

difficult arrangement came to an end. An increment of United States staff officers under Brigadier-General T. F. Wessels and Brigadier-General R. T. Maddocks was added to my Headquarters to provide adequate American representation.

On taking over, I received my first Directive from the Supreme Allied Commander.

3. My Advanced Headquarters were in the process of moving from Delhi to Barrackpore, where they opened on the 1st December, 1944. Main Headquarters, Allied Land Forces, South-East Asia, at the insistence of the Supreme Allied Commander, were at Kandy where the Supreme Allied Commander and the Air Commander-in-Chief were located, while the Naval Commander-in-Chief was nearby at Colombo.

It was not, however, possible for me to exercise command from Kandy of an Army Group which was actively engaged on three widely separated fronts, 15 Indian Corps in Arakan, Fourteenth Army in the Chin Hills, west of the Chindwin River, and the British/Chinese/American forces comprising the American "Northern Combat Area Command" in Northern Burma. Even from Barrackpore I was to find that it took me 1,500 miles flying to visit the three fronts. Despite therefore the disadvantages of being separated by so great a distance from the Headquarters of the Supreme Allied Commander and from those of his two other Commanders-in-Chief, it was necessary for me to base myself on my Advanced Headquarters at Barrackpore, which was in fact by far the larger echelon, where all the day-to-day executive business of the Headquarters was carried on. Actually Barrackpore had certain other advantages. First, Headquarters, Eastern Air Command, were located only a mile or two down the Hooghli. I was thus enabled to maintain that close touch with General G. E. Stratemeyer which was essential to our joint operations while the battle for Burma was in progress. Secondly, I was in a good position to visit Delhi, the Headquarters of the India Base through which all my supplies and personnel had to pass. And, lastly, I was well placed to visit formations training under G.H.Q., India, which had been allocated to my future operations, and in particular those at the Combined Training Centres at Cocanada and near Bombay.

My Main Headquarters at Kandy was in reality a strong liaison section under Major-General I. S. O. Playfair, designed to maintain close contact with Headquarters, Supreme Allied Commander, South-East Asia, and the other Commanders-in-Chief.

4. On the 12th November, when I took over, my command consisted of Fourteenth Army, made up of 4, 15 and 33 Indian Corps, the Northern Combat Area Command and Ceylon Army Command. In addition there were certain formations in India, which although not under my command, were allocated for my future operations.

In Fourteenth Army (Lieutenant-General Sir William Slim), 4 Indian Corps (Lieutenant-General Sir Geoffrey A. P. Scoones) consisted of 19 Indian Division and 23 Indian Division, which was in the process of being withdrawn to India. 33 Indian Corps (Lieutenant-General Sir Montagu G. N. Stopford), consisted of 2 British Division, 5 and

20 Indian Divisions, 11 (East African) Division, the Lushai Brigade, 268 Indian (Lorried) Brigade, and 254 Indian Tank Brigade. 7 Indian Division was in the Kohima area and was destined for 4 Corps. 255 Indian Tank Brigade at Imphal and 28 (East African) Brigade were also under Fourteenth Army. Fifteenth Indian Corps (Lieutenant-General Sir A. F. Philip Christison) consisted of 25 and 26 Indian Divisions, 81 and 82 (West African) Divisions, 50 Indian Tank Brigade and 3 Commando Brigade.

Northern Combat Area Command (Lieutenant-General Dan I. Sultan) consisted of First and Sixth Chinese Armies, 36 British Division, and 5332 U.S. ("Mars") Brigade. First Chinese Army (General Sun Li Jen) was composed of 30, 38, and 50 Chinese Divisions, while the Sixth (General Liao Yo Hsiang) was composed of 14 and 22 Chinese Divisions. The Mars Brigade (Brigadier-General J. P. Willy) was in fact equivalent to a United States light division and consisted of 475 United States Infantry Regiment, 124 United States Cavalry Regiment, and one Chinese regiment. In addition Northern Combat Area Command possessed one Chinese tank brigade.

Ceylon Army Command (Lieutenant-General H. E. de R. Wetherall) consisted of a few locally enlisted battalions and Base units, and also the small garrisons in the island bases of Addu Atoll and Diego Garcia.

In India, assigned to my operations, but not under my command, were Special Force, made up of 14, 16 and 23 Infantry Brigades, 77 and 111 Indian Infantry Brigades and 3 (West African) Infantry Brigade, which together formed six Long-Range Penetration Groups, 50 Parachute Brigade, two tank regiments (25 Dragoons and 149 R.A.C.), and certain small units. 17 Indian Division was in India in G.H.Q. Reserve and not under my command.

5. In mid-November, a reorganization of the chain of command took place, which had been planned by General Giffard with the object of freeing the Commander, Fourteenth Army, from the control of operations in Arakan, and from the responsibility of administering the long and difficult lines of communication in Assam. In this way he would be enabled to concentrate his full attention on the coming offensive across the Chindwin River into Central Burma. Accordingly on the 15th November, Lines of Communication Command was formed under Major-General G. W. Symes, with its H.Q. at Comilla. It comprised 202 L. of C. Area (H.Q., Gauhati), consisting of four sub-areas and the Fort Hertz Area, and 404 L. of C. Area of four sub-areas; it included a very great number of Base and L. of C. units. The policy was to be that the rear boundaries of Fourteenth Army and 15 Corps would be adjusted as the progress of operations allowed, in order to free them from rearward responsibilities. On the 16th November, 15 Corps was separated from Fourteenth Army and came direct under my command. I thus had under my command three major formations in contact with the enemy, 15 Corps, Fourteenth Army and Northern Combat Area Command, with the L. of C. Command in the rear up to the boundary between South-East Asia Command (S.E.A.C.) and India Command.