

38. *P.R.U.**—Up to half-way through January there were a few Buffaloes in 67 Squadron with the necessary range. They undertook long reconnaissance. When these were finished we were without long reconnaissance until in the first week of February 2 P.R.U. Hurricanes en route for Java remained in Burma. These were attached to Hurricane Squadrons and met our P.R.U. requirements on an outline basis only.

39. *Balloons*.—An advanced party of 274 Balloon Wing arrived and reconnaissance of sites commenced. The Balloon Wing, which was diverted from Basra, did not arrive in time and, in consequence, balloon defence was not available.

40. *R.D.F. Warning*.—Of the considerable programme of R.D.F. in Burma (3 chain stations 2 C.O.L. and 2 G.C.I.) only one C.O.L. set was in the country, the balance not having arrived. This one was at Moulmein, but its arc of observation there was ineffective. It was therefore moved out for the defence of Rangoon. It was later moved to Magwe. No spares of any kind existed for this set but local arrangements were possible to keep it in action until it left Rangoon. The lack of adequate R.D.F. equipment of the M.R.U. or Chain Station and C.O.L. type exerted a critical influence on the air battle in Burma, since *early warning* of low flying fighter attack and high flying bomber attack was an essential quality of successful air operations. Without such warning an air force inferior in numbers—as ours constantly was—faced annihilation as indeed later happened at Magwe.

41. To summarize under this heading: Of the Air Ministry programme of 6 Fighter Squadrons, 7 Bomber Squadrons, 2 A.C. Squadrons and 1 G.R. Squadron for the defence of Burma—for various reasons—principally that of time—only the mixed equivalent of 2 Fighter Squadrons, 1 Bomber Squadron, 2 A.C. Squadrons and one-third G.R. Squadron joined action with the enemy in the campaign. Of 7 R.D.F. Stations only 1 existed.

42. As regards other units, the following arrived:—

H.Q. 267 (Fighter) Wing.
No. 60 R.S.U.
No. 39 A.S.P.
No. 7 S. and T. Column.
No. 258 A.M.E.S.

The R.S.U. and A.S.P. had no equipment, and the A.M.E.S. arrived so late that it was turned round at Rangoon, sited to defend Akyab, and finally withdrew to Calcutta where for many critical weeks it remained our primary means of warning for oversea attack.

43. Personnel for Group H.Q. Staff gradually arrived and Station H.Qs. Zayatkwint, Toungoo and Magwe were formed.

Co-operation.

44. *Co-operation between the Services*.—As regards the co-operation between the four Services, I have to record that Sir Reginald Dorman Smith, H.E. the Governor, was always ready to assist me with wise advice and his Government was at my service with active and energetic help so long as was practicable.

45. General Hutton's Headquarters and mine lay close together at Rangoon. I gratefully record the good feeling and understanding he extended to the R.A.F. which made possible close co-operation. We usually met each morning and evening to review the situation, and to agree action. At these meetings there was an interchange of important telegrams which had been received or despatched by us. The same cordial relations continued when General Alexander took over on the 5th March.

46. Our co-operation with Commodore Graham, R.N., and earlier Capt. Hallett, R.N., was all that could be desired. Although there were none of H.M. ships present in the close defence of Rangoon and Tenasserim, there were many maritime tasks to be undertaken from day to day by aircraft and the few patrol craft that were available.

47. *Co-operation with A.V.G. and the American Air Force*.—I took the earliest opportunity of meeting Colonel (now Brigadier-General) Chennault in Kunming on the 31st January. At this meeting we discussed and agreed the principles on which the A.V.G. Squadron in Burma would be used in air battle. As always, his primary requirement was good warning. He was quite clear that if I was unable to provide this for the A.V.G. the Squadron would have to be withdrawn to China. I have to record my appreciation of the way in which General Chennault wholeheartedly maintained the Squadron at the highest practicable level in pilots and P.40's from his fast dwindling resources in China. On the 18th January so bad were these that he issued instructions for the Squadron to be withdrawn to China. The Supreme Commander was informed and the Generalissimo, Chiang Kai-Shek, after the representations of the combined Chiefs of Staff, agreed to the retention of the A.V.G. in the defence of Rangoon. Elsewhere I have remarked upon the admirable gallantry and fighting characteristics of the 3 Pursuit Squadrons of the A.V.G.—who fought over Rangoon in turn—an admiration felt not only by the R.A.F. but by the Army also. The co-operation between the A.V.G. and the Hurricanes was close and cordial.

48. When bombing operations in Burma were later carried out from India, a small force of American Army Air Corps long range bombers closely co-operated.

49. *Co-operation with the Chinese*.—I took the first opportunity of visiting the Generalissimo, Chiang Kai-Shek, on the 30th January. The Generalissimo very kindly gave me an interview on this day at which he promised to maintain 1 Squadron of the A.V.G. in the defence of Rangoon as long as this was possible. It is a matter of great regret to the R.A.F. that towards the end of the campaign in Burma it was impracticable on account of shortage of aircraft and the effect of the air battle for the R.A.F. to give adequate support to the Chinese Armies deployed in Burma.

PART II—STRENGTH AND EQUIPMENT OF THE JAPANESE AIR FORCE ENGAGED IN BURMA.

50. *Enemy Air Effort*.—In the opening stages, from the 1st January onwards, P.R.U. reconnaissance and information from other sources put the enemy air force within close

* Photographic Reconnaissance Unit.