

I include, for information, the composition of Northern Combat Area Command.

36 British Division.

5332 Brigade (two U.S. regiments, one Chinese regiment).

Chinese Army in India.

Chinese Expeditionary Force (when released by the Generalissimo).

Fort Hertz Kachin Levies (re-enlisted for service under Northern Combat Area Command).

Chinese-American airborne units.

84. I issued the following administrative orders:—

(a) The Tamu - Indaingyi - Kalewa - Ye-U road to be improved to a capacity of 300 tons daily and to an all-weather standard.

(b) The construction of the Manipur Road - Imphal pipeline to be continued as rapidly as resources permitted.

(c) Inland Water Transport on the Chindwin to be used to the maximum extent possible.

(d) Before the outbreak of the monsoon in 1945, reserve stocks to be built up forward of Kalewa for 45 days, plus 15 days' working stocks.

#### *Operations in October.*

85. *Arakan—15 Indian Corps.* On the front of 25 Indian Division, there was no renewal of the fighting which occurred at the end of September, and activity in the coastal sector and east of the Mayu Range was reduced to vigorous patrolling and artillery fire.

On 26 Indian Division's front, however, the Japanese attempted a reconnaissance in force of our left flank. A raiding force drawn from all three regiments of 55 Japanese Division penetrated into the Goppe Bazaar area and between the 6th and the 8th October we repelled attacks at Panzai and in the vicinity of Goppe. Our counter-attack was quick and strong and by the end of the week the enemy had been dispersed into the hills, losing two-thirds of his strength killed and much equipment.

Our patrols were active in the area during the rest of the month.

86. 3 *Commando Brigade* arrived at the end of October and assumed responsibility for the Teknaf Peninsula south of 26 Indian Division's boundary.

87. 81 (*West African*) Division. Early in the month, the Japanese based on Daletme and Paletwa showed considerable activity, but 81 (*West African*) Division continued its advance eastward to the Kaladan. They occupied Mowdok and drove the enemy out of Labawa, six miles to the north-east. After this, resistance became sporadic and by the 25th October units of both brigades had reached and crossed the Kaladan and were in contact with the enemy on the east bank. At the end of the month one brigade had begun to advance down the Kaladan River, while the other was moving south down the Pi Chaung.

88. *Situation in Arakan at the End of the Monsoon.* Although the monsoon prevented major operations by either side, we had before it ended seized the initiative and occupied several important positions beyond our front line in the Mayu Peninsula. At the same time, 81 (*West African*) Division had moved across to the Kaladan Valley and captured Mowdok,

thereby controlling the routes from the Kaladan into the Sangu Valley, and removing a threat to our airfields and base.

89. *Chindwin Front—33 Corps: (a) 5 Indian Division (Tiddim - Kalemio Road).* Enemy resistance in scattered pockets both east and west of the road continued, and by the 4th October the battle for Tiddim was developing. Tiddim lies some 5,600 feet above sea-level, 162 miles from Imphal. At about Milestone 149, the road leaves the Manipur River and climbs 3,700 feet in the next ten miles, the first six of which consist of a series of steep hairpin bends. The Japanese were holding strongly dug-in positions about Milestone 158, with a forward position at Milestone 152. They were also entrenched at Valvum (6,000 feet) and Sialam Vum (8,000 feet), which are strong natural features about three miles and seven miles east of Tiddim respectively.

90. By the 10th October enemy resistance at Milestone 152 had been broken and operations, which, in spite of bad weather, were receiving strong air support, were in progress against stubborn and fierce opposition in the Milestone 158, Valvum and Sialam Vum areas. A wide turning movement, by an infantry brigade, found the enemy also strongly entrenched at Tuibal, thirteen miles east of Tiddim.

91. We pressed our attack with great vigour throughout the following week. The final assault on the positions at Milestone 158 covering Tiddim was supported by a co-ordinated attack by tanks and Hurribombers. A thick mist hid the advancing tanks, while the noise of their engines was drowned by the roar of low-flying aircraft. Complete surprise was achieved and the position was captured. Tiddim was occupied on the 18th October, by which date the Valvum, Sialam Vum and Tuibal positions had also been captured.

92. After the occupation of Tiddim, one brigade continued the advance along the Tiddim - Kalemio road, strong resistance at Milestone 7 being turned by a detachment from Valvum. The Japanese, however, again made a determined stand at Milestone 11 and to the north of it.

93. Meanwhile another brigade, west of Tuibal, was attacking positions on the Dolluang - Kennedy Peak track, in conjunction with detachments of the Lushai Brigade which had come up behind the enemy from the south-west. Successful air strikes were a feature of these operations.

94. By the end of the month, good progress had been made against the main enemy positions in the Vital Corner - Fort White area, "Vital Corner" being the name given to the bend, about Milestone 13, where the road, after running due east and west, turns sharp south. One brigade had successively captured enemy positions from Sialam Vum, through Milestone 11, to Khum Vum, a 7,000 foot mountain about four miles south of the road, and had established a block at Milestone 14. A second brigade was making a shallow right hook to the south of the road, while the remaining brigade of the Division was engaged in a deeper turning movement farther south to cut off the enemy in the Fort White area. Vital Corner was thus virtually surrounded and the reduction of its defences with maximum air and artillery support was in progress.