

This question has been dealt with in some detail because it vitally affected the campaign. Instead of Indian battalions stiffening, as was hoped; the Burma Rifles, the effect was exactly the opposite. However, as more than half the forces available consisted of Burma Rifles there was no alternative to making use of them even after their lack of training began to be disclosed.

The possible failure of the attenuated services behind the Army, especially M.T., was a source of constant anxiety. As regards equipment and transport the situation was equally serious and no units had their full scale and some, such as signal units and A.A. batteries, had practically none. The force, such as it was, was quite unprepared for war. Reserves were of course practically nil.

5. *Levies.* As regards levies or guerrillas, efforts had already been made to start an organisation in the Shan States. This was now extended to the Karen country of North Tenasserim. Although started very late in the day it was undoubtedly of value in providing a foundation for larger scale operations in the future, a deterrent to Japanese infiltration of the hills in that area and a valuable threat to the so-called free Burmese of the plains below.

6. *Burma Frontier Force.* There was also the Burma Frontier Force of the equivalent of six battalions which had only just been taken over by the Army from the Civil Administration, but the Inspector-General remained responsible for the administration of the force. It consisted for the most part of good Indian personnel but was numerically weak in officers and neither its organisation nor its training really fitted it to take part in active operations against a first-class enemy.

7. *British and Indian Troops.* The remainder of the troops available consisted of two British battalions, two Indian infantry brigades and one Mountain Regiment.

8. *Enemy Forces.* Very little was known about the enemy owing both to the lack of intelligence and of aircraft for reconnaissance. The thick jungle country rendered air or even ground reconnaissance very unproductive. It was known, however, that there were three or four Japanese divisions available in Thailand of which at least two could probably be made available for operations against Burma. In view of the weak state of our forces and the approach of the monsoon there appeared to be every reason why the Japanese should invade Burma as early as possible.

9. *Appreciation.* A full appreciation of the defence problem of Burma was completed by me on 10th January. It formed the basis of policy throughout the period of my command. I should like here to refer to the valuable help and assistance given me throughout my tenure of command by my B.G.S., Brig. H. L. Davies, whose judgment and military knowledge proved invaluable in dealing with a most difficult situation.

10. *Bombing of Rangoon.* On the 23rd December and again on the 25th December just before I arrived, Rangoon was bombed by a large force of enemy aircraft. These attacks were directed against the dock area and in the neighbourhood of the power station. Extensive damage was caused by fires among the crowded wooden houses and huts in the bombed area

and civilian casualties due mainly to anti-personnel bombs were very heavy indeed, amounting to approximately 1,700-2,000 people killed. Very little damage of a military nature occurred and the only damage to the docks was the destruction of one transit shed.

11. *Effects of Bombing.* The bombing had, however, a very serious repercussion as servants, menials, all subordinate employees, and coolies including the dock labourers, at once commenced to leave the town. As there were many ships loaded with military stores for the Army and with Lease and Lend stores for China waiting discharge, the results were serious.

Practically all Government offices, shops, markets, hospitals etc., lost almost the whole of their subordinate staffs as also did the Ordnance, Military Works, Transportation services, etc. For a time there was in some cases great difficulty in obtaining and preparing food as almost all servants, cooks, etc., had also departed.

Rangoon town was not raided again; thereafter the enemy directed all his efforts against the aerodrome at Mingaladon and that neighbourhood. As a result of this policy labour gradually regained confidence and a useful proportion returned to work.

Taken as a whole, however, the situation was never restored. Military units for essential work became available only on a very limited scale and the working of all transportation, works, labour, etc., for services was most precarious throughout the period prior to the fall of Rangoon.

12. The organisation of the A.R.P. services in Burma was carried out by Mr. de Graff Hunter who did most excellent work in spite of great difficulties in securing suitable personnel. This organisation, like others based on locally recruited personnel, soon showed a tendency to disintegrate in face of attack.

13. *Fighter Successes.* During the first two air raids over Rangoon the R.A.F. and A.V.G. fighters were most successful and not less than 61 enemy first-line bombers and fighters were claimed as destroyed on these two days. A further large number were shot down during subsequent raids.

It is significant to note that on no occasion were the oil installations in the Rangoon area attacked and later we were able to remove with confidence for use elsewhere a proportion of the A.A. artillery detailed for the defence of Syriam.

14. *Observer Corps.* I should here like to draw attention to the fact that until the Central Telephone Exchange in Rangoon closed down on the 28th February no enemy air raid reached the Rangoon area without warning passed by the Observer Corps posts. Until Tenasserim was lost the average period of warning was forty minutes but this of course gradually decreased as the enemy closed in on Rangoon.

In all cases the Observer Posts were manned by local inhabitants who passed the warning by pre-arranged codes over the Posts and Telegraphs or Railway systems, the average time taken to pass a warning message being about two minutes. The success of the system depended on the wholehearted support of the Posts and Telegraphs officials and in particular thanks are due to Mr. Nesbitt-Hawes the D.G., P. and T., who devised the communication system and who until the last was always