the campaign for, when the troops knew that they were no longer cut off from outside assistance, they fought with renewed vigour and gallantry.

The value of long training as a formation and the confidence resulting therefrom was well exemplified by the 7 Armoured Brigade which retained its cheerful outlook and fighting capacity throughout.

96. *Air.* I have already commented at some length on the air situation and I do not propose to say more except to record once again that the lack of aircraft in India, as in Malaya, was one of the causes of failure.

97. *Unity of Command.* There was no real unity of command of the Allied Forces in Burma, although I had been nominally appointed the Commander of the Chinese Armies. Consequently full use could not be made of the forces available and I feel most strongly that, allied as we are to different nations, unity of command must be achieved in each separate theatre of war.

Appendix "A"

ORDER OF BATTLE—CHINESE ARMIES IN BURMA

Chinese Fifth Army :—

22 Division	}	Employed on Toungoo front South of Mandalay.
96 Division		
200 Division		

Chinese Sixth Army :—

55 Division	Loilem—Loikaw—Karenni	}	Southern Shan States.
49 Division	Mongpan area		
93 Division	Kengtung area		

Chinese 66 Army :—

38 Division	...	Originally allotted for defence of Mandalay, but subsequently placed under command 1 Burcorps.
28 Division	...	Relieved 38 Division at Mandalay, subsequently moved back to Hsipaw.
(two regiments only)		

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