

(d) *Ammunition.* There was a serious shortage but sufficient of the more common types to last up to the rains when expenditure was likely to be on a reduced scale.

(e) *Ordnance Stores.* There was a shortage of clothing and equipment but there was a reasonable stock of small arms.

82. With no supplies coming into the country from outside, the administrative problem resolved itself into the back loading of supplies in conformity with the projected plan of operations. As the army withdrew to the north it was to a large extent carrying its base with it and in common with most administrative situations the problem was largely one of transportation.

83. *I.W.T.* On the Irrawaddy a system of short hauls had to be adopted, owing to the time required for the turn round of steamers, of which owing to the lack of crews there were too few in commission. The desertion of crews began soon after the evacuation of Rangoon and it was accentuated by the bombing of Mandalay and other places on the river and by the need to take some steamers into the forward area where they were more exposed to air attack. The tales spread by crews returning from the front led to wholesale desertions. Some I.W.T. personnel were flown in from India and, further to help the situation and to set an example, I released twenty junior Staff Officers who volunteered for work on ships in any capacity. The greatest credit is due to Mr. Morton of the Irrawaddy Flotilla Company and his staff who, by their devotion to duty and cheerfulness, succeeded in keeping a large fleet of steamers at work right up to the end when, in order that they should not fall into enemy hands, vessels were sunk at Mandalay and Thabeikkyin and later at Sittaung.

84. The railway situation was very similar to that on the Irrawaddy in that the dominating factor was the disintegration of the operating personnel. The desertions of railway operating personnel became so serious that in April I called in the late Manager of the Burma Railways, Sir John Rowland, who was at this time at Lashio in charge of the construction of the Yunman-Burma Railway. Sir John Rowland undertook to do all in his power to keep the railway personnel at their posts. The main plank in his platform was the evacuation of families of railway workmen. In this, I am sure, he was right, but the strain of evacuating 10,000 women and children by train at a time when every wagon was required for the movement of stores or military personnel was almost more than the administrative machine could bear. Nevertheless, although their capacity was reduced the railways kept going as long as was humanly possible, due largely to the efforts of Lieut.-Colonel C. P. Brewitt and his staff.

85. *Effect of Destruction of Oilfields.* On the 16th April, the oilfields were destroyed. This at once set a limit to the length of the campaign. The collection and distribution of rice alone was dependent almost entirely on motor transport and without rice the armies could not be fed. The stocks of petrol held in the middle of April were estimated to be sufficient for two months, but they were widely distributed and the shortage of P.O.L. was felt before the Imperial Forces reached India.

It is interesting to note that the effect of the destruction of the oilfields was never fully appreciated by the Chinese who proposed to send more troops into Burma after the destruction had taken place.

86. *Medical.* The problem of evacuating to India the sick and wounded was a source of constant anxiety. After the loss of Rangoon, casualties were evacuated by air from Shwebo and later from Myitkyina. During April, however, when such evacuation was easy, sufficient aircraft were not available with the result that there was an accumulation of sick and wounded in the hospitals in Burma.

When the withdrawal north of Mandalay commenced, I decided that the sick and wounded must be evacuated at all costs. Consequently, hospital equipment and medical stores were abandoned in order to save the patients.

At the end of April when the Japanese captured Lashio a considerable number of sick and wounded were on the Irrawaddy en route to Myitkyina. It was impossible to make any change in this plan but I understand that the majority of these men reached India safely.

The remainder of the sick and wounded were evacuated to India by motor transport. There can be no doubt that many of the wounded travelling in lorries over the bumpy tracks to Shwegyin and Tamu endured great suffering. It was better, however, that they should endure this rather than be left behind and the fact that 2,300 men were evacuated in this way, with very little transport available, is evidence of the efficiency and tireless devotion of the Medical Directorate.

87. *Changes of Plan* As will have been seen from preceding paragraphs, changes of plan were almost inevitable in the circumstances prevailing. That I should have been able to change a plan, for which administrative arrangements had already been made, was, under the difficult transport conditions prevailing, a high tribute to the staff.

88. *Administration of the Chinese Armies.* This Report would not be complete without some account of the administration of the Chinese armies operating in Burma.

The Chinese have no administrative services as understood in a modern army. Until the arrival of the Chinese Expeditionary Force in Burma the Chinese had never operated outside their own country where they depend for rations upon local purchase and for transport upon local requisitions of vehicles and animals. Casualties are handed over to voluntary organisations or left in the villages to be cared for by the inhabitants. These facts were not fully realised until the arrival of the Chinese Armies in Burma and this resulted in the administration of the Chinese forces being unsatisfactory throughout the campaign. The position was aggravated by the serious shortage of administrative units available in the Army in Burma. These were inadequate at the outbreak of war and the position grew worse when reinforcements arrived without services due to shipping difficulties. As a result, the administrative organisation which could be placed at the disposal of the Chinese was inadequate.

The gap was to some extent filled by the Staff of the Chinese Liaison Mission who.