could not possibly be met. By means of closer liaison it was hoped that the Army would make bids for air transport which would be practicable, so that there would be no need for the Air Forces to overwork their squadrons in order to make good the backlog. In addition, it was possible, in planning, to leave some airlift for domestic requirements such as the carriage of A.O.G. spares, etc.

207. For the coming months air transport commitments could be divided into the following categories :—

(i) The requirements of "Zipper/Mailfist" Operation.

(ii) The supply of 12th Army fighting in Burma.

(iii) The maintenance and expansion of internal airlines.

(iv) The continuance at a higher rate than hitherto of airborne training.

208. In order to meet requirement (i) it had been anticipated that there would be a sharp diminution in the supply of 12th Army in Burma as the port of Rangoon became cleared. It became apparent in the first week of July, however, that the requirements of the Army in Burma were going to be very considerably in excess of the figures that had been estimated at the time when aircraft had been allocated for "Zipper/Mailfist."

209. A complete review of air transport plans was thus once again necessary. The Army suggestions for meeting the new situation were given in a signal from H.Q., A.L.F.S.E.A., which, however, could not be agreed. The Army was accordingly asked to await recommendations which would be available with all data at the next meeting of the Supreme Allied Commander, when the whole question of air transport requirements would be reviewed and priorities adjusted.

Hazards of Weather in Monsoon.

210. Weather was the one dominant factor which affected air supply operations throughout Burma after the breaking of the monsoon. It is no exaggeration to state that the transport aircraft, probably more than any other aircraft employed in the Burma Theatre, had to wage a day to day battle against the elements.

211. During the crucial months, while the Allied advance down through Central Burma was in progress, transport aircraft had been able to fly long hours, often in good weather, which greatly contributed to the successful completion of their commitment.

212. The proposition, however, was different in May, after the arrival of the monsoon. Not only did weather make flying hazardous and difficult, but it was frequently impossible for meteorological staffs to determine in advance what weather the transport aircraft were likely to encounter en route to their destination.

213. The monsoon in Burma is at its worst during June and July, when cumulo nimbus cloud, the greatest enemy of aircraft flying over Burma, builds up frequently from low level to above aircraft ceiling.

214. Comparing aircraft effectiveness in the monsoon months of June and July with that of February and March, 1945, it appeared that the effectiveness dropped to 70 per cent. As the average length of trip was less during June and July, however, the cargo tonnage carried per aircraft dropped only to 76.5 per cent. of the fine weather standard.

215. An indication of the monsoon's toll on aircraft and crews may be seen from the study of figures of losses for the month of June, 1945. During this period No. 232 Group lost 12 aircraft due to bad weather; casualties to crews and passengers inclusive of those killed, injured and missing totalling 72. This was a high price paid in men and material for the continued success of air supply in Burma.

216. It is on record that one Dakota aircraft flying over Burma actually found itself turned upside down in a storm, and it was only the skill and presence of mind of the pilot which averted disaster.

217. Yet another example of the hazards which faced transport supply crews in Burma during that monsoon was the experience of a pilot who found himself completely closed in with cumulo nimbus cloud during a return journey from Meiktila to Akyab. After three attempts, a break in the cloud was found which brought the aircraft out on to the coast opposite Ramree Island. The aircraft descended to 300 feet but cumulo nimbus again closed in behind, and the pilot, after making several unsuccessful attempts to climb out of the cloud, was eventually forced down to sea level. For almost an hour the aircraft circled around until the pilot finally succeeded in climbing to 7,000 feet where more cumulo nimbus was encountered and the radio compass was rendered unserviceable. The aircraft then turned on a reciprocal course and found a small gap in the cloud which again closed in. In the face of this predicament, the pilot decided there was no alternative but to descend and to risk a blind forced landing. The pilot succeeded in bringing the aircraft to a standstill in a paddy field without injury to any of the crew.

Stocking Rear Airfields with Supplies.

218. Most of the supplies carried by the R.A.F. Transport Squadrons in Burma after the departure of the American units were for the purpose of stocking rear airfields, where the Army organisations distributed the supply to various Army and R.A.F. units. Civil commitments also continued to be fulfilled in Northern Burma.

219. With the experience gained in June regarding the consumption of petrol required by C-47 aircraft for each trip during average monsoon flying conditions, squadrons located at Ramree, Akyab, and Chittagong were instructed to increase their load from 5,500 lb. to 6,000 lb.

220. In preparation for the final showdown with the trapped Japanese forces in Burma, during July, special instructions for supply dropping in the Toungoo area were issued. Weather, however, was again the big handicap, and as dropping operations were frequently impossible in this area, arrangements had to be made to land loads in Central Burma so as to form a stock-pile near the source of ground operations and later take advantage of periods of fine weather in which to deliver the backlog. This system made it unnecessary for aircraft to carry undropped supplies back to base, with a consequent increase in the number of