

Myitkyina was still holding out against Chinese and American troops and Morris-force (part of Special Force), which were heavily engaged.

The brigades of Special Force were much scattered and were operating in widely separated areas. 14 L.R.P. Brigade was in the area 28 miles west-south-west of Mogaung, 111 and 3 (West African) Brigades in contact with 38 Chinese Division were 20 miles west-north-west of the same place. This Force, which comprised the Long-Range Penetration Brigades flown into North Burma in the Spring, had come under General Stilwell's command on the 20th June, when General Stilwell was transferred from the command of General Slim to that of the Supreme Allied Commander.

On the Salween front, the Chinese Expeditionary Force was engaged 12 miles south-south-west of Lungling.

12. *Arakan.* During the month, 25 and 26 Indian Divisions and 81 (West African) Division had completed their moves to their monsoon positions with little interference from the enemy. Since then, operations in this area had been confined to active patrolling.

13. *Imphal Front.* The opening of the Kohima - Imphal road on the 22nd June completed the first task set by the Supreme Allied Commander in his instructions of the 8th June.

14. Though the opening of the road solved many of our administrative difficulties, it also created a new set of problems. 2 British Division, though its morale was high, had suffered severe casualties and was tired. It was clear that the Division could not continue to fight without reinforcements and the necessary time and facilities to train them. All expedients to bring units up to strength were temporarily exhausted. The Corps Commander considered that the Division should be withdrawn from active operations until the Autumn. A rest area was therefore prepared but, as will be seen, 4 Brigade had to be used temporarily to relieve 20 Indian Division and, later, 5 Brigade was called upon to support 23 Indian Division.

5 and 7 Indian Divisions had to resume their proper compositions, which had been upset when reinforcements had to be flown in during the early stages of the battle. 161 Brigade, which belonged to 5 Indian Division, had been under command of 7 Indian Division, and 89 Brigade of 7 Indian Division had worked with 5 Indian Division. These two Brigades had to return to their own Divisions.

15. The operations against Ukhrul consisted of cross-country advances eastwards by 33 and 89 Brigades of 7 Indian Division, from the Kohima - Imphal road, in co-operation with an advance north-east by 20 Indian Division along the main Imphal - Ukhrul road. This was complicated initially because 20 Indian Division and 89 Brigade were under command of 4 Corps, while 33 Brigade was under 33 Corps. However, as soon as the advance got under way, the Commander, 33 Corps assumed control of the whole operation.

16. By the end of June, 20 Indian Division had reached a point eight miles west of Ukhrul and 7 Indian Division, further north, were clearing the area four miles south-east of Karong.

23 L.R.P. Brigade, advancing southwards, had driven the enemy back to a line eight miles south of Kharasom.

South of Imphal, 17 and 23 Indian Divisions were still engaged in bitter fighting in the Bishenpur and Palel areas respectively.

The monsoon had broken, and the troops had to work under very arduous conditions of rain and mud in the mountains and jungle.

17. On the 30th June, the institution of a new boundary between 4 and 33 Corps, and the consequent transfer of 20 Indian Division (less 32 Brigade) from 4 Corps to 33 Corps, marked the beginning of a new phase of operations. This boundary gave the area between Imphal and Ukhrul inclusive to 33 Corps, and left 4 Corps with Imphal and the areas of 5 Indian Division (Imphal - Bishenpur), 17 Indian Light Division (Bishenpur) and 23 Indian Division (Palel).

The Situation in early July.

18. *Chin Hills and Chindwin.* As a result of our continuous pressure in the Imphal Plain, there were signs at the beginning of July that the Japanese forces in Manipur were giving up their plan for a final attack on Imphal.

19. On the 3rd July a brigade of 7 Indian Division captured Ukhrul from the west, while a column of 23 L.R.P. Brigade entered the village almost simultaneously from the east. The fall of Ukhrul was important since it was the focal point of all communications in that area; its capture removed all threats to Imphal from the north and north-east.

20. On the 29th June, I had wired to General Slim that 31 Japanese Division would probably be withdrawn to the south of Ukhrul, but that the enemy might make a final desperate attempt to capture Imphal from the general direction of the Tiddim and Tamu roads. Although we had sufficient strength to defeat any such attempt, our task of clearing the enemy west of the Chindwin would be facilitated if we could develop a real threat to his communications. I therefore directed him to consider whether the advance on Ukhrul could be continued south-south-east to Humine and Myothit at the head of the Kabaw Valley. This would give 31 Japanese Division no chance to recover and would threaten the communications of 15 Japanese Division at Thaungdut and Tamu.

21. On the fall of Ukhrul, General Slim issued an Operation Instruction, dated the 5th July, directing 4 and 33 Corps to destroy the Japanese forces west of the Chindwin River. 4 Corps, with 5 and 17 Indian Divisions and one brigade of 20 Indian Division under command, were to clear the area west of the general line Imphal - Shuganu. 33 Corps, with 2 British, 7, 20 and 23 Indian Divisions, 268 Indian Lorried Infantry Brigade, 23 L.R.P. Brigade and 50 Indian Parachute Brigade under command, were to clear the area east of this line.

22. By the 10th July, it had become clear that the Japanese had begun a general withdrawal from their three main concentration areas about Bishenpur, Palel, and Ukhrul. They had not captured Bishenpur or Palel.

23. *North Burma.* Although General Stilwell was now no longer under General Slim's command, I must review the operations as a whole, as they had, of course, to be co-ordinated. I