

Plans for this major enterprise were still in process of being examined when operational planning was taken over by the South East Asia Command.

## II. Summary in regard to Operational Planning.

In the period covered by this Despatch, much of the planning commenced under my direction could not be completed and was passed on in a fluid state to the Supreme Allied Commander, South East Asia Command. This was indeed only to be expected, and the changes of policy that resulted from the Quebec Conference also had a retarding effect on the progress made.

Although many of the conclusions reached during the period were in fact negative in character, much valuable work was nevertheless done. Schemes were explored which may well prove to be of use in the future. Clearly the main conclusion that emerged was the inadequacy of previous long term planning of base, transportation, and administrative resources. This is no reflection on work and preparation that had gone before. Developments in a theatre of war, and requirements in resources that follow as a result, are impossible to foresee.

We now look to the future in the hope that our long term planning in these directions undertaken during the period, is based on a sufficiently comprehensive scale to meet all needs. These things remain the responsibility of the India Command.

With the establishment of the South East Asia Command, my planning staff were transferred in a body to that H.Q. and continuity of work and effort was thus ensured in the operational planning room.

## PART II—OPERATIONS AND INTELLIGENCE.

### 1. Land Operations.

In June, 1943, we were in contact with the Japanese on four fronts:—in Arakan; on the Chindwin; in the Chin Hills; and in North Burma.

### 2. The Arakan Front.

In Arakan, after the evacuation of Buthidaung and Maungdaw (in the final stages of our retirement from the Mayu Peninsula in the early part of the year) the 26th Indian Division took up positions covering Cox's Bazar. Our forward areas extended in the coastal region from the Teknaf Nhila to Bawli Bazar (held by one infantry brigade group), while inland across the Mayu ridge another brigade group held the area Taung Bazar—Goppe Bazar.

After following up our retirement in the first instance, the enemy had himself withdrawn to positions covering the Maungdaw—Buthidaung road, and both sides had settled into the above positions for the monsoon period.

Generally speaking, other than patrol activity, nothing of any significance occurred on this front during the period of this Despatch. Patrols, however, were used by us not only to get information and keep touch with the enemy, but also to build up the confidence of our troops in the forward areas. This, it must be admitted, had been somewhat shaken by the

experiences of the previous Arakan campaign, and it was hoped by constant and energetic patrolling to accustom the troops in the forward areas to work in the jungle, and gradually to acquire a moral ascendancy over the enemy.

To this end the troops worked splendidly under difficult conditions, and much success was achieved. In numerous brushes and encounters during this period of static warfare our patrols inflicted many more casualties on the enemy than they suffered themselves, and in spite of depressing monsoon conditions there was a general rise in morale.

Noteworthy among such minor affairs on the Arakan was a raid on Maungdaw (to obtain identifications) carried out between the 5th and 7th July. Two companies of a British battalion (1st Battalion The Lincolnshire Regiment) with a M.G. section and a 3" mortar detachment penetrated to Maungdaw and completely occupied it.

The main raiding party of one company landed by sampans from a river steamer in the Pyinbu Chaung (four miles N.N.W. of Maungdaw). Stiff enemy opposition was encountered and overcome, an enemy M.G. post being stormed and six Japanese killed. Our troops withdrew according to plan after the raid, having killed twenty-one Japanese and wounded at least seven. Our casualties were seven killed (including one Viceroy's commissioned officer) and eight wounded. The capture of a mail bag in Maungdaw secured the required identifications. The total enemy strength engaged was estimated to be two companies. A further raid by another British battalion (1st Battalion The North Staffordshire Regiment) ten days later to establish road blocks on the Maungdaw—Buthidaung road resulted in one Japanese officer and twenty other ranks being killed and forty others (estimated) killed or wounded, at a cost to ourselves of one British officer wounded and missing, and two British other ranks killed.

The 26th Indian Division held the forward area in Arakan throughout the monsoon, until at the beginning of October, the 7th Indian Division relieved it, the 5th Indian Division also moving into the area. H.Q. 15 Corps (Lt.-Gen. W. J. Slim), moved to Chittagong and became responsible for operations south of (exclusive) Chittagong from the 1st November, 1943.

The enemy forces in Arakan opposing us during the period were the 55th Japanese Division with H.Q. at Akyab. This Division had only two regiments in this area, the third having gone to New Guinea. Possibly a battalion of the 33rd Regiment was also in Arakan at the end of October, 1943.

Such then was the position in Arakan when operational responsibility was assumed by the South East Asia Command.

### 3. 4th Corps Front.

The 4th Corps (Lt.-Gen. G. A. P. Scoones) has been responsible for the front east and south of Manipur since 1942. Its Headquarters were at Imphal and its front which extended from the Chindwin east of the Kabaw Valley to the Chin Hills south of Tiddim, was held by the 17th Indian Light Division and the 23rd