

and the toll taken by disease, from which, on their own admission, they suffered severely. The total Japanese casualties on this front, after they crossed the Chindwin in March up till the middle of June, may safely be put at not less than 30,000. Against this, our own losses in killed, wounded and missing, from the 4th March to the 17th June totalled 12,525, of whom only 2,669 were killed. We captured a large amount of equipment, including nearly 100 guns.

97. The results achieved had been due to the determination and skill shown by all Commanders in surmounting difficulties and the fine fighting spirit displayed by the troops who had shown a marked superiority over the Japanese. 4 Corps was entirely dependent on supplies brought in by air and in spite of the splendid work of Air Transport Command, which is mentioned later in this Despatch, there were occasions when our stocks of ammunition ran dangerously low. Rations too had to be cut although the numbers of mouths to be fed had been greatly reduced by the movement out of Imphal, by road, before the Japanese cut it, and subsequently by air, of every man whose presence was unnecessary. In spite of these handicaps the spirit of 4 Corps remained as high as ever and officers and men fought splendidly throughout the long battle. This, coupled with the determination and vigour displayed by 33 Corps, led, in the words of the Supreme Allied Commander, to the Japanese Army suffering a defeat greater than ever before in its history.

Fort Hertz.

98. This isolated outpost, in the extreme north of Burma, was originally occupied by a small detachment in September 1942, in order to protect the landing ground and to raise and support Kachin Levies to operate towards Myitkyina. These Levies have carried out many very successful operations and, indeed, at one time, became such a thorn in the side of the enemy that the Japanese made a direct threat against Fort Hertz. To counter this, the 4th Battalion, The Burma Regiment was flown there from India at the end of November 1943.

99. In November 1943, the Americans agreed to maintain the Fort Hertz garrison by air, as there was no road link with India. Command of this detachment was transferred to General Stilwell in February 1944.

100. These troops, including the Levies, after many skirmishes, subsequently made a steady advance down the Mali Hka Valley (which constitutes the headwaters of the Irrawaddy), in conjunction with General Stilwell's forces moving south from Ledo. They did most useful work, inflicting many casualties on small enemy parties, and by the 19th March they had occupied Sumprabum. From the beginning of June they co-operated with the Chinese-American troops in the Myitkyina area.

Northern Burma-Ledo-Myitkyina.

101. The rôle allotted to the Chinese troops which were under the command of General Stilwell in India, in January, was to advance on Mogaung and Myitkyina with the object of covering the construction of an overland

route to China via Ledo and Myitkyina and of securing the air route from Assam to China.

This force, known originally as the Chinese Army in India (C.A.I.), which had been trained with the help of American officers and equipped with American material, comprised initially 22 and 38 Chinese Divisions, and was joined later by 30 Chinese Division. These three divisions were subsequently reinforced by 50 and 14 Chinese Divisions, which were flown from China in April and May respectively. The force was completed by the addition of U.S. 5307 Provisional Regiment, consisting of three battalions of Long-Range Penetration troops which had trained with Major-General Wingate's Special Force in India and were now being used as medium-range penetration battalions. Known officially by the code name "Galahad Force", they were more usually referred to—after the name of their commander—as Merrill's Marauders.

102. General Stilwell, the Deputy Supreme Allied Commander, South-East Asia Command, personally assumed command of these troops in the Field. They never formed part of my Army Group, but General Stilwell agreed, until C.A.I. forces had captured Kamaing, to accept instructions from General Slim, who was, of course, under my command.

103. On the 17th May, C.A.I. had reached the outskirts of Myitkyina and captured the airfield, Galahad Force having contributed much to this very notable advance. Kamaing was captured on the 16th June and Mogaung invested. The situation in the Mogaung Valley on the 22nd June was that the Japanese in the Kamaing area were being forced into the southern end of the valley; while Special Force was attacking their supply lines in the area north of Indaw. Special Force also had a detachment, known as "Morrisforce", blocking the Myitkyina—Bhamo road.

104. Supply of all forces was largely by air, as owing to the weather the construction of the Ledo Road did not keep pace with the advance of the troops.

Special Force.

105. I have already mentioned Special Force. This Force consisted of six Long-Range Penetration Brigades, which were specially selected, trained, organised and equipped by the late Major-General Wingate to give them the maximum mobility in jungle fighting. The plan was to concentrate this Force within a circle of forty miles radius from Indaw, with the objects of:—

(a) Assisting the advance of the Chinese-American forces on Myitkyina by drawing off and harassing the Japanese forces opposing them, and by preventing reinforcements reaching them.

(b) Creating a situation which would enable the Chinese forces to advance from Yunnan.

(c) Causing confusion, damage and loss to the enemy forces in North Burma.

I hoped that General Wingate's operations might also interfere with the Japanese advance against Imphal.

106. The operations of both Special Force and the Sino-American forces moving south from Ledo were co-ordinated by the Commander, Fourteenth Army.