

PART III—ORGANIZATION.

136. I have already given a summary of the land forces transferred to me from India Command with effect from midnight on the 15th-16th November 1943 when the Supreme Allied Commander assumed command. In addition, the following formations passed to my command between November 1943 and June 1944:—

9 Indian Infantry Brigade (5 Indian Division). (December.)

32 Indian Infantry Brigade (20 Indian Division). (Late November.)

254 Indian Tank Brigade (less 45th Cavalry, but plus 3 Dragoon Guards). (December.)

25 Indian Division. (February and March.)

14 and 16 L.R.P. Brigades. (In March and January respectively.)

77 and 111 L.R.P. Brigades. (January.)

36 British Division. (Between late January and early March.)

23 L.R.P. Brigade. (Early April.)

Advance H.Q., 3 Special Service Brigade (with No. 5 Commando and No. 44 Royal Marine Commando). (February.)

50 Indian Parachute Brigade. (Early March.)

2 British Division, which moved to Assam as follows:—

5 Brigade. (End of March.)

H.Q., 2 British Division and 6 Brigade. (Early April.)

4 Brigade. (Mid-April.)

Also a cavalry regiment, a medium regiment R.A., and two Indian battalions.

28 (East African) Brigade arrived in February and replaced 99 Infantry Brigade in Ceylon, which reverted to India Command.

Headquarters, 21 Indian Division, consisting of a proportion of the H.Q. Staff and a few ancillary units of the late 44 Indian Armoured Division, arrived in Jorhat (Assam) on the 5th March.

268 Indian Lorried Infantry Brigade was lent by India Command early in May (*vide* paragraph 67).

137. A skeleton Order of Battle of the undermentioned formations will be found in the appendices:—

Appendix "A"—Skeleton Order of Battle of 15 Indian Corps on the 1st January 1944, at the commencement of our offensive in the Arakan.

Appendix "B"—Skeleton Order of Battle of 4 Corps on the 8th March 1944, the date the Japanese launched their offensive across the Chindwin.

Appendix "C"—Skeleton Order of Battle 33 Indian Corps on the 31st May 1944, when that formation was engaged in driving the enemy from the Kohima area.

Appendix "D"—Skeleton Order of Battle 11 Army Group on the 22nd June 1944, the date on which this Despatch closes.

138. The major re-organizations, which were finished, or which were begun, during the period covered by this Despatch were:—

11 (East African) Division.

81 and 82 (West African) Divisions.

Standard Organizations for:—

A Corps Headquarters.

An Infantry Division.

Armoured Formations (re-organization of Tank Brigades).

Organization for the movement and maintenance of Air Transported Formations.

Assumption of full control by 11 Army Group of Fourteenth Army and Land Forces, Ceylon.

The principal changes involved, together with my reasons for effecting them, are summarized in the succeeding paragraphs:—

139. 11 (East African) Division. At a conference held in Ceylon in January, at which the G.O.C.-in-C., East African Command was present, I decided to increase the artillery of this formation up to the scale of that in an Animal and Motor Transport (A. and M.T.) Division on the Indian Establishment.

I also decided to reduce the scale of both unit and 2nd line motor transport, and to provide an element within the infantry battalions for carrying fighting equipment under conditions when M.T. could not operate.

140. 81 and 82 (West African) Divisions. In May, at a conference attended by the G.O.C.-in-C., West Africa, I considered the advisability of amalgamating these two divisions; for 81 Division, which had given up one of its brigades to Special Force, consisted only of two brigades. Owing, however, to the shortage of formations with which to carry out reliefs, I decided to retain both divisions, but to effect certain changes in their organization. These included:—

(a) The divisional artillery to consist of one light regiment (three batteries of 3.7-inch howitzers and one battery of 3-inch mortars) and one anti-tank regiment (three batteries, each of twelve six-pounder guns). Field regiments could not be formed, but would be attached when required.

(b) A reconnaissance battalion to be included in each division.

(c) A proportion (25 per cent.) of the un-armed soldiers, who act as porters, to be armed.

West African resources did not, unfortunately, admit of certain other desirable increases, such as the inclusion of a Divisional Headquarters battalion.

I also decided that 3 (West African) Brigade of 81 (West African) Division should continue to be employed with Special Force.

I intended to bring these two West African divisions and the East African division, into line with the standard divisional organization (*vide* paragraph 142) in due course.

141. *Corps Headquarters and Corps Troops.* In order to secure uniformity, a standardised War Establishment for a Corps Headquarters and, also, a standard Order of Battle for Corps Troops, is to be adopted.

142. *Standard Organization for Infantry Divisions.* I have already briefly referred to the desirability of having one standard organization for all infantry divisions operating in this theatre of war, and for some time past I had been examining the possibility of this. Experience had shown that, with our limited