

undertaken the work. This work, to which I gave considerable personal attention, was very fully justified by results both in Rangoon and in the oilfields. The destruction of the refineries and oil tanks was remarkably complete and all the personnel involved, military and civil, were successfully evacuated.

As regards other demolitions considerable planning and preparation was also necessary. Arrangements were made to destroy all port facilities and to sink a number of ships in places where they would prevent the use of the jetties. The power station, port and the telegraph installations, workshops, bridges, fixed defences, etc., were also successfully destroyed.

In view of the hardship involved for the civil population, without any material military advantages, of destroying the Rangoon water supply, this was left intact. The widespread destruction of rice mills or boats was avoided for similar reasons. A wholesale "scorched earth" policy was not practicable and would probably have created more problems for us, in the form of refugees, than it would for the Japanese.

59. *Refugees.* A considerable number of people, especially women and children, and including a large number of Indians, left Rangoon by sea during the early stages of the campaign. In order to provide increased facilities I took action to ensure that returning transports should be made available for this purpose. In view of subsequent events it is fortunate that evacuation on a large scale did take place.

A large number of Indians evacuated by walking across the hills from Prome to Taungup, whence they could be cleared to Chittagong in small craft. Lack of food, water and medical attention on the route caused much suffering and many deaths including a large number from cholera. Cholera was also present in the area south of Prome and a serious epidemic was anticipated.

60. *Evacuation Plans.* The arrangements for evacuating Rangoon were in three stages. The warning stage during which all non-essential personnel would be encouraged to depart leaving only those required to run essential services. The second stage in which the final arrangements for demolition, etc., would be completed and all civilians not required in connection with this work would be evacuated. Finally, the demolition stage on completion of which all the personnel concerned and the military for guarding them were to depart in transport for which special arrangements had been made.

61. *Route of Evacuation.* The route of evacuation for the majority of the population was inevitably the main Mandalay road and railway. The proximity of the enemy to this line after the battle of the Sittang and the small forces available to cover it rendered it very important that the first stage should not be left too late. The unreliability of the railway transportation personnel was another factor and it was only by the closest margin that the last few trains succeeded in getting away. Evacuation by the Prome route was of course possible, but the fact that the railway ended at that point and the presence of cholera and serious unrest made it undesirable to use it more than necessary. Another factor was the importance of avoiding serious congestion on either route

both of which were of course essential for military purposes.

A further difficulty arose from the fact that Rangoon was only 80 miles south-west of Pegu and that the Pegu road joined the Prome road 21 miles north of Rangoon. Unless therefore personnel were moved out of Rangoon City in good time they might well find themselves cut off from the north.

The preparation of the above measures naturally took considerable time and imposed a severe burden on an already overworked staff. In the event the interval between stage 1 and stage 2 was considerably longer than was anticipated, partly owing to lack of pressure on the part of the enemy after the battle at the Sittang and partly owing to the anticipated arrival of reinforcements which made it possible even up to the last moment that the position might be retrieved. During this period a certain number of people evacuated under stage 1 were brought back to keep essential services and transportation services in action till the last moment. During this period large quantities of personnel and stores were disembarked and moved up-country to Prome and Mandalay.

VIII. OPERATION IN THE SOUTHERN SHAN STATES AND IN TENASSERIM.

62. *Dispositions.* The dispositions when I arrived in Burma were as follows:—

Mergui, 2 Burma Rifles and two companies 3 Burma Rifles with a Frontier Force Detachment and an aerodrome guard.

Tavoy, 6 Burma Rifles, Tavoy Company of the Tenasserim Battalion B.A.F. and aerodrome guards.

Moulmein, 1/7 Gurkha Rifles, 8 Burma Rifles and the remainder of the Tenasserim Battalion B.A.F. also one Indian Mountain Battery.

Near Kawhareik, 4 Burma Rifles watching the Thai frontier. All the above were under the command of Commander 2 Burma Brigade in Moulmein.

Rangoon, the 1 Glosters and 3 Burma Rifles (less two companies) were under the Brigadier commanding Rangoon Area.

Southern Shan States, the 1 Burma Division consisting of an Indian Mountain Regiment, one 18-pounder Battery B.A.F. (4 guns), 13 Indian Infantry Brigade and 1 Burma Brigade consisting of the 2 K.O.Y.L.I. and 1 and 5 Burma Rifles. There were also some Frontier Force Detachments.

Mandalay Area (in reserve), 16 Indian Infantry Brigade (less one Battalion) and 7 Burma Rifles.

63. *Minor Operations in the Southern Shan States* There were no serious operations undertaken in the Southern Shan States during my period of command. A raid into Thailand up the River Kemapyu obtained useful information and there were several encounters between our Frontier Force columns or guerrilla detachments and the enemy on the frontier in the neighbourhood of the Kengtung-Chiengrai road. The Chinese 93 Division also undertook some raids across the Mekong River which inflicted considerable casualties and obtained valuable information.