

medical use, and was converted into a coastal hospital carrier for fifty lying and seventy sitting cases.

Two other hospital ships in use were the "Wu Sueh" and "Melchior Trueb". The former was unsatisfactory in river evacuation, and had to be fitted with improved cooling plants. The latter was converted during the period into a satisfactory ocean-going hospital carrier with accommodation for two hundred and ninety-four patients.

54. *Training of Medical Personnel.*

This has progressed in spite of difficulties such as low standard of recruits, differences of language, lack of trained instructors, and little time for training.

A medical school of jungle warfare was started in the 26th Division Area (Arakan) in July, which was attended by selected officers from all Divisions in North East India.

55. *Medical Stores.*

During the period, the situation as regards medical stores improved, but there have been temporary shortages at times, of supplies of Mepacrine and Pamoquin (for malaria). Except for this there were no difficulties other than those connected with certain known items of which there is a world shortage.

56. *Incidental Medical Matters.*

Pathology assumes importance when the bulk of sick are suffering from malaria, dysentery or venereal disease, and progress was made in the provision of laboratories and clinical slide-rooms.

Dental facilities improved in all areas, and men were no longer evacuated unnecessarily for dental treatment.

A Facio-Maxillary unit was opened in Calcutta where cases of grave head injuries can receive adequate treatment.

Arrangements for dealing with mental cases also were developed by the formation of a definite network of centres and subsidiary centres in North East India. This will prevent temporary cases being evacuated.

Diversional therapy also received attention, and a Red Cross Diversional Therapy Service has been formed which will extend over the whole of North East India. It should be particularly welcome in forward hospitals where amenities are scarce. In this as in other directions where the Red Cross has extended its invaluable help, our indebtedness to this organisation has continued to be great. I wish to record my gratitude for the assistance it has given.

57. *Welfare among Troops and Families in the India Command.*

With the great increase in the numbers of British personnel in India that took place since the beginning of 1943 their welfare became a matter of increasing concern. It has an obvious bearing on morale, and in this is linked with the soldier's outlook for the future.

Living in a tropical climate under conditions devoid of most ordinary comforts and unable to buy in the ordinary market many of the commodities that make up the every day needs of the civilised mortal, large numbers of British soldiers have had to work under lonely or

depressing surroundings in back areas, and without the stimulus of contact with the enemy. It is for these, just as much as for the men in forward zones, that welfare work is of importance, and it has been carried on ceaselessly in spite of many and varied difficulties and handicaps.

One of the difficulties has always been a lack of buildings suitable for welfare activities, and welfare funds were very largely expended in providing them.

A great deal has been done by enthusiastic officers in the field, particularly in the forward areas of Eastern India. The work of the army welfare officers has been supplemented by the efforts of Toc H, the Y.M.C.A., and the Women's Voluntary Services, which have opened many new institutes and canteens in spite of difficulties in obtaining sufficient staff to serve the troops on as wide a scale as is necessary in a country of such vast distances and such difficult climatic conditions, and so undeveloped according to western standards.

In August, 1943, it was possible to appoint welfare officers to all the major areas of the Eastern Army, thus relieving the strain on the few officers who had hitherto borne the whole burden.

Funds were provided for welfare on a per capita basis, but how best to use these funds is ultimately a problem for the unit to decide—a problem which has never been easy in the jungle areas and under the monsoon conditions in which the Eastern Army had to live and fight. In response to requests from units, however, large quantities of books, games, sports gear, gramophones, etc., for both British and Indian Troops were sent out from the Eastern Army amenities depot in Calcutta. As the volume of the supplies increased it was found necessary to establish two sub-depots to facilitate distribution further forward, and these were accordingly set up at Gauhati and Chittagong.

Supplies of such things as those mentioned above have been generally plentiful, with one major exception. There have never been enough mobile cinema units available in India, and despite persistent efforts to obtain more of them, there are still far too few to cope with the numbers of troops they have to serve. Eastern Army was allotted the major share of those available, but the fact remains that the provision of more projectors and more up-to-date films is a matter of paramount importance and urgency. Entertainment was provided by touring British and Indian concert parties, some organised by G.H.Q. and the rest by the Bengal Entertainment for the Services Association (B.E.S.A.).

Officers were not forgotten, and H.E. the Viceroy generously contributed large sums of money from his War Purposes Fund for the equipping of leave hostels and the subsidization of hotels and the foundation of clubs in Chittagong, Comilla and Gauhati.

The important subject of family welfare, on the British side, was dealt with by the S.S.A.F.A. sub-office set up in Calcutta, and this was followed in July, 1943, by the establishment of a Legal Aid Section which by the end of October had already dealt with 160 applications for legal advice and assistance.