

I.C.S., my Chief Civil Adviser. In the withdrawal to India, the feeding arrangements for the thousands of refugees who came out through Kalewa and Tamu worked extremely well and very few demands were made on the army for rations. The refugees themselves were no bother and the majority of them, more particularly the women, displayed a courage and heroism under most trying conditions which were worthy of the best traditions of India.

91. *Indigenous Units.* I cannot close my report without making some mention of the behaviour of the indigenous units. Political considerations arising out of the separation of Burma from India brought about the enlistment of Burmese into the Burma Army. Prior to this, only Karens, Chins and Kachins had been enlisted. That this former policy was right was amply demonstrated by the fighting in Burma. The Burmese proved thoroughly unreliable and deserted wholesale and thus they began the disintegration which later affected all indigenous units except the Signals. As the campaign progressed, the Karens and Kachins also began to desert. This, I think, was largely because they felt they were being cut off from their families. This feeling affected the Karens first since many had their homes in Lower Burma. The Chins on the other hand, did not desert to the same extent, which is almost certainly due to the fact that the final withdrawal was through their country.

As a result of the distrust and suspicion engendered by desertions, often in the face of the enemy, only two battalions of the Burma Rifles remained in the Burma Division at the end of the campaign. One of these was composed of Chins and the other was wholly Indian.

I must pay a tribute to the Burma Army Signals which had a large proportion of Karens and some Burmese personnel. This unit did magnificent work and was completely reliable.

PART IX—CONCLUSIONS.

92. It may be thought that after 3 years of war it is a little late still to be learning lessons from our enemies. The old proverb, however, should be a safeguard against this feeling, and after an unsuccessful campaign one must of necessity examine the causes of failure.

I do not propose further to comment on the events which led up to the loss of Rangoon since it was already too late to save that city when I arrived in Burma. I have stated earlier and I wish to emphasise again that in the absence of a road to India the loss of Rangoon virtually decided the issue of the campaign. Thereafter my task was to impose on the enemy the maximum delay possible with the means remaining at my disposal.

93. *Training and Equipment.* From what I had learned of the nature of the fighting since the beginning of the campaign and from my personal experience of the operations in Burma, I was impressed by the apparent ease with which the Japanese were able to outflank our forces by moving through thick jungle country, whereas our troops were tied to the roads.

The reason for this was that the Japanese were organised, equipped and trained for the type of country over which they fought whereas our troops were not. The Japanese also had the help of local guides and the assistance of

many friends amongst the local population. In fact they had all the advantages which accrue from having a plan and from preparations made over a long period in time of peace.

The Imperial Forces were almost completely mechanised down to unit transport which made movement off the few roads almost impossible.

As the campaign progressed units supplemented their motor transport by the local purchase and requisition of bullock carts. This form of transport, however, is too slow and cumbersome for tactical use in the jungle where pack transport or porters are really required.

The technique of jungle fighting, as understood by the Japanese, was virtually non-existent in my force. Success in this type of fighting depends largely on the ability of parties to find their way through the jungle and to keep touch with one another. It demands a knowledge of all types of signalling by visual and by sound and also requires a high scale of low powered wireless sets with infantry battalions. It demands also training to eliminate the sense of loneliness which so often saps the morale of those who are not used to it.

Quite apart from jungle fighting, however, the infantry were not sufficiently well trained in modern tactics which require above all else the ability to manoeuvre in small parties under the fire of their own weapons. Towards the end of the campaign, however, some formations had learned how to take the Japanese on at their own game.

There had been no training with tanks prior to the arrival of the 7 Armoured Brigade and it was not unnatural therefore that the armoured units did not receive the support from the infantry which they needed. The infantry, on the other hand, came more and more to rely on the tanks to get them out of a tight corner.

The country on the whole was unsuitable for the employment of armoured fighting vehicles. In the thick jungle country they were necessarily confined to the roads and tracks and even in the open country of the dry zone the small bunds surrounding paddy fields caused the tanks to slow down in order to avoid breaking their suspension. Nevertheless, the tanks did invaluable work and the reliability of the American M3 or "Honey" was quite remarkable.

94. *Power of the Offensive.* It did not need the Burma campaign to prove the power of the offensive under modern conditions, more particularly in its effect on the civil population. Burma was singularly dependent on her poor communications particularly railways and I.W.T. As has been explained at some length these soon began to break down and I wish to draw attention once again to the vulnerability in this respect of eastern countries where the ignorance and gullibility of the population renders them even more susceptible to the lying tongue of rumour than their western brothers.

This campaign was fought by comparatively small forces over a very large area and therefore militarily the offensive, coupled with air superiority and the help of the local population, enabled the Japanese to concentrate superior forces at the decisive point, since the defence had necessarily to be more dispersed.

The right method of defence was, I am convinced; to hold defended localities well stocked with reserves of supplies and ammunition