

2,000-foot height seven miles north-west of Taungni (20 miles south-west of Mogaung). One brigade of 36 British Division had been flown into North Burma and was concentrating in the Mogaung area.

*Planning for Operations—Winter 1944-45.*

46. In accordance with instructions received from the Supreme Allied Commander, I issued an Operation Instruction on the 29th July to the Commander, Fourteenth Army, directing that plans be made for the following post-monsoon operations:—

(a) *Arakan*: An offensive/defence to secure with minimum forces our present forward positions in the Maungdaw - Tunnels Area and to prevent enemy penetration in the Kaladan Valley, which might endanger the operations of our Air Forces and our line of communication west of the Mayu Range.

(b) *Imphal Front*: A phased plan (which contemplated certain airborne operations) with the following objectives:—

(i) Seizure of Kalemyo - Kalewa.

(ii) An airborne assault against the Ye-U area, to gain a quick exit into the Mandalay Plain, to be followed by ground operations to open the Kalewa - Ye-U road so that heavy equipment, including tanks, could be brought forward for an advance on Mandalay.

(iii) Capture of Mandalay - Pakokku.

(iv) Consolidation along the general line Pakokku - Mandalay - Maymyo - Kyaukse - Lashio (in conjunction with Northern Combat Area Command).

(c) I informed the Commander, Fourteenth Army, that the Northern Combat Area Command forces would advance to capture the Katha - Bhamo area and later Lashio, and that the Chinese Yunnan Force would advance along the old Burma Road to capture Hsenwi and Lashio.

(d) *South Burma*. A plan which did not affect the operations covered by this Despatch.

*Operation Instructions affecting Operations in August.*

47. On the 6th August, the Commander, Fourteenth Army, gave 33 Corps the following tasks:—

(a) To pursue the enemy on the lines:

Imphal - Tiddim - Kalemyo - Kalewa.

Tamu - Indaingyi - Kalewa.

Tamu - Sittaung.

(b) To occupy Sittaung in order to deny the use of the Chindwin River to the enemy.

(c) If opportunity offered, to capture Kalewa and establish a bridgehead in that area.

He was told that air supply could be provided for a maximum of five brigades.

*Operations in August.*

48. *Tiddim Road Sector*. 5 Indian Division maintained the impetus of its advance down the Tiddim road during the month, in spite of stubborn resistance by Japanese rearguards; the 75th milestone, which marks the Indo-Burmese frontier, was passed; and successive enemy positions—many of

them of great natural strength—were overcome by a combination of frontal assaults, and wide turning movements through the jungle-clad mountains. By the 4th August, the number of captured tanks had risen to 32, and by the end of the month a further 10 tanks, 200 M.T. and 12 guns had fallen into our hands. On the 31st August, our troops were engaged with the enemy about Milestone 96.

These operations were distinguished by the highly successful co-operation of air, tanks, artillery and infantry, which inflicted severe casualties on the enemy and maintained the speed of the advance.

49. *Lushai Brigade*. This independent Brigade of three battalions had been given the task of raiding the Japanese flanks and rear during their withdrawal down the Tiddim road. It had been ordered by 33 Corps at the end of July to intensify its operations southwards from Milestone 60 almost to Tiddim. The operation was most arduous as the Brigade had to advance eastwards by bad tracks across steep hills and deep valleys in the height of the monsoon. During August, assisted by detachments of Chin Levies, it was actively engaged with the enemy and caused him much damage.

Some idea of the damage inflicted can be gauged from the fact that, in one week alone, one battalion killed 92 of the enemy, wounded many more, and destroyed a large number of lorries. The operations undoubtedly assisted the advance of 5 Indian Division.

To facilitate co-operation, the Lushai Brigade was placed under 5 Indian Division for operations from the 15th July. It continued to be dependent on air supply.

50. *Tamu - Sittaung Track and Kabaw Valley*. Operations to clear the enemy from the Palel - Tamu road were very successful, and our forces occupied Tamu on the 4th August. This village fell to 5 Brigade, of 2 British Division, which had been placed under command of 23 Indian Division and held in reserve in the Palel area. The village was found in an indescribable state as wounded, sick, dying and unburied dead Japanese officers and men abandoned by the enemy were lying in confusion in the houses and the streets. The large quantity of abandoned equipment included six guns and seventeen 3-ton lorries in good condition. The capture of Tamu was important as it is at the entrance of the Kabaw Valley and lies at the junction of the tracks leading east to Sittaung on the Chindwin, and south to Kalemyo.

51. On the 7th August, 11 (East African) Division, which had been concentrating in the Palel area since the end of July, took over from 23 Indian Division, which was gradually pulled out to rest in Shillong. 25 (East African) Brigade advanced along the track to Sittaung meeting little resistance to start with; 26 (East African) Brigade started down the Kabaw Valley.

The advance continued and, by the end of the month, 25 (East African) Brigade had reached Milestone 28 on the Sittaung track having destroyed the enemy. 26 (East African) Brigade also made good progress, and successfully overcame many difficulties, particularly at the crossing of the Yu River which was in full flood. By the end of August they