



1. Signing of the Surrender at Singapore, 12th September 1945. Seated from left to right at the Allied table are Brigadier K. S. Thimayya, General P. Leclerc, Admiral Sir Arthur Power, Lieut.-General R. A. Wheeler, Admiral Lord Louis Mountbatten, General Sir William Slim, Air Chief Marshal Sir Keith Park, Major-General Feng Yee, Air Vice-Marshal A. T. Cole and Colonel D. C. Boorman van Vredon. Major-General W. R. C. Penney is supervising the signature by General S. Itagaki of the surrender document.

**HISTORY OF  
THE SECOND WORLD WAR  
UNITED KINGDOM MILITARY SERIES**

**Edited by SIR JAMES BUTLER**

**The authors of the Military Histories have been given full access to official documents. They and the editor are alone responsible for the statements made and the views expressed.**

# THE WAR AGAINST JAPAN

VOLUME V

## The Surrender of Japan

BY

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# LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

## USED IN THE TEXT

A.C.S.E.A.	Air Command, South-East Asia.
A.F.N.E.I.	Allied Forces, Netherlands East Indies.
A.F.O.	Anti-Fascist Organization (in Burma).
A.F.P.F.L.	Anti-Fascist Peoples' Freedom League (formerly A.F.O.).
A.F.V.	Armoured fighting vehicle.
Air O.P.	Air observation post (an army light aircraft used to spot for artillery).
A.L.F.S.E.A.	Allied Land Forces, South-East Asia.
B.N.A.	Burma National Army (Japanese-sponsored Burmese military organization).
C.A.S.(B.)	Civil Affairs Service (Burma).
C.C.A.O.	Chief Civil Affairs Officer.
C.I.G.S.	Chief of the Imperial General Staff.
D.U.K.W.	A wheeled amphibious vehicle.
E.A.	East African.
F.A.M.O.	Forward airfield maintenance organization.
F.M.A.	Field maintenance area.
I.M.B.	Independent mixed brigade (a Japanese formation equivalent to a British brigade group).
I.N.A.	Indian National Army (Japanese-sponsored military organization recruited from Indian nationals in Japanese-occupied territory).
I.W.T.	Inland Water Transport.
J.S.P.	Japanese surrendered personnel.
K.N.I.L.	Koninklijk Nederlands Indische Leger (Royal Netherlands Indian Army).
L.C.A.	Landing craft, assault.
L.C.G.(L.)	Landing craft, gun (large).
L.C.I.(L.)	Landing craft, infantry (large).
L.C.M.	Landing craft, mechanized.
L.C.S.	Landing craft, support.
L.C.T.	Landing craft, tank.
L.C.T.(R.)	Landing craft, tank (rocket).
L.M.G.	Light machine-gun.
L. of C.	Line of communication.
L.S.I.(M.)	Landing ship, infantry (medium).
L.S.M.	Landing ship, medium.
L.S.T.	Landing ship, tank
L.V.T.	Landing vehicle, tracked.
M.M.G.	Medium machine-gun.
N.C.A.C.	Northern Combat Area Command.

N.I.C.A.	Netherlands Indies Civil Affairs (Organization).
P.B.F.	Patriotic Burmese Forces (formerly B.N.A.).
P.O.L.	Petrol, oil and lubricants.
R.A.A.F.	Royal Australian Air Force.
R.A.M.O.	Rear airfield maintenance organization.
R.A.P.W.I.	Recovery of Allied Prisoners-of-War and Internees.
R.A.S.C.	Royal Army Service Corps.
S.A.C.S.E.A.	Supreme Allied Commander, South-East Asia.
S.E.A.C.	South-East Asia Command.
S.P.	Self-propelled (artillery on tank mountings).
T.R.I.	Tentera Repoeblik Indonesia (Indonesian Republican Army).
U.S.A.A.F.	United States Army Air Force.
V.C.P.	Visual control post (accompanied forward army units to direct aircraft in the air on to targets by ground-to-air radio-telephone).
W.A.	West African.



## INTRODUCTION

**T**HIS fifth and last volume of the history of *The War against Japan* is written in four parts. The first covers the operations in the South-East Asia Theatre from the reoccupation of Rangoon in the first week of May 1945 until the Japanese surrender on the 15th August. During this period the Japanese *28th Army* became isolated in the Pegu Yomas and made its dramatic effort to break out, aided by *33rd Army* on the Sittang River. South-East Asia Command's plans for the invasion of Malaya are given in some detail since this was to have been the only large-scale amphibious operation undertaken by the command. These plans are, too, of particular interest to students of war since the problems involved were intricate, distances were great and the resources available barely adequate. The Japanese plans for the defence of Malaya and Singapore are also given so that the reader can come to his own conclusion on the probable course of the operation had it been opposed.

The second part covers the operations in the Pacific from March 1945 till the Japanese surrender in August. It outlines the Japanese plan for the defence of the inner ring, which included Formosa, the Ryukyu Islands, China, Korea, Manchuria and the Japanese mainland, and then goes on to describe in detail the battle for Okinawa in which the Japanese garrison fought to the death while *Kamikaze* aircraft made an all-out attempt to force the huge concentration of Allied shipping standing off the island to withdraw. Two chapters are then devoted to operations in the South-West Pacific and Borneo, and to the events which brought the China 'Incident' to an end. These are followed by chapters dealing with the American plan for the invasion of Kyushu (the most southerly of the main islands forming the Japanese homeland) and the Japanese plan for its defence, the intensified air attacks on Japanese cities, the mining of ports and exits from the Inland Sea and the close blockade by the American and British Pacific Fleets, which led to almost complete economic chaos in Japan.

Succeeding chapters describe the efforts of the Japanese peace party to persuade the national leaders to conclude a negotiated peace, and those of the President of the United States to bring the war to an end without undertaking a costly invasion of Japan. The Potsdam Conference, held after the defeat of Germany, is described insofar as it affected the Far East and it is shown how the Potsdam

Declaration defining unconditional surrender in relation to Japan came to be drawn up and issued. The Russian invasion of Manchuria and the Kurile Islands is then described, as are the events leading up to the signature on the 14th August 1945 of the Sino-Soviet Treaty of Friendship and Alliance between the Chinese Nationalist and Russian Governments, a treaty which Russia was soon to violate. The second part of the volume is brought to its end by a chapter discussing the effects of the receipt of the Potsdam Declaration in Tokyo, of the dropping of the atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki and of the Russian declaration of war, the three events which finally broke the power of the members of the military clique who had brought Japan into the war and led to her acceptance of the Allied terms, her surrender and the end of the Second World War.

The third part deals with post-war operations in South-East Asia and the problems that arose with the sudden addition of about 1½ million square miles of territory with some 128 million inhabitants to Mountbatten's already large operational area, and successive chapters describe the rescue of Allied prisoners-of-war and internees, the occupation of south-eastern Burma, Malaya, Hong Kong, Siam, Indo-China, Java, Sumatra, Borneo and Celebes and their eventual handover to the appropriate civil governments or foreign military authorities. It ends with the winding-up of South-East Asia Command, which was completed in November 1946.

The fourth part is a review of the five volumes of the series with an analysis of the causes of the war and of the early disasters, and of the steps taken which eventually led to the overwhelming Allied victory.

We are indebted to Admiral of the Fleet The Earl Mountbatten of Burma, Field-Marshal Viscount Slim, General Sir Montagu Stopford, General Sir Philip Christison, General Sir Robert Mansergh and many other officers too numerous to mention by name who have been good enough to read our drafts and send us their comments. We are grateful to Colonel S. Nishiura and his colleagues, War History Office, Defence Agency, Tokyo, for information from Japanese sources and for photographs and research carried out on our behalf in Japan. We have had the advantage of using the Admiralty Staff History of the War against Japan written by Major G. S. Goldingham, R.M., the Administrative Narratives written by Brigadier M. Henry of the Cabinet Office Historical Section, and the narratives prepared by Squadron-Leader W. M. Gould and Mr. D. Craik of the Air Historical Branch, Air Ministry. The quotations from *Blackwood's Magazine* and the *Journal of the Royal Artillery* are reproduced by the kind permission of *Blackwood's Magazine* and the Secretary, Royal Artillery Institution, Woolwich.

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Finally we wish to put on record our great appreciation of the outstanding work, including meticulous research, of Miss M. M. Baird M.A. in connection with all the five volumes of this series.

S.W.K.

M.R.R.

G.T.W.

N.L.D.

*Note by the Editor*

*Major-General S. Woodburn Kirby died, after a long illness, on the 19th July 1968. He had looked forward eagerly to seeing the public appearance of this volume, the completion of the work on which he had been engaged for eighteen strenuous years. That, unfortunately, was not to be; but he had at least the satisfaction of receiving a copy of the volume in book proof a few days before his death.*

*J.R.M.B.*



## **PART 1**

### **Operations in S.E.A.C. (May—August 1945)**





Map 1





# CHAPTER I

## PLANNING FOR THE LIBERATION OF MALAYA (February—May 1945)

*See Maps 1 and 16*

ON the 3rd February 1945 Admiral the Lord Louis Mountbatten, the Supreme Commander of South-East Asia Command (S.E.A.C.), received a directive from the Combined Chiefs of Staff which instructed him to liberate Burma as soon as possible and then, subject to the accomplishment of this operation, to undertake the liberation of Malaya and the opening of the Strait of Malacca.<sup>1</sup>

The operations between February and May 1945 which resulted in the reconquest of Burma have already been described in detail in Volume IV. Nevertheless, since events in Burma had considerable effects on the planning for the eventual advance towards Malaya, it is necessary here to summarize them briefly. When the Supreme Commander received his directive early in February, 14th Army (Lieut.-General Sir William Slim) had as part of operation 'Capital' completed its advance from the Chindwin to the Irrawaddy, had secured two bridgeheads across the river north of Mandalay and was making its preparation to cross at several points west of the city with the object of encircling it, of capturing Meiktila (the key point on the Japanese lines of communication to Rangoon) and of bringing the Japanese armies in northern and central Burma to battle south of the river.<sup>2</sup> The capture of Meiktila on the 3rd March resulted in *Burma Area Army* (Lieut.-General H. Kimura) launching a counter-offensive with all the forces it could gather to recapture the town and clear its communications. The 14th Army captured Mandalay on the 20th March and by the end of the month had defeated the Japanese offensive.<sup>3</sup> The *15th Army* (Lieut.-General S. Katamura), which had been holding Mandalay and the Irrawaddy River line, had disintegrated; part of it was making its way in small parties to the Shan Hills and the remainder was withdrawing with *33rd Army*

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<sup>1</sup> For the directive in full see Volume IV, page 209.

<sup>2</sup> See Map 1, facing page 1.

<sup>3</sup> See Map 16, facing page 600.

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(Lieut.-General M. Honda) to Pyawbwe. The *28th Army* (Lieut.-General S. Sakurai) was holding the Yenangyaung oilfields and Mount Popa and preparing to withdraw its forces holding the passes over the Arakan Yomas whose task had been to prevent XV Corps (Lieut.-General Sir Philip Christison) from moving into the Irrawaddy valley in rear of the Japanese main armies.

Fighting had ceased on 14th Army's left flank where the Chinese Yunnan forces, after a brief link-up in the Lashio area with Lieut.-General D. I. Sultan's Northern Combat Area Command (N.C.A.C.), were withdrawing to China. By the end of March the Japanese division which had been operating throughout the campaign on the Burma Road east of Mandalay was in retreat southwards into the Shan Hills, and Mountbatten had agreed to the American and Chinese forces in N.C.A.C. being progressively transferred to China, while 36th British Division was placed under orders of 14th Army.

The desperate efforts by the Japanese to retake Meiktila and the prolonged resistance of their garrison at Myingyan on the Irrawaddy, which Slim needed as a base, had made it seem likely that 14th Army's southward advance from Meiktila would not begin on schedule and might not therefore reach Rangoon before the onset of the monsoon made roads impassable and air supply hazardous. The army might therefore find itself marooned in south Burma where it could not be maintained and would consequently have to withdraw, a political as well as military disaster which could not be countenanced. Slim had therefore asked for an amphibious operation ('Modified Dracula') to be launched to ensure that the port of Rangoon would be secured before the monsoon.

On the 1st April 14th Army began its pursuit of the defeated Japanese armies. The highly mechanized IV Corps (Lieut.-General F. W. Messervy) was to drive with all speed down the main road to Rangoon with its armour and two mechanized divisions, while its third division followed up and watched its left flank. The XXXIII Corps (Lieut.-General Sir Montagu Stopford) with two divisions, a tank brigade and an independent brigade was to move down the Irrawaddy to capture Prome and intercept and destroy the Japanese forces withdrawing from Arakan. This double thrust was to be supported by 221 Group R.A.F. and was designed to split the Japanese armies in Burma into three groups which could be destroyed in detail. The remaining two divisions of 14th Army,<sup>1</sup> which could not be maintained in south Burma, were to be flown out to India in April and May. On the 3rd April Mountbatten decided that 'Modified Dracula' should be carried out in the first five days of May.

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<sup>1</sup> The 2nd and 36th British Divisions.

The thrust by IV Corps from Meiktila ran into fierce resistance north of Pyawbwe and it was not till the 10th April that the forces holding it were surrounded and dispersed. This delay might have had serious consequences but for the fact that the Japanese were so severely mauled during the battle for the town and *Headquarters 33rd Army* lost so much of its signal equipment that control began to break down. The dispersal of *33rd Army* was completed a few days later at Pynmana, after which the Japanese retreat became a rout and the remnants of the army sought refuge east of the Sittang. Toungoo with its airfields, which were required for the support of 'Modified Dracula', was occupied on the 22nd April, three days ahead of schedule. A week later the corps was hammering at the gates of Pegu, which was defended by the enemy garrison withdrawn from Rangoon. There it was temporarily held up by floods following unusually early and very heavy rain. On the 2nd May, 26th Indian Division landed without opposition near the mouth of the Rangoon River and, finding that the Japanese had evacuated the city as a result of 14th Army's rapid advance towards Pegu, occupied it on the 3rd. On the 6th May, IV Corps and 26th Division joined hands north-east of Rangoon.

The XXXIII Corps advance down the east bank of the Irrawaddy was rapid. The 20th Indian Division (Major-General D. D. Gracey), moving swiftly south-west from Meiktila, occupied Magwe on the 20th April, Allanmyo on the 28th and Prome on the 3rd May. On the west bank 7th Indian Division (Major-General G. C. Evans), having cleared the Yenangyaung-Mount Popa area, as it moved south met increasing resistance from *54th Division* (Lieut.-General S. Miyazaki) making its way to the Irrawaddy valley from Arakan. The 7th Division, having intercepted *54th Division*, was trying by the 6th May to prevent it crossing the Irrawaddy, while 20th Division was establishing a cordon along the Prome-Rangoon road to prevent the Japanese from south Arakan and the Irrawaddy delta from reaching the Pegu Yomas, where Sakurai was trying to concentrate the remnants of his scattered army.

The Japanese armies in Burma had by the 7th May 1945 been split asunder: the remnants of *15th* and *33rd Armies* were in the Sittang valley, *28th Army* was trying to concentrate in the Pegu Yomas but the main body of its *54th Division* was still west of the Irrawaddy in danger of being isolated.

It will be seen that, when the directive of the 3rd February was received, the campaign for the liberation of Burma was well under way. To enable him to comply with the second part of his directive Mountbatten on the 5th asked his Joint Planning Staff to produce a

#### 4 *PLANNING FOR THE LIBERATION OF MALAYA*

paper on future strategy in S.E.A.C. They worked on the assumptions that operations in the Pacific would maintain their planned impetus, that Germany would not be defeated before the 1st July 1945, that Rangoon might have fallen by the 1st June and certainly by the 1st October, and that the first of the three naval assault forces (Force 'W'), which in October 1944 the Chiefs of Staff had undertaken to provide for the war against Japan, would be in the theatre by March/April 1945.<sup>1</sup> They also assumed that, with her communications with the Southern Region cut, with her navy in a parlous condition and with her general shortage of shipping, Japan could not undertake a complete withdrawal from the South-East Asian theatre. Her forces in that area would therefore probably be strengthened by forces withdrawn from the eastern Netherlands East Indies and adjoining islands and, when it was found that they could no longer hold Burma, the Japanese would probably reinforce and hold on to Malaya. They would, however, withdraw the greater part of their naval and air forces for the defence of Japan.

The Joint Planning Staff proposed that Singapore should be the primary objective as it was the only place which could be developed as a main base for further operations and would give free entry into and control of the South China Sea and the Gulf of Siam. Although there were a number of lines of advance towards Singapore, they came to the conclusion that the best was by way of Tenasserim, the Kra Isthmus and the west coast of Malaya, since operations for the establishment of an advanced base in the Kra Isthmus could be supported from Rangoon. Such an operation would have the advantage of maintaining the impetus of S.E.A.C.'s advance and making the best possible use of the ground gained in Burma. They recommended that, although it did not give physical possession of the Kra Isthmus, Phuket Island (off the coast of the isthmus some 120 miles south of Victoria Point and within easy reach of Malaya) should be occupied and developed into a forward air base and naval anchorage.<sup>2</sup>

On the 14th February Mountbatten discussed these recommendations with his Commanders-in-Chief (Lieut.-General Sir Oliver

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<sup>1</sup> Each of the three forces ('W', 'X' and 'Y') was to be capable of lifting the assault element of one division. The arrival of Force 'W' in the Indian Ocean depended on the release of L.S.T.s from the Second Front in Europe, the ability of large landing craft to make the passage to India in winter and on there being no new operational commitments in Europe. It was hoped that Force 'W' would be complete before April 1945. On the 3rd February, however, the Admiralty told Mountbatten that Force 'W' would be complete in the Indian Ocean as soon as possible and that Forces 'Y' and 'X' could be ready for combined training in the Indian Ocean six and twelve months respectively after the end of the war with Germany, on the assumption that it did not end before June 1945.

<sup>2</sup> Phuket Island, twenty-seven miles long from north to south and ten miles across, is separated from the mainland by a channel from  $\frac{1}{2}$  to  $3\frac{1}{2}$  miles wide. It lies 610 miles from Rangoon and was thus within the limit of the range of all fighter aircraft.

Leese being represented by a senior staff officer).<sup>1</sup> It was agreed that it would be wise to move towards Singapore as quickly as possible and that an advance down the Tenasserim-Kra-Malaya peninsula was the best course of action to adopt, although a final decision to occupy Phuket Island should not be taken until the reaction of the Japanese to the current operations in Burma showed that their resistance was cracking. Mountbatten then instructed the Joint Planners to prepare a broad concept of operations for the capture of Phuket Island before the 1945 monsoon and for securing a bridgehead in the Port Swettenham/Port Dickson area in October 1945 preparatory to an advance on Singapore. He also decided that an amphibious force should be formed without delay and plans prepared for it to capture Phuket Island (operation 'Roger') or, as a secondary task, to launch an amphibious assault on Rangoon should 14th Army's advance from the north fall behind schedule.

Future strategy was again discussed by Mountbatten and his Commanders-in-Chief at Calcutta on the 23rd February.<sup>2</sup> Leese said that he was prepared to undertake the attack on Phuket Island provided he had a corps of two divisions and a commando brigade at his disposal. Power believed that, as there was no enemy surface threat and the threat from submarines was negligible, naval resources would be adequate to support the operation in June, and, since interference by the Japanese air force would be on a very small scale, the four assault carriers and two light carriers which would then be available could provide adequate air cover. He, however, urged Mountbatten to ask the Chiefs of Staff for the support of the British Pacific Fleet, operating on the eastern side of the Kra Isthmus in the Gulf of Siam. Garrod was prepared to fly fighters to Phuket Island even if Rangoon were not captured by the 1st June, provided there were airfields available south of Ramree within 900 miles of it. Mountbatten decided that, for planning purposes, the date for the attack should be the 1st June, although every effort should be made to launch it earlier irrespective of whether Rangoon had been captured before the monsoon.<sup>3</sup> After the capture of Phuket Island, a bridgehead should be secured early in October in the Port Swettenham/Port Dickson area (operation 'Zipper') preparatory to an advance on Singapore (operation 'Mailfist').

On the 26th February Mountbatten told the Chiefs of Staff of these plans and said that, provided the air build-up proceeded as planned and he was given the amphibious resources, he intended to

<sup>1</sup> The three Commanders-in-Chief were Admiral Sir Arthur Power (who was also Commander-in-Chief East Indies Fleet), General Leese and Air Marshal Sir Guy Garrod, who was Acting Allied Air Commander-in-Chief until Air Chief Marshal Sir Keith Park took over on the 24th February 1945.

<sup>2</sup> Operations in Burma were also discussed at this conference. See Volume IV, page 247.

<sup>3</sup> Planning was to begin on the 2nd March and be completed by the 1st April. See Volume IV, page 252.

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secure a bridgehead in Malaya with the land forces available in S.E.A.C. and not wait for the arrival of reinforcements from Europe since speed was the governing factor. He hoped to have two divisions available for the Phuket Island operation early in June,<sup>1</sup> and four more divisions from Burma for operations in Malaya after the fall of Rangoon. His timetable was the capture of Phuket Island with two divisions in June, the Port Swettenham/Port Dickson area with four divisions in October (provided Force 'W' and at least 24 L.S.T.s, one L.C.T. and two landing ships, headquarters, of Force 'Y' arrived in the theatre before August),<sup>2</sup> and Singapore in December 1945–March 1946. Unless enemy opposition was unexpectedly weak the last operation would probably need the leading formations from Europe and the balance of Force 'Y'. After the capture of Singapore he would undertake the complete clearance of South-East Asia. He concluded by pointing out that, although 'Dracula' in its original form was not being carried out, the provision of resources for it should continue, if possible at an increased rate, as these would all be needed for the proposed operations.<sup>3</sup> Eight days later Mountbatten told them that he was satisfied the East Indies Fleet would be able to provide adequate cover for the Phuket operation but, since the first airstrip for land-based fighters could not be ready until D+10 day, extra air support was desirable. He therefore asked if the carrier force of the British Pacific Fleet could be made available to operate against targets in Siam, the Kra Isthmus and Malaya at the time of the attack on Phuket Island.

The Chiefs of Staff were in general agreement with Mountbatten's concept of operations aimed at capturing Singapore but, as the provision of resources was closely bound up with the dates of the various operations and they wished to avoid the delay inherent in awaiting detailed plans, they asked him on the 2nd March for further reports on a number of points.<sup>4</sup> They had, however, decided

<sup>1</sup> The XXXIV Corps, consisting of 23rd Indian Division (loaned by the Commander-in-Chief in India (General Sir Claude Auchinleck) provided it was replaced in G.H.Q. India reserve by the first division withdrawing from Burma), 81st West African (W.A.) Division and 3 Commando Brigade (both recently withdrawn from Arakan), was formed at the end of February. Lieut-General O. L. Roberts assumed command of the corps on the 12th March. See Volume IV, page 252.

<sup>2</sup> See page 4 fn. 1.

<sup>3</sup> 'Dracula' was the large amphibious and airborne operation for the capture of Rangoon proposed in the autumn of 1944 but which could not be carried out owing to lack of resources. It must not be confused with the *ad hoc* smaller amphibious operation mounted in April/May 1945 against Rangoon which was given the code name of 'Modified Dracula'.

<sup>4</sup> The Americans allotted resources only on the basis of approved plans. On the 10th March Washington told Sultan, in his capacity of Commanding-General Burma—India Theatre, that the current operations for clearing Burma were to be considered a continuation of 'Capital' and not 'Dracula' (see Volume IV, Chapter I). Accordingly 'Dracula' requirements were to be renamed 'Exploitation of Capital Requirements', and Sultan was to bear this in mind when recommending quantities needed. From this it was clear that resources would not be made available for Mountbatten's new programme unless it could be shown that it was 'Exploitation of Capital'.

that, as adequate air cover could be provided by the East Indies Fleet, there was no justification for diverting any part of the British Pacific Fleet from the main operations against Japan.<sup>1</sup>

On the 23rd March the Chiefs of Staff forwarded Mountbatten's programme to their colleagues in Washington, pointing out that, although the proposals were based throughout on the best case, they were satisfied that there was a reasonable chance of the dates being adhered to. Approval was required so that S.E.A.C. would not be delayed by lack of assigned resources and could take full advantage of the recent accelerated progress in Burma. They recommended, however, that the attack on Phuket Island should not begin until it was clear beyond all doubt that the fall of Rangoon was imminent.<sup>2</sup>

On the 6th April the American Chiefs of Staff said that they approved the attack on Phuket Island but did not see their way to agree to either 'Zipper' or 'Mailfist' since these operations would need the allocation of material, particularly shipping, which might interfere with the main operations for the invasion of Japan. They therefore required to have detailed requirements submitted in order to establish for themselves that the scale of the operations was necessary and that they could be carried out without interference with the main operations in the Pacific. The Chiefs of Staff were not, however, prepared to accept any delay and therefore suggested on the 13th April that, in view of the importance of maintaining the momentum and retaining the initiative in S.E.A.C., the American Chiefs of Staff should agree to the allotment of the necessary resources, provided their release did not hazard the main operations against Japan. To this the Americans eventually agreed on the 12th May.

Meanwhile on the 3rd April Mountbatten, having decided to give 'Modified Dracula' overriding priority however serious the effect on the dates of subsequent operations, told the Chiefs of Staff that the attack on Phuket Island would have to be delayed for six weeks, since the beach groups allotted to it were required for 'Modified Dracula' and part of Force 'W' would have to provide the amphibious lift. Determined not to countenance any delay in the overall theatre strategy or to postpone the recapture of Singapore until after the end of 1945, he then set on foot a re-examination of his strategic programme with a view to regaining the time lost. The Joint Planning Staff recommended that the intermediate step of capturing Phuket Island should be abandoned, 'Zipper' instead

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<sup>1</sup> See Volume IV, pages 9 and 12.

<sup>2</sup> See Volume IV, page 327. The situation in Burma on the 23rd March was that Mandalay had been captured but the Japanese counter-attack on Meiktila had not yet been defeated. See Volume IV, Chapters XXV and XXVI.

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being mounted in late August rather than in October, for the sooner it was launched the lighter would be the initial enemy opposition and the slower the rate of build-up against it. The lack of an advanced naval anchorage would, however, increase the administrative problem of maintaining the naval forces for the operation and entail major landing craft having to sail direct from Ceylon, but, in view of the negligible enemy naval opposition, the planners considered that these disadvantages could be accepted. The loss of air support resulting from the by-passing of Phuket Island could, they thought, be made up by the addition of three or four light carriers to the escort carriers already with the East Indies Fleet. The assault force would have to consist of two divisions with armoured support and, to carry it, the whole of Force 'W' and twelve L.S.T.s from Force 'Y' would be required. Two divisions would be available for the follow-up. Mountbatten accepted the recommendations of the Joint Planning Staff on the 3rd May and ordered that the planning for 'Zipper' should begin in Delhi on the 1st June.

On the 4th May Mountbatten told the Chiefs of Staff that, in view of the enemy's rapidly deteriorating position and negligible naval and air strength, he proposed to launch 'Zipper' during the second half of August without any intermediate operation to obtain an advanced air base and naval anchorage. By this means the capture of Singapore would be accelerated, but his ability to achieve his object with the greatest possible speed depended on the presence of four light fleet carriers with the East Indies Fleet since adequate carrier-borne air strength was a fundamental condition of this accelerated programme. The Commander-in-Chief British Pacific Fleet had asked for these carriers to be sent to join him in June, but if this was done an intermediate base would have to be secured and developed and the capture of Singapore would be delayed beyond 1945. Mountbatten would also require by June tracked landing vehicles (L.V.T.s), eighteen L.S.T.s over and above those in Force 'W' and some amphibious vehicles for maintenance. With these additional resources and those in the theatre or expected to be in the theatre in the near future, he could undertake the capture of Singapore by the end of the year. He therefore asked for approval of his strategy and confirmation that what he needed would be provided in time.

The Chiefs of Staff decided, however, that the course of the war in the Pacific, and the damage which had been inflicted on units of the British Pacific Fleet already there,<sup>1</sup> made it impracticable for the light fleet carriers of 11th Aircraft Carrier Squadron to be attached to the East Indies Fleet for 'Zipper', but, as they were

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<sup>1</sup> See Chapter XII.



extremely anxious that Mountbatten should be in a position to omit the attack on Phuket Island and launch 'Zipper' in August 1945, they offered him in place of the light carriers an escort carrier equipped with 24 Wildcat aircraft which would arrive in the Indian Ocean in time for the operation. In addition they were prepared to allow 896 Squadron (Hellcat aircraft), then in Ceylon but under orders to proceed to the Pacific, to remain in S.E.A.C. and operate from H.M.S. *Shah*. This would give him nine escort carriers for 'Zipper'. They also offered to make two general purpose escort carriers, which were on passage to the Pacific, available in Ceylon by the 7th August to ferry fighter aircraft to the assault area.

On the 18th May Mountbatten replied that he was prepared to undertake 'Zipper' in late August with the carrier force now allotted to him, and that he accepted the offer of the two general purpose escort carriers. He pointed out, however, that the withdrawal of the four light fleet carriers would seriously reduce his ability to neutralize enemy air bases before the assault; for this reason he would be grateful for any further help that the Chiefs of Staff could furnish.



## CHAPTER II

# THE BATTLE OF SITTANG

### The Isolation of the Japanese 28th Army (May 1945)

*See Map 1 and Sketches 1 and 2*

ON the 6th May 1945 at Hlegu the leading troops of IV Corps (Messervy), which had moved from Meiktila down the Sittang valley on Rangoon, met those of 26th Division of XV Corps which had undertaken 'Modified Dracula' and occupied Rangoon on the 3rd;<sup>1</sup> those of XXXIII Corps (Stopford), which had moved down the Irrawaddy valley, had by the same date reached a point forty miles south-east of Prome.<sup>2</sup> The objects of operation 'Capital' having been achieved with the capture of Rangoon and the defeat of the Japanese armies in Burma, Slim (14th Army) assumed command on the 6th of all the forces in Burma, and XV Corps Headquarters was withdrawn to India. Although 14th Army had still to complete its final task of destroying or driving the remnants of the defeated and widely scattered Japanese armies out of Burma, it had now become necessary to consider the reduction of the British/Indian forces in Burma to the minimum necessary to undertake the task of mopping-up, thereby releasing forces for the invasion of Malaya in August.<sup>3</sup> Leese therefore began on the 6th May to consider the reorganization of Allied Land Forces, South-East Asia (A.L.F.S.E.A.) to fit it for its new tasks.<sup>4</sup>

The operations which had resulted in the defeat of the Japanese armies in Burma and the capture of Rangoon had split *Burma Area Army* into a number of groups separated from each other. West of the Sittang River there were three such groups. One, west of the Irrawaddy River, consisted of the main body of 54th Division (Miyazaki), which was withdrawing from Arakan, the remnants of 72nd Independent Mixed Brigade (I.M.B.), which had been forced westwards across the river from Yenangyaung, and the *Katsu Force* (a composite battalion made up from two battalions of 153rd Regiment of 49th

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<sup>1</sup> See Volume IV, Chapter XXXII, and Map 1, facing page 1.

<sup>2</sup> See Volume IV, Chapter XXXI.

<sup>3</sup> See Chapter I.

<sup>4</sup> For the reorganization of A.L.F.S.E.A. see Chapter III.

*Division*). This group was itself split into two portions separated by 89th Indian Brigade of 7th Division: approximately half, the *Koba Force*, was in the Shandatkyi area and the remainder, under command of Miyazaki, was collecting near Kama. Three battalions had already crossed to the east bank at various places.<sup>1</sup> The second group was in the Pegu Yomas and south-west Burma and consisted of *Headquarters 28th Army* (Sakurai), elements of *54th* and *55th Divisions* and a large number of administrative units. The third group, consisting of what was left of *33rd Army* (Honda) was in the Sittang valley; it was concentrating in the Waw-Mokpalin area and endeavouring to keep open an escape route for the other two groups.<sup>2</sup> East of the Sittang River *15th Army* and *56th Division* were withdrawing south towards Moulmein, where Kimura had established his headquarters after the withdrawal from Rangoon. Both *15th Army* and *56th Division* had left rearguards to cover their withdrawal; the former had *15th Division*, now at about the strength of a regiment, in the Karen Hills astride the Toungoo-Mawchi road covering the north-south withdrawal route through Kemapyu and offering a potential threat to IV Corps communications and the airfields at Toungoo, and the latter (*56th Division*) was at Kalaw with its rearguard on the Meiktila-Taunggyi road. The plight of *28th Army* west of the Toungoo-Pegu road was desperate and might have been considered hopeless, but, as Slim once said, 'all armies talk of fighting to the last man and the last round; the Japanese alone did it.'<sup>3</sup> True to form, *28th Army* was determined to concentrate all its scattered elements in the Pegu Yomas and then break out eastwards or die in the attempt, and *33rd Army* was equally determined to keep open an escape route at all costs in the Waw-Mokpalin area.

There could be no pause in the operations in Burma while A.L.F.S.E.A. was reorganizing, since it was essential that the scattered enemy forces were given no respite, were kept separated and, if possible, destroyed piecemeal before they could once again concentrate. Stopford and Messervy, who were commanders of energy and drive, knew what Slim wanted and wasted no time. On the 6th and 7th May respectively they issued orders designed to set up north and south cordons to keep the enemy forces west of the Sittang split into three groups and to isolate *28th Army* in the Pegu Yomas. The XXXIII Corps cordon was to run along the road from Allanmyo to Prome and thence south-east to Tharrawaddy, where it was to link up with a column of 26th Division which was to move north from Hlegu to meet it. Since both the forward divisions of IV

<sup>1</sup> See Volume IV, pages 378-9. The units east of the river were III/154th, I/143rd and II/121st Battalions.

<sup>2</sup> See Volume IV, page 388.

<sup>3</sup> Field-Marshal Sir William Slim, *Courage and other Broadcasts* (Cassell, 1957), page 164.

Corps were in or south of Pegu and there was a large gap between them and the follow-up (19th Indian) division at Toungoo, IV Corps had to deploy backwards as quickly as possible in order to establish its cordon from Pegu to Toungoo before the Japanese in west and south-west Burma could cross the Sittang and join up with 15th and 33rd Armies east of the river.

In the Irrawaddy valley XXXIII Corps had 7th Indian Division (Evans) deployed with 114th Indian Brigade (Brigadier H. W. Dinwiddie) in the Padan-Minbu area in contact with the *Koba Force*, 89th Indian Brigade (Brigadier W. A. Crowther) in the Yenanna area moving towards Shandatkyi and also in contact with the *Koba Force*, and 33rd Indian Brigade (Brigadier J. S. Vickers) in reserve at Magwe.<sup>1</sup> The 268th Indian Brigade (Brigadier G. M. Dyer) was in the Thayetmyo area.<sup>2</sup> The 20th Indian Division (Gracey) was farther south with 80th Indian Brigade (Brigadier D. E. Taunton) north of Prome, 100th Indian Brigade (Brigadier C. H. B. Rodham) south of the town and 32nd Indian Brigade (Brigadier E. C. J. Woodford) moving south towards Tharra-waddy.<sup>3</sup> Fighting flared up on the 7th May when 114th Brigade had sharp engagements at Padan and Minbu. Thereafter opposition in the area ceased and it became clear that the Japanese realized that a strong force was cutting across their escape route to the south in the Shandatkyi area, and were in full retreat. Early on the 8th, 1/11th Sikhs, the leading battalion of 89th Brigade, overran two fortified stockades north of Shandatkyi and reached the Pani Chaung, the probable line of withdrawal of the force which had previously been located in the Padan area.<sup>4</sup> The battalion quickly blocked the track and waited for the enemy attack; it came soon after dark and was the beginning of as fierce an action as any fought in Burma. All night long the Sikhs held firm while their patrols worked their way round the Japanese flank in search of a transport column suspected to be in the area; it was found and shelled by 136th Field Regiment, R.A. soon after dawn on the 9th with the result that the long column of some seventy vehicles turned and made off. At 8 a.m. the enemy infantry tried to break contact and follow it, but were so closely engaged that they were unable to do so and eventually renewed their attacks. It became evident by evening

<sup>1</sup> See Volume IV, Chapter XXXI. The *Koba Force*, under command of Major-General T. Koba (commander of 54th Division's infantry group) consisted of 154th Regiment (less III/154th Battalion), 111th Regiment (less III/111th Battalion), 54th Reconnaissance Regiment and I/54th Artillery Battalion.

<sup>2</sup> See Volume IV, Chapter XXXI. This was an independent brigade.

<sup>3</sup> See Volume IV, Chapter XXXI.

<sup>4</sup> See Sketch 1, facing page 26.

of the 9th May that, under cover of their attack in the Shandatkyi area, the Japanese were switching their line of retreat to the Yegyi Chaung in the next valley to the west along which a track ran by way of Taungmaw and the Mu Chaung to Mindon and on to Kama where Miyazaki, with the main body of *54th Division*, was anxiously awaiting their arrival before making his attempt to cross the Irrawaddy and join the rest of *28th Army* in the Pegu Yomas.

Crowther immediately sent two companies of *4/8th Gurkhas*, his only reserve which was quickly available, to block the enemy's new line of withdrawal at Taungdaw, some five miles south-west of Shandatkyi. For the next three days there was much hand-to-hand fighting as two battalions of *111th Regiment* tried and failed to overwhelm the small force of Gurkhas at Taungdaw in order to clear the way for the *Koba Force* and its transport, while the Sikhs and the rest of *4/8th Gurkhas* tried to drive in Koba's rearguards and destroy his force before it could overwhelm the two companies at Taungdaw.<sup>1</sup> Perhaps the outstanding factor in the fighting here and at Shandatkyi was the close integration of the efforts of artillery and infantry, though widely dispersed in dense forest, and the R.A.F. with the help of a Visual Control Post. That air support was so close and effective and, above all, arrived so quickly over the target during the action was due to the arrangements made at the beginning of the advance on Rangoon, whereby fighter wings moved close behind the forward troops, their control being vested in a forward group control centre which established itself as close as possible to the forward wing.<sup>2</sup> In this case 907 Wing was operating from Magwe, only forty air miles from Shandatkyi.

The action at Shandatkyi completed the dispersal of the *Koba Force*. The Japanese losses were very heavy: 470 dead, five Japanese and fifteen *Indian National Army (I.N.A.)* prisoners, five 105-mm. field guns and almost all the vehicles of the transport column. The Japanese account records that the *Koba Force* withdrew after heavy fighting at Shandatkyi and moved across to the Yegyi Chaung, where fighting again broke out and lasted for three days. The *111th Regiment* is said to have broken through and reached Kama on the 21st May while the rest of the *Koba Force*, including *54th Reconnaissance Regiment*, some transport and engineers as well as the divisional medical unit with 700 casualties, made a wide detour and reached Kama on the 22nd.

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<sup>1</sup> During this action Rifleman Lachiman Gurung of *4/8th Gurkhas*, the sole survivor of a section holding a vital post, though severely wounded in the face and side and with his right arm almost shattered, held his ground, firing from the left shoulder, for four hours and lived to wear the V.C. he earned. The citation went on to say that, of eighty-seven Japanese dead counted in the immediate vicinity of the company position, thirty-one lay in front of the post he defended.

<sup>2</sup> See Volume IV, pages 253-4.

While the action at Shandatkyi was being fought, the uncommitted third battalion of 89th Brigade (2nd King's Own Scottish Borderers) was ordered to move from Yenanna to Thayetmyo, where it was to come under command of 268th Brigade which had two battalions west of the river, one eight miles south-west of Thayetmyo and the other farther west at Kyaukkyi where the road to Mindon crossed the Pani Chaung. The brigade, which had been put under command of 7th Division on the 12th, had been ordered to move south and attack the Japanese force known to be in the Kama area and, if possible, prevent the remnants of the *Koba Force* joining it from Shandatkyi. As soon as the action at Shandatkyi ended Crowther ordered 1/11th Sikhs to Mindon and 4/8th Gurkhas to Yegyanzin on the road ten miles east of it to link up with 268th Brigade and, it was hoped, complete the destruction of the *Koba Force*.<sup>1</sup> As soon as the link-up took place, 2nd K.O.S.B. was to revert to command of 89th Brigade. Meanwhile 114th Brigade, whose area was now clear of enemy, had been ordered to cross to the east bank of the Irrawaddy and concentrate at Magwe, less its two attached units (the Chin Hills Battalion and the Lushai Scouts) which were covering its right flank. Those two units were ordered to Shandatkyi and Minbu respectively to occupy the areas vacated by 89th and 114th Brigades.

On the 15th May, the day the Shandatkyi action ended, one hundred and seventy miles to the south 32nd Brigade of 20th Division made contact at Okkan,<sup>2</sup> seventeen miles south of Tharrawaddy, with a motorized column from 71st Indian Brigade of 26th Division which was advancing to meet it from Rangoon. The 32nd Brigade's advance from Prome to Tharrawaddy had met little resistance, but the small actions that did take place were fiercely contested since such Japanese as were encountered were almost invariably covering the passage of others across the road on their way to the Pegu Yomas.<sup>3</sup> With the advance of 32nd Brigade to Tharrawaddy, 20th Division's cordon had become very attenuated. All along it there were frequent sharp clashes and there was no doubt that Japanese were trickling across the river and road. It was evident, too, that a major action was likely to develop before long in the Kama area where the remnants of 54th Division were known to be collecting. On the arrival of 114th Brigade at Magwe, Evans ordered 33rd Brigade to move south on the 19th May to double the cordon east of the Irrawaddy opposite Kama. Headquarters 80th Brigade then moved south to Hmawbi with one of its battalions,

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<sup>1</sup> See Sketch 1, facing page 26.

<sup>2</sup> See Sketch 2, facing page 48.

<sup>3</sup> During this fighting Japanese naval base personnel from the Rangoon area were encountered for the first time.

leaving its other two temporarily under command of 33rd Brigade.

Evans' intention was to destroy the enemy forces in the Kama area by an enveloping attack made by 89th and 268th Brigades west of the Irrawaddy, while 33rd Brigade (five battalions) closed escape routes east of the river. Miyazaki had to ward off attack from the north, north-west and west, cross the river and then evade or break through 33rd Brigade's cordon before he could reach the comparative safety of the Pegu Yomas. His only hope of escape lay in concentrating all his troops still west of the Irrawaddy near the selected crossing area in secrecy,<sup>1</sup> making a sudden thrust at an unexpected point and getting his force through the gap before his opponents, who, as is inevitable in any large-scale enveloping movement, were widely dispersed, could move their mobile reserves to intercept and crush him. He had already shown skill and boldness at Imphal in 1944 and Arakan earlier in the year;<sup>2</sup> he again showed these qualities in the desperate situation which now faced him, and almost succeeded.

Crowther (89th Brigade) sent 1/11th Sikhs from Mindon by way of Kabaing to attack Kama from the west, and 2nd K.O.S.B. (which had hurriedly been put on pack transport sent up by 114th Brigade to Kyaukkyi) to attack across country from the north-west. Dyer (268th Brigade) at Thayetmyo planned to attack from the north with Mahindra Dal (Nepalese) and 1st Chamar Regiments, the latter on the left moving down the river bank. The reserve battalion of 89th Brigade (4/8th Gurkhas) remained at Thayetmyo and that of 268th Brigade (4/3rd Madras Regiment) moved down the east bank of the river to a point opposite Kama. All the attacking battalions moved off on the 20th May. The next evening the Sikhs surprised a party of about a hundred Japanese at Kabaing, killing seventy-three and capturing three guns and five machine-guns for the loss of three killed and nine wounded. About the same time 2nd K.O.S.B. and Mahindra Dal made contact about four miles north-west of Kama; 1st Chamar occupied Kama village against slight opposition and got a footing on the north shoulder of the ridge overlooking the gorge through which the Made Chaung flows before reaching the Irrawaddy; it was counter-attacked twice during the night but held firm. Neither 2nd K.O.S.B. nor Mahindra Dal had much success next morning in their attempts to capture the rest of the Kama ridge. On the evening of the 22nd the reserve battalion of 268th Brigade (4/3rd Madras) was ferried across the river and with 2nd K.O.S.B. attacked the southern end of the ridge

<sup>1</sup> Movement was restricted to the hours of darkness and cooking to the short period of half light at dusk and dawn when, aided by mist, fires and smoke would not be easily seen.

<sup>2</sup> See Volume III, page 359 and Volume IV, page 345.



but made little headway until enemy resistance suddenly ceased on the 25th.

It was then clear that what was left of Miyazaki's force had succeeded in crossing the Irrawaddy and that a break-out across the road and into the Pegu Yomas was imminent. By this time, however, 33rd Brigade (Vickers) had established an inner and an outer cordon on the east bank of the river. The inner cordon, which ran in a four-mile arc from a point on the river two miles south of Kama to Zalon, was established among hills covered with dense jungle. It was manned by three battalions: 4/15th Punjab in the north, 4/1st Gurkhas in the centre and 1st Queen's Royal Regiment in the south. Behind this the outer cordon, manned by 1/19th Hyderabad and 2/8th Punjab (left behind temporarily by 80th Brigade when it moved south to Hmawbi), ran along the main road in open grass and scrub country, and consisted of a screen of patrols watching the road with striking forces at convenient points ready to move to any threatened area. The first attacks on the inner cordon were made on the 24th, but large numbers were not involved and they were probably merely probing to find a gap. The big effort came on the night of the 27th/28th when five attacks were made in the right and centre sectors. In the morning seventy-eight dead Japanese were found and seventeen men of the *I.N.A.* gave themselves up. It was obvious that many Japanese must have got through the inner cordon and reports from 1/19th Hyderabad on the 26th of finding enemy in the Point 536 area seemed to confirm that some at least had also got through the outer cordon.<sup>1</sup>

During the next three days in extensive patrol clashes the Hydrabads incurred forty-nine casualties against forty-three Japanese dead counted. On hearing of the situation at Point 536 (which appeared to be the enemy rendezvous), Evans ordered the K.O.S.B. to be ferried at once from Kama to the east bank where it was to be met by lorries and taken to positions to thicken up the outer cordon along the main road. While this move was in progress it became known from patrol reports that several hundred Japanese who had broken through the inner cordon were at Letpagan;<sup>2</sup> the K.O.S.B. was therefore hurried into positions before nightfall on the 28th along the road between that village and Point 536. Within a few hours probing attacks began and, soon after daylight on the 29th, about 300 Japanese broke from the jungle west of the road and made a concerted rush near the centre of the K.O.S.B. line, while another party escaped round its southern end but ran into 2/8th Punjab near Wettigan. Of the party that charged the K.O.S.B. 138 were

<sup>1</sup> The force at Point 536 was in fact *III/154th* and *II/121st Battalions* which had crossed the river in early May. See Volume IV, page 379.

<sup>2</sup> Not to be confused with Letpadan much farther south on the Prome—Rangoon road.

killed, while the Punjabis killed sixty-seven of the other party and captured six prisoners and a battalion gun. For the next twenty-four hours interceptions continued over a wide area. Typical of the confused fighting was an action near Wettigan when a 33rd Brigade convoy, taking ammunition and supplies to the Hyderabads and escorted by Bren carriers, became aware that the scrub and tall grass each side of the road was full of Japanese. The carriers attacked while the convoy drove on; the action ended with almost all of the carrier crews casualties and the destruction of two carriers and six trucks, while some 200 Japanese made for the hills at Paukkaung. A column from the Queen's sent in pursuit gained contact with the rear of the party but was unable to intercept it. By the 30th, as the area seemed to be clear of Japanese, Evans concentrated 89th Brigade at Thayetmyo and 268th Brigade at Allanmyo and returned the two battalions attached to 33rd Brigade to 80th Brigade at Hmawbi. That day a considerable force of Japanese was discovered at Paukkaung and Evans ordered 114th Brigade south from Magwe to isolate and if possible destroy it, in co-operation with 33rd Brigade.

The action of Kama, which lasted from the 20th to the 30th May, completed the destruction of the transport and most of the artillery of 54th Division. Known Japanese losses included 1,396 counted dead and seventy-four prisoners (but many bodies were never found in the thick jungle in which most of the fighting took place) and all the division's vehicles, guns and heavy mortars, except those which had crossed early in May or had been jettisoned before and during the crossing of the Irrawaddy. The action at Kama is of particular interest in that it is a story of quick parry and thrust by two experienced and determined commanders. That Miyazaki succeeded in assembling a by no means negligible, though battered, portion of his division in the Pegu Yomas was a creditable performance in view of the skill with which Evans manoeuvred 7th Division which had been in action since the summer of 1943 and had never yet tasted defeat. Against lesser opposition Miyazaki might well have got most of his division away.

The Japanese account of the action at Kama records that shortly after his arrival there on the 6th May Miyazaki ordered his units east of the river to Point 536, by way of which he intended to make for his rallying point, Paukkaung, and began to trickle his forces on the west bank across the river. He had an initial setback at Zalon on the 14th when troops crossing were intercepted and most of their boats destroyed, but thereafter the crossing was unmolested and by the 25th the whole of his force was on the east bank, except for a battalion rearguard holding the Kama ridge. It disengaged and crossed during the night of the 25th/26th. For the break-out from

his bridgehead Miyazaki divided his force into two main columns, each with a large number of sick and wounded, and a small flying column which was to try to create the impression that the break-out would be to the south.<sup>1</sup> In addition, the *Katsu Force* was to make its way between the 23rd and 27th independently to Paukkaung, avoiding action as far as possible. By the 29th the bulk of Miyazaki's force, not without considerable losses, had reached the Point 536 area. From there it began its move towards Paukkaung, its southern flank being covered by the *Katsu Force* which had occupied a position astride the Paungdale-Paukkaung road some three miles west of Paukkaung.

By the end of May what was left of 28th Army, with the exception of groups of stragglers, was east of the Prome-Rangoon road assembling in two groups in the western foothills of the Pegu Yomas: one, under command of 54th Division, at Paukkaung, and the other, under command of Headquarters 28th Army, at Tanbington, both preparing to move deeper into the mountains as soon as they had sent their remaining supplies and ammunition ahead into safer areas. The Magwe-Prome road was firmly in possession of 7th Division as far south as Paungde, and Evans was moving 33rd and 114th Brigades to attack the Japanese force known to be concentrating at Paukkaung. His third brigade (89th) remained in reserve at Thayetmyo, while 268th Brigade (under command) was under orders to concentrate at Allanmyo. To the south, 20th Division had a cordon along the Prome-Rangoon road from Paungde to Hmawbi where it was in contact with IV Corps to the east and the Rangoon garrison to the south. Two of its battalions were west of the Irrawaddy and patrols from those on the main road were operating in the foothills of the Pegu Yomas. The encirclement of 28th Army on the west was complete.

On the 7th May, when Messervy issued his operation orders,<sup>2</sup> IV Corps was disposed along the Rangoon-Meiktila road from Hlegu in the south to Pyawbwe in the north. The 17th Indian Division (Major-General D. T. Cowan), with the exception of 99th Indian Brigade at Pyu, was in the Hlegu area; 5th Indian Division (Major-General E. C. R. Mansergh) was between Payagyi and

<sup>1</sup> The column under Koba's command consisted of I/111th and II/154th Battalions, 54th Reconnaissance Regiment, I/54th Field Artillery Battalion, 54th Engineer Regiment (less detachments) and 1,000 casualties in two groups. The column under Miyazaki's command consisted of Headquarters 54th Division, 111th Regiment (less I/111th Battalion), I/154th Battalion, 54th Field Artillery Regiment (less two battalions), one company 121st Medical Unit (less detachments), a detachment of engineers and 1,000 casualties in two groups. The flying column consisted of one company of 111th Regiment and a detachment of engineers.

<sup>2</sup> See pages 12-13.

Pegu, with 9th Indian Brigade (Brigadier H. G. L. Brain) operating eastwards in the Waw area and a battalion group at Shwegyin; and 19th Indian Division (Major-General T. W. Rees) was holding Toungoo and operating eastwards along the Mawchi road, less 64th Brigade group which, under the direct command of 14th Army, was taking over the Kalaw road from the last remaining brigade of 36th Division about to be withdrawn to India. The 255th Indian Tank Brigade (less detachments with divisions) was concentrating at Pegu.

Messervy had an accurate assessment of the strength and distribution of the Japanese forces in south Burma. He estimated that in the Shwegyin area there were some 7,200 composed of elements of *2nd, 18th, 49th and 53rd Divisions* and possibly of *144th Regiment of 55th Division*, although it was thought that this formation might have withdrawn towards Mawchi instead of to the south.<sup>1</sup> The rest of *15th and 33rd Armies and 56th Division*, some 23,000 strong, were east of the Sittang River in the Shan States and Karen Hills between Kalaw (*56th Division*) in the north and Mawchi in the south. In the Mokpalin area there were elements of *24th Independent Mixed Brigade* from Tenasserim as well as the forces which it was believed had gone there after the evacuation of Rangoon. In western Burma it was thought there were some 18,500 Japanese of *54th and 55th Divisions, 72nd I.M.B. and 153rd Regiment of 49th Division* together with some army troops; this force was not believed to have any artillery heavier than pack guns.

Messervy's intention was to destroy the enemy attempting to escape from Burma and he indicated two main zones of destruction: one between the Pegu Yomas and the Sittang River and the other the coastal strip between the mouths of the Sittang and Salween Rivers. To bring this about IV Corps was to redeploy at once with 17th Division along the Pyinbongyi-Pyu road to the north of 5th Division. The 5th Division based on Pegu, with 116th Regiment R.A.C. and 7th Light Cavalry (less two squadrons) under command, was to prevent any Japanese from escaping eastwards through the divisional area, which was to extend from Zayatkwın in the south to Payagyi in the north, and to capture Kyaikto and Bilin in the coastal strip east of the Sittang.<sup>2</sup> When 17th Division arrived in its new area, it was to take under command 9th (Royal Deccan) Horse and a squadron of 7th Light Cavalry and ensure that no enemy could escape across the road between Pyinbongyi and Pyu. The 19th Division (less 64th Brigade) was to remain responsible for the area northwards from Pyu to Toungoo and for the Mawchi road. The 255th Tank Brigade, less detachments with divisions, was to

<sup>1</sup> The *144th Regiment* did in fact withdraw towards Mawchi.

<sup>2</sup> The 5th Division's task of capturing Kyaikto and Bilin was later cancelled; see page 23.

remain in corps reserve at Pegu. Armour for 19th Division was to be provided by flying the officers and men of a squadron of 25th Dragoons from India to Meiktila where they would be re-equipped with medium tanks.<sup>1</sup> The engineers were to improve bridges on the main road and the all-weather airstrips at Toungoo, establish all-weather airstrips at Pegu and Zayatkwın and repair the railway to make it fit to take jeep trains.

'V' Force was to operate six intelligence jeep patrols, four in the Pegu Yomas and two east of the Sittang in the Shan Hills. Force 136 was to maintain a Burma National Army (B.N.A.) intelligence screen on both sides of the road and work in close co-operation with the division in whose area they were operating.<sup>2</sup> Until a road and rail line of communication from Rangoon was established, maintenance was to be by air-landing at Toungoo for 17th and 19th Divisions and at Payagyi and Zayatkwın for 5th Division. All fighter aircraft had been withdrawn to Meiktila and Myingyan when the torrential rain, which began on the 2nd May and delayed 14th Army's advance on Rangoon,<sup>3</sup> flooded the Toungoo all-weather airstrips and put all but the best of the fair-weather airstrips out of action until the end of the monsoon. The redeployment of close support squadrons was deferred until it was known whether the engineers could build and maintain airstrips during the monsoon, and all usable airfields south of Meiktila were allotted for the time being exclusively to transport aircraft engaged in bringing forward supplies.

The redeployment of 17th Division was completed on the 10th May with 99th Brigade (Brigadier M. V. Wright) in the north in contact with 19th Division at Pyu, 63rd Indian Brigade (Brigadier G. W. S. Burton) in the centre based on Penwegan and 48th Indian Brigade (Brigadier R. C. O. Hedley) in the south based on Daik-u in contact with 5th Division. The Rangoon road cordon was thus completed.

There was not a great deal of activity in the divisional area between the 10th and 31st May. In 99th Brigade's sector all was quiet until the 17th May, but during the next three days two enemy columns, one 150 and the other about 400 strong, were intercepted north-east and north of Pyu and in the ensuing fighting 1st East Yorkshire Regiment and 1/3rd Gurkhas killed 233 Japanese and took eight prisoners with trifling losses to themselves. In 63rd Brigade's sector there was only one interception of Japanese attempt-

<sup>1</sup> The 25th Dragoons had fought in Arakan in the 1943-44 campaign; see Volume III.

<sup>2</sup> Force 136 in actual fact worked mostly with guerrillas it raised with the help of the Anti-Fascist Organization (A.F.O.), of which the B.N.A. was in effect the military section. Force 136 was able to make little contact with the B.N.A. and on the whole found it unsatisfactory.

<sup>3</sup> See Volume IV, page 393.

ing to cross the main road. This was near Penwagon on the 11th and resulted in a day-long action in which a company of 1/10th Gurkhas suffered twenty-one casualties and the Japanese left behind forty-six dead and a medium machine-gun. Shortly after this action patrols watching the Sittang reported many corpses floating down the river and found thirty dead in stranded country boats.<sup>1</sup> Apart from a party of about twenty Japanese, of whom seventeen were killed, only stragglers were met in 48th Brigade's sector, most of whom gave themselves up. The great variety of identifications and the fact that only the party which tried to break out in the Pyu area was of any size indicated that during May only stragglers and minor units which had lost touch with their formations were on the move eastwards from the Pegu Yomas.<sup>2</sup>

The Battle of Sittang opened in the area held by 9th Brigade of 5th Division when 2nd West Yorkshire Regiment, supported by tanks of 7th Light Cavalry operating along the high-level road, attacked Nyaungkashe, three miles from the Sittang bridge, on the 10th May.<sup>3</sup> The village was quickly overrun, for the garrison (one of the battalions hastily organized for the defence of Rangoon)<sup>4</sup> panicked at the appearance of tanks and over 200 were killed by fire from automatic weapons as they left their positions. Surrounded as it was by miles of flooded ricefields, Nyaungkashe commanded the only dry-shod route from the west to the Sittang bridge and was destined to become the most fought over place in Burma during June and July 1945. After its capture there was a pause for a few days during which two motor launches, sent into the Sittang estuary to examine the possibility of assault landings on the east bank, were swept away and wrecked and 3/9th Jats (the divisional reconnaissance battalion) got patrols across the Sittang River where they observed considerable movement, particularly of artillery and tanks, in the wooded hills on the east bank. As a discouragement to these activities the Japanese demolished another span of the already damaged Sittang bridge. Since the whole countryside west of the Sittang was flooded to a depth of several feet, approach to the west bank of the river was impossible except along the railway to the bridge and a few paths on top of embankments. It was evident that,

<sup>1</sup> Altogether 113 corpses were reported. As there was no action in which IV Corps troops were involved to account for this, it is presumed that the dead were from the ill-fated 118th Base Hospital, which had been at Paungde. From Japanese accounts it would appear that touch with it was lost but that it tried to get across the Sittang River and was never heard of again. It seems probable that the party which engaged 1/10th Gurkhas on the 11th was covering its passage across the main road and that later it was intercepted and all its personnel massacred by Force 136 and its guerrillas (A.F.O. and Karen).

<sup>2</sup> Prisoners were from twelve major units, several minor units, some nurses, and three 'comfort girls'. Many were men with long hospital records, evidently unfit being evacuated.

<sup>3</sup> Some 300 immobilized motor transport vehicles were found in the village. See Sketch 2, facing page 48.

<sup>4</sup> See Volume IV, page 391.

with the river in spate and the flooded west bank completely dominated by the hills on the east bank, which appeared to be held in strength, any attempt at an assault crossing at that time would have ended in disaster. The 5th Division was therefore told to make no attempt to get to Bilin but that the enemy was to be cleared from the west bank of the river.

On the 13th May 1st Burma Regiment, which had been at Shwegyin since the end of April, rejoined 9th Brigade on relief by a unit of 17th Division. The brigade, now at full strength, adjusted its positions: 1st Burma Regiment took over Nyaungkashe and the western approaches to the Sittang bridge, the West Yorkshires withdrew to Waw and 3/2nd Punjab held Abya. Behind 9th Brigade 161st Brigade (Brigadier E. H. W. Grimshaw), with 2/1st Punjab, a squadron of medium tanks of 9th Royal Horse and a troop of light tanks of 7th Light Cavalry, a medium battery and a company of 17th Dogra Machine-Gun Battalion under command, was deployed in the Moyingyi Reservoir–Thanatpin–Payagyi–Pyinbongyi area with a strong detachment at Myitkyo, where the main canal sluice gates were, since an enemy build-up was reported in that area. The brigade faced both east and west since it also had the task of blocking all tracks leading into the main road from the Pegu Yomas. The 123rd Brigade, less 2/1st Punjab, was in the Hlegu area and 5th Divisional Headquarters was at Pegu.

The rain suddenly stopped on the 13th and there was fine weather for over a week, during which the flood level fell. Patrols were able to move about more freely and they soon discovered a considerable enemy force west of the Sittang in the area between the old course of the river and the existing estuary which became known as the Sittang Bend.<sup>1</sup> A fighting patrol of the West Yorkshires was annihilated at Letpanthonbin, another was badly mauled, and a company going to their assistance was unable to get near them. On the 18th a column from 1st Burma Regiment was in action farther south in the bend, supported by light tanks which owing to the dry weather could now operate. On the 20th the rain began again, and the floods rose so rapidly that two batteries of field guns in Nyaungkashe were withdrawn to Abya only just in time to avoid their being drowned. From the 20th to the end of the month there were few contacts and little activity. The great drop in activity is exemplified by the fact that between the 6th and 19th May thirty-nine Japanese and thirteen *I.N.A.* prisoners were taken and 745 Japanese were killed in 9th Brigade's area (including Shwegyin) in contrast to thirty-two killed and no prisoners taken from the 20th to the end of the month.

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<sup>1</sup> See Sketch 2, facing page 48.

To the north in 19th Division's area 62nd Indian Brigade (Brigadier J. R. Morris), attempting to drive the Japanese eastwards on the Mawchi road, found an extensive road block at MS 5 on the 6th May and, when trying to turn the position to the north, ran into another strongly defended area. It was not until the 12th that an enveloping attack by 3/6th Rajputana Rifles, with a half squadron of 25th Dragoons under command, along and south of the road and by 4/6th Gurkhas north of it broke through and the advance continued. A brief account written at the time by the commanding officer of 3/6th Rajputana Rifles describes the fighting:

'Enemy resistance took the form of road blocks of felled trees, logs and craters, 105-mm. shells attached to grenades, anti-tank mines, 47- and 75-mm. guns firing over open sights and the all too common snipers and booby traps. The ground was ideal for the enemy, being thick jungle on both sides of the road which had many bends round which were the inevitable road blocks covered by lay-back positions. All the area was a mass of dumps, principally rice and ammunition of all types including British. Progress was slow and costly causing the battalion many casualties . . . The battalion executed a series of very successful platoon 'hooks' and succeeded in putting into the bag twelve enemy guns and exterminating their crews often without tank or artillery support'.

On the 17th 62nd Brigade resumed the advance with one battalion, supported by a half squadron of tanks, on the road, while the other two battalions carried out a deep outflanking movement aimed at MS 15. Up to this point the opposition had been from *51st Regiment of 15th Division*, but from now on a fresh unit, *144th Regiment of 55th Division*, was encountered. Opposition stiffened and, with the flank battalions often having to cut their way through jungle and negotiate deep ravines, only two miles had been gained by the 23rd May. The 98th Indian Brigade (Brigadier C. I. Jerrard) from the Toungoo area relieved the 62nd on the 24th but, despite its comparative freshness, it was the end of the month before the immediate objective, the junction of the Mawchi and Thandaung roads, fourteen miles east of Toungoo, was gained.

Casualties incurred by 98th Brigade in the five days it took to advance to and secure the road junction were not serious: thirty-eight men killed and wounded, forty-two animals either killed or so badly injured that they had to be destroyed and two tanks out of action. The casualties of 62nd Brigade between the 6th and 23rd were on a similar scale and it is probable that those of the Japanese were approximately the same.

Meanwhile east of Meiktila 64th Brigade (Brigadier J. G. Flewett) was, on the 6th May, moving up to take over the Kalaw road sector from 29th Brigade of 36th Division. The Japanese held a position on the road known as the Staircase, where it zigzagged up a precipitous



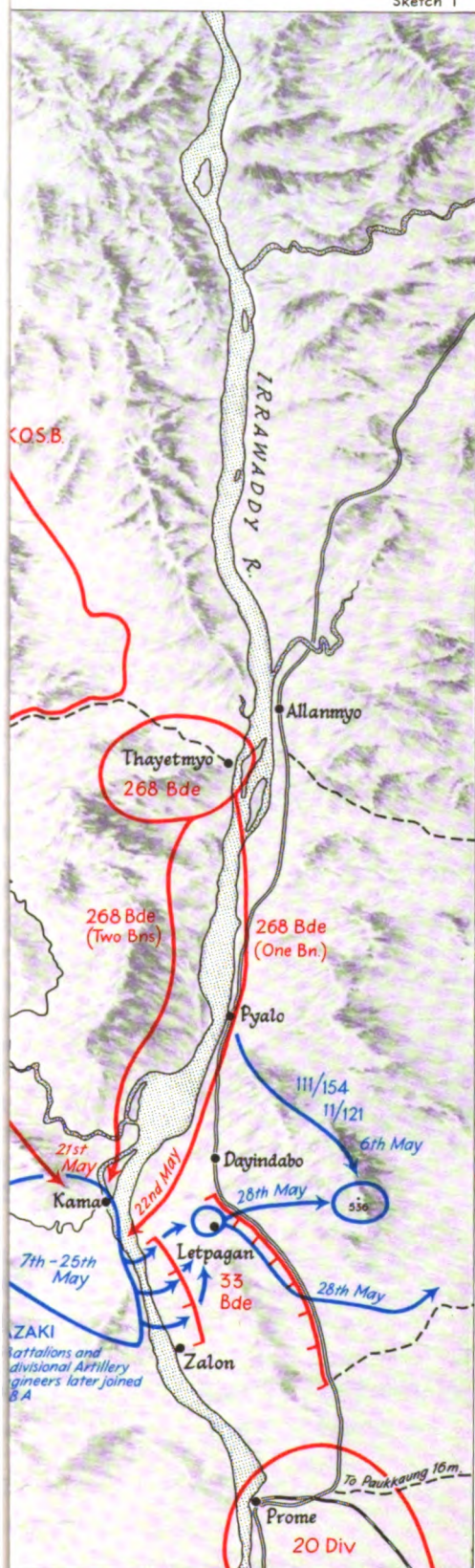
1,200-foot escarpment, and Flewett quickly realized that a frontal attack was out of the question, particularly as all reports indicated that the Japanese were in considerable strength.<sup>1</sup> The whole area was one of dense, trackless jungle and precipitous ravines, so that outflanking moves had to be carefully reconnoitred and routes marked and even cut in advance. He assessed that all three battalions of his brigade would be needed for an enveloping attack and applied to 14th Army Headquarters, under which he was operating, for an additional battalion to secure his communications back to Thazi for which he was responsible. He was allotted the Chin Hills Battalion, then on its way from the Irrawaddy valley, and he decided to attack as soon as it arrived, which it was hoped would be about the 16th May.

On the 18th May, when 14th Army Headquarters moved from Meiktila to Rangoon, operations in the Meiktila-Kalaw-Pyinmana area became the responsibility of IV Corps (Messervy), and 19th Division (Rees) consequently resumed command of 64th Brigade. At this stage the situation was virtually the same as it had been on the 12th, for the promised reinforcement had not yet arrived and 1/6th Gurkhas still had to be employed on the line of communication, which was threatened by a Japanese force reported to be some twelve miles north of Kalaw. Patrol actions were numerous and the Japanese consistently shelled the positions held by the brigade as well as the road running north from the Staircase. The Chin Hills Battalion finally arrived on the 26th and relieved the Gurkhas. Flewett then decided to attack the Staircase on the 30th. The Gurkhas were to work their way round the south of it and attack from the east, 5/10th Baluch, supported by a half squadron of 25th Dragoons, was to attack from the north and 2nd Worcestershire Regiment was to secure the brigade's firm base and maintain pressure from the west. Two squadrons of Thunderbolts attacked the enemy positions on the 28th and 29th while the brigade moved into its starting positions and on the 30th, after a final air attack at 7 a.m., the infantry closed in under cover of artillery concentrations put down by 5th Indian Field Regiment. The Gurkhas encountered such difficult going that it was late on the 30th before they got behind the Japanese, having dispersed several small parties on the way, and captured three guns. The Baluch attack was held up throughout the day, but that night the enemy, finding the Gurkhas getting behind them, pulled out.

The capture of the Staircase on the Kalaw road and the road junction at MS 14 on the Mawchi road, the dispersal of the column

<sup>1</sup> The 148th Regiment, 1,200 strong, at Kalaw; 56th Divisional Headquarters with 146th Regiment and most of the divisional troops in the Taunggyi area, forty miles to the east; and 113th Regiment some forty miles to the north at Lawksawk.

trying to escape to the east in the Pyu area and the consolidation of the Nyaungkashe area marked the end of the first phase of the Battle of Sittang. It was at this stage that 14th Army handed over command in Burma to the newly-formed 12th Army in Rangoon, and the forces in Burma were reorganized.





# CHAPTER III

## S.E.A.C. REORGANIZES IN PREPARATION FOR THE INVASION OF MALAYA (May 1945)

*See Maps 1 and 16*

**T**HE reoccupation of south Burma and the recapture of Rangoon early in May 1945 together with the decision to mount 'Zipper' late in August 1945 made it necessary for considerable reorganization to take place within S.E.A.C.

When 14th Army and XV Corps linked up north of Rangoon on the 6th May,<sup>1</sup> Leese decided that the time had come to withdraw Headquarters 14th Army from Burma so that it could begin planning for the reconquest of Malaya. A Headquarters Burma Army would have to be formed to take its place and he proposed to use Headquarters XXXIII Corps as its basis.

On the 7th Leese called Slim to his headquarters at Meiktila and told him in private that he proposed to place Christison in command of 14th Army and that he (Slim) would remain in command in Burma.<sup>2</sup> At a conference held later the same day it was laid down that command was to pass from 14th Army to the new Burma Army (later renamed 12th Army) on the 1st June 1945, but meanwhile 14th Army planners were to assemble at Delhi by the 24th May and begin planning future operations.<sup>3</sup>

Headquarters 12th Army was to take over from 14th Army the command of IV Corps, the formations which had been under command of XXXIII Corps, the newly-formed Rangoon Area and 505 District in north Burma. A new South Burma District, to include Rangoon Area, was to be formed later with headquarters at Rangoon. The responsibility for operations against the Japanese forces still in Burma was to be assumed by IV Corps.

The Line of Communication (L. of C.) Command was to be

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<sup>1</sup> See Volume IV, page 398.

<sup>2</sup> Slim was not however prepared to accept Burma Command and the proposal was later dropped on orders from Mountbatten.

<sup>3</sup> A duplicate 14th Army planning staff was in fact brought into existence on the 7th May at Delhi under command of Christison.

abolished on the 1st June and its headquarters staff used to form the new South Burma District. That part of L. of C. Command which lay in India was to be absorbed by Eastern Command, India, less an area around Imphal (including the air base) which was to come under command of 505 District,<sup>1</sup> and part of eastern Bengal (including Chittagong) which, since it was the key area on the southern line of communications to Akyab, Ramree and Rangoon, was to come under the command of Headquarters A.L.F.S.E.A.<sup>2</sup> The object of these changes was to free A.L.F.S.E.A. from responsibility for Indian territory, excepting areas essential for the maintenance of formations in Burma. Of the seven divisions, two tank brigades and three independent brigades in Burma, three divisions and one tank brigade were to be withdrawn to India between May and September, thus leaving in Burma four divisions, one tank brigade and three independent brigades.<sup>3</sup>

On the 13th May a conference was held at 14th Army Headquarters to arrange details of the reorganization and, in particular, to decide on the disposal of minor units and clandestine forces. Most of the small units of 14th Army troops engaged in intelligence and security duties were to be transferred permanently to 12th Army; others, such as battalions on line of communication duties and ordnance, hygiene and anti-malaria units, were to remain until replaced by A.L.F.S.E.A. Clandestine forces (Force 136), 'V' Force and the local forces in Burma known as the Burma National Army (B.N.A.) and later as Patriotic Burmese Forces (P.B.F.) were to continue their activities under 12th Army.

The necessary orders having been issued, Headquarters 14th Army began its move from Meiktila to Rangoon on the 19th May, establishing itself alongside Headquarters XXXIII Corps, which moved in at the same time, and by the 23rd the handover had begun. The next day Slim left for what was now known as Advanced Headquarters 14th Army at Delhi and Stopford assumed command in Burma. On the 28th May 12th Army came into being, absorbing Headquarters XXXIII Corps which ceased to exist, and on the same day main Headquarters 14th Army began its move to Delhi. All Burma, except for the Arakan civil division, which remained under A.L.F.S.E.A., and Tenasserim (still in Japanese hands), now

<sup>1</sup> See Map 16, facing page 600.

<sup>2</sup> The 202 L. of C. Area (except for Imphal) and 404 L. of C. Area (except for Chittagong and parts of eastern Bengal) thus reverted to the control of G.H.Q. India.

<sup>3</sup> The formations in India under command of A.L.F.S.E.A. would then be XXXIV Corps (consisting of 23rd Indian Division, 81st (W.A.) Division and 3 Commando Brigade), 25th Indian Division, 2nd Division (less 6th Brigade) and 36th Division. To these 26th Indian Division and 254th Indian Tank Brigade would be added in June and two other divisions later in the year. The formations in Burma would be initially 5th, 7th, 17th, 19th and 20th Indian Divisions and 82nd (W.A.) Division, 255th Indian Tank Brigade, 6th British Brigade, 268th Indian Brigade and 22nd East African (E.A.) Brigade. Of these 7th and 20th Divisions were earmarked for 'Zipper'.

came under command of 12th Army. The 82nd (W.A.) Division in Arakan was to remain there until the end of the monsoon under command of Headquarters A.L.F.S.E.A. In the unlikely event of a renewal of major operations in Arakan the division was to act under orders of 12th Army, but apart from that the army had no responsibility for it.

Broadly speaking Burma, less Arakan and Tenasserim, was now divided into two internal security areas – 505 District in north Burma and Rangoon Area – separated by an operational area stretching from an east-west line through Meiktila in the north to a similar line through Pegu in the south. The headquarters of 505 District was in Meiktila and it controlled five sub-areas with headquarters at Meiktila, Magwe, Mandalay, Kalewa and Myitkyina. To maintain internal security, the district was allotted three battalions of regular infantry and three of Levies distributed among the five sub-areas. Rangoon Area, destined eventually to become South Burma District, had 6th Brigade of 2nd Division under its command. In both 505 District and Rangoon Area the Civil Affairs Service (Burma) (C.A.S.(B.)) under the general direction of the Chief Civil Affairs Officer (C.C.A.O.) at Rangoon had already begun the work of re-establishing the machinery of constitutional government in preparation for handing over control to the Government of Burma as soon as the military situation made it possible.<sup>1</sup> In Arakan the C.A.S.(B) preparations were well ahead of the rest of Burma, while in the operational area in central Burma its work was of necessity as yet very limited.

When 12th Army took over in Burma at the end of May 1945 it assumed command of IV Corps (5th, 17th and 19th Divisions and 255th Tank Brigade) in the Sittang valley, 7th Division (with 268th Brigade under command) and 20th Division in the Irrawaddy valley, 22nd (E.A.) Brigade which was on its way from Taungup to Prome, 505 District, and Rangoon Area which became South Burma District on the 1st June.<sup>2</sup>

The administrative organization of both S.E.A.C. and India Command had also to be reorganized to meet the new conditions. From December 1944 to May 1945 all the energies of both these commands had been directed towards maintaining the offensive on three fronts for the reconquest of Burma. India had concentrated on the build-up of India base, the maintenance of the northern line of

<sup>1</sup> See Chapter V, and Donnison, *British Military Administration in the Far East, 1943-46*, (H.M.S.O., 1956) pages 123-7.

<sup>2</sup> It also commanded 26th Division and 254th Tank Brigade until these formations were returned to India.

communications to Dimapur and Ledo and the southern line to Chittagong, and later to Akyab and Ramree Island, and A.L.F.S.E.A. had concentrated on the development of land, inland water transport (I.W.T.) and air lines of communication forward through these places to the Arakan, Central and Northern fronts.

The maintenance of XV Corps in Arakan had been mainly by sea from Chittagong with a little help from the air. By stupendous efforts, which have been described in Volume IV, 14th Army on the Central front and N.C.A.C. on the Northern front had been maintained across the grain of the country and with ever-lengthening communications: 14th Army mainly by air, at first from Imphal and Chittagong and later also from Akyab and Ramree, supplemented by the Chindwin I.W.T. service from Kalewa to Myingyan, a service fed from Dimapur by the Imphal-Kalewa road; and N.C.A.C. from the air base at Myitkyina, by the extension of the Ledo Road to Bhamo and by the railway south from Myitkyina. The most difficult problem had been to maintain the rapidly moving 14th Army during its pursuit of the Japanese from the Chindwin to the gates of Rangoon. This was achieved mainly by air supply, but there was little to spare and by early May, when torrential rain temporarily put all the forward airfields out of action, the administrative machine was stretched almost to breaking point. On the 29th April IV Corps, spread out between Meiktila and Pegu, had to be put on half rations,<sup>1</sup> but the capture of Rangoon on the 3rd May ensured that this situation would be short-lived. Nevertheless, with the monsoon expected to set in soon after the middle of May, the rapid development of the port, the build-up of the Rangoon area as the main base for the maintenance of formations in Burma, and the rehabilitation of rail, road and water communications northwards from Rangoon became a matter of the greatest urgency.

It had been realized as early as February 1945 that, on its occupation, Rangoon would be required not only for the maintenance of formations remaining in Burma but also as an advanced base for operations against Malaya. A plan (operation 'Stanza') had therefore been drawn up to rehabilitate the port to handle 7,500 tons a day (including 1,500 tons of bulk petrol) and to develop it as an advanced base to hold forty-five days' supplies and petrol for 6½ divisions and a R.A.F. group, as well as 50,000 tons of civilian supplies.<sup>2</sup> When it was decided early in April that an amphibious attack should be launched on Rangoon, 'Stanza' was incorporated into the plan and was to come into operation as soon as possible after Rangoon was reoccupied.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> See Volume IV, page 399.

<sup>2</sup> See Volume IV, page 331.

<sup>3</sup> See Volume IV, pages 331-2.



Since Rangoon was reoccupied much more quickly than had been expected 'Stanza' was accelerated. The despatch of the follow-up division for 'Modified Dracula', less the one brigade already embarked, was cancelled and the convoys earmarked to carry it and its supplies were hurriedly adjusted to bring forward the 'Stanza' administrative units required for the development of Rangoon as a base and the equipment necessary to rehabilitate the port and the railways in south Burma. The rehabilitation of the port and the provision of transit facilities to depots outside the city were pushed ahead as rapidly as possible to enable convoys to be quickly unloaded and turned round. As a result of these measures, stores were landed at an average rate of 1,200 tons a day up to the 14th May and by the end of the month the daily average had been increased to 2,075 tons.<sup>1</sup>

While the port was being rehabilitated and supplies brought in, great efforts were made to resuscitate the railways and roads from Rangoon to the north. By the 9th May the railway to Mingaladon and its airfield was opened; by the 12th the Prome railway was working as far as Hmawbi and by the 17th to Taikkyi, forty miles north of Rangoon.<sup>2</sup> Since a number of major bridges on the railway to Pegu needed to be completely rebuilt, the road to Pegu through Hlegu was repaired and brought into use as the main line of communication to IV Corps. Supplies to supplement the airlift began to reach the corps by road from Rangoon on the 19th, and on the 22nd May it was once again put on full rations. Concurrently, the railway from the river port at Myingyan through Meiktila and Thazi was being reopened and by the 11th May was working as far south as Tatkon, within ninety miles of Toungoo. There was thus an all-weather road, I.W.T. and rail link from Dimapur in Assam to the northern (19th) division of IV Corps.<sup>3</sup> Its other two divisions (5th and 17th) were maintained partly by air and partly by road from Rangoon.<sup>4</sup>

On the 31st May A.L.F.S.E.A. issued a new maintenance project for Burma, by which Rangoon was to become the advanced base for the whole of the country as soon as possible, all supplies and stores being brought in through the port.<sup>5</sup> Administrative priority was to be given to the completion of 'Stanza' and preparations for

<sup>1</sup> By the end of May the port had five deep-water berths and six lighterage pontoons in working order and 300 feet of 'hards' had been cleared as well as two 'hards' for L.S.T.s.

<sup>2</sup> See Map 1, facing page 1. Six locomotives and seventy trucks were found in serviceable condition in the Rangoon area, and there were others that could be brought into service after repairs which could be finished within reasonable time.

<sup>3</sup> The high-level bridge at Kalewa had to be dismantled on the 18th May when the Chindwin rose to its monsoon flood level, and was replaced by ferries.

<sup>4</sup> Field Maintenance Areas (F.M.A.s) were opened at Toungoo and Pegu.

<sup>5</sup> There were two exceptions: 100 tons a day of civil supplies were to be flown from Imphal to remote areas in north Burma and 300 tons of bulk petrol a day moved by pipeline and I.W.T. from Dimapur to Myingyan.

'Zipper', and then to the operations for mopping up the Japanese armies still left in Burma. The development of the lines of communication north from Rangoon was, however, to be pushed ahead as a matter of urgency, and the northern line of communications from Assam closed down as far as possible.

Since the Rangoon-Mandalay railway was badly damaged, the main line of communication to the north was to be the reconstructed railway to Prome and thence an I.W.T. service on to Myingyan and Mandalay, with a target capacity of 250 tons a day by the beginning of July and 600 by the 15th August. The Rangoon-Mandalay railway was to be repaired and be capable of operating by the end of 1945. Of the two main roads leading north from Rangoon priority was to be given to the direct one to Mandalay by way of Pegu and Thazi with the object of bringing it into use by the end of the 1945 monsoon. An I.W.T. service between Rangoon and Pegu was also to be established with a capacity of 100 tons a day by the beginning of July.

In accordance with the agreement reached in March 1945 the withdrawal of American air forces from S.E.A.C. to the China Theatre began as soon as Rangoon had been recaptured.<sup>1</sup> Their removal was not in the circumstances a serious matter, for air superiority in S.E.A.C. was assured, the narrowing front for air operations in the advance on Malaya would make it difficult to deploy large Allied air forces in southern Burma, and air supply to the army, which had been such a heavy commitment from January to May 1945,<sup>2</sup> would be considerably and gradually reduced as supplies were brought into Rangoon by sea in greater quantities and the land lines of communication northwards from that port developed.

Headquarters Eastern Air Command was disbanded on the 1st June 1945, bringing to an end the integration of the British and American air forces which had existed since the 12th December 1943 and had proved operationally to be a sound arrangement.<sup>3</sup> On the same date Headquarters R.A.F. Burma (Air Marshal W. A. Coryton) was formed, mainly from the British staff of Eastern Air Command at Calcutta. The new headquarters was to move to Rangoon as soon as the situation permitted and, to facilitate the move and free it of some of its administrative responsibilities, Headquarters 228 Group R.A.F. was formed at Calcutta to take over the

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<sup>1</sup> See Volume IV, page 319.

<sup>2</sup> See Volume IV, Chapters XVIII, XXII, XXVIII and XXXIII and Appendices 15, 19, 22 and 23.

<sup>3</sup> In an Order of the Day on the 1st June the Allied Air Commander-in-Chief emphasized the effectiveness of the integration and the complete harmony that had existed between the American and British air forces.

administration of all R.A.F. units remaining in Bengal and Assam. At the same time the British components of the various formations which had been subordinate to Eastern Air Command were re-organized.<sup>1</sup> Headquarters 231 Group R.A.F. (Major-General J. T. Durrant, S.A.A.F.) was formed in Calcutta to command the R.A.F. squadrons of the disbanded Allied Strategic Air Force; Headquarters 232 Group R.A.F. (Air Vice-Marshal J. D. I. Hardman) was formed at Comilla to take over the R.A.F. squadrons of the disbanded Allied Combat Cargo Task Force, which had undertaken the onerous duty of air supply during the advance on Rangoon; and Headquarters 347 Wing R.A.F. was formed at Calcutta to control the R.A.F. squadrons of the disbanded Allied Photographic Reconnaissance Force.

The development of the Rangoon airfields to provide a southern Burma air base was to be pushed ahead as quickly as conditions during the monsoon would permit and, as soon as airfields became available for use, 231 and 232 Groups R.A.F. and 347 Wing R.A.F. were to move forward to Rangoon.<sup>2</sup> Headquarters 224 Group R.A.F. (Air Vice-Marshal The Earl of Bandon), which with most of its squadrons had been in support of XV Corps throughout the operations on the Arakan front, was withdrawn at the end of May to southern India to re-equip in preparation for the invasion of Malaya in August. The 221 Group R.A.F. (Air Vice-Marshal G. A. Bouchier), with headquarters at Rangoon, remained in Burma to assume responsibility for the air support of 12th Army as well as for the fighter defence of the Rangoon area and the eastern approaches to Burma as far north as Mandalay.<sup>3</sup> The 907 Wing R.A.F., which had been in support of XXXIII Corps during its advance down the Irrawaddy valley, was to be withdrawn to India during May for re-equipment, and some of the squadrons which had been with 221 Group R.A.F. were to be replaced by others from India.<sup>4</sup>

The redeployment of 221 Group R.A.F. in southern Burma was accomplished only with difficulty. By early June the monsoon had reached its height and the few all-weather airfields which existed were in bad condition, for they had been damaged by Allied bombing or by the Japanese before withdrawing. Since there had been insufficient time between the occupation of the south Burma airfields and the onset of the monsoon to carry out permanent repairs, the engineers had to do their best to keep the runways fit for use by day-to-day repairs. Even so there were periods, fortunately of short

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<sup>1</sup> For the organization of Eastern Air Command see Volume IV, Appendix 5.

<sup>2</sup> It was not expected that work on new airfields could begin until October 1945.

<sup>3</sup> Bouchier relieved Air Vice-Marshal S. F. Vincent who had completed his tour of duty overseas on the 13th June.

<sup>4</sup> For the outline order of battle of Air Command, South-East Asia, in June 1945 see Appendix 1.

duration, when some were put out of action by floods, and tactical squadrons had then to operate as best they could from any usable airfield, irrespective of the wing to which they belonged. Since under such conditions wing headquarters could not be expected to control their squadrons effectively, 221 Group took over direct control of all tactical squadrons. Thus, while the location of the squadrons frequently changed, that of the wings remained permanent. From May to August 1945, 221 Group was deployed with 906 Wing at Mingaladon (Rangoon), 908 and 910 Wings at Meiktila and 909 Wing at Toungoo.

With the disbandment of the Combat Cargo Task Force and its replacement by 232 Group R.A.F., air supply within Burma had to be reorganized. By the 14th June all the R.A.F. transport squadrons were deployed, two being at Ramree (Kyaukpyu), three at Akyab, one at Chittagong and one at Imphal. There was in addition one American squadron of C.46 aircraft which operated from Chittagong until the 15th July, when it was withdrawn and replaced by 215 Squadron R.A.F. Since three of these eight squadrons were to be released by the 1st September for training in India for airborne operations, the demands by 12th Army for air supply had to be progressively reduced. These were estimated to be 1,310 tons a day from the 1st to the 8th June, 880 from the 9th June to the 8th July and thereafter 660 tons a day, delivered at forward airfields at Meiktila, Toungoo, Magwe and Myingyan. The air base at Kyaukpyu was to be closed by the 1st August and that at Akyab by the 1st September, both being replaced by the new air base at Mingaladon. The Imphal air base was, however, to remain open for the airlift of civil supplies to 505 District in north Burma.

## CHAPTER IV

# THE BATTLE OF SITTANG

### The Break-Out

(June—August 1945)

*See Maps 1 and 16 and Sketch 2*

ON the 1st June 1945, Stopford (12th Army) formally took control of operations in Burma and became responsible for the maintenance of internal security, law and order and the re-establishment of civil government in reoccupied territory. In addition he was to assist in the reconquest of Malaya by embarking 5th Division at the end of August at Rangoon and 7th and 20th Divisions at the end of October, together with a proportion of army, corps and administrative units. He had, however, no responsibility for the road and pipeline to China, which task was to remain in the hands of American forces.<sup>1</sup>

The 12th Army on formation consisted of IV Corps in the Sittang valley and 7th and 20th Divisions and 268th Brigade in the Irrawaddy valley as well as a number of minor units.<sup>2</sup> The IV Corps was deployed along the Rangoon–Meiktila road with 5th Division in the Moyingyi Reservoir–Waw–Sittang Bend–Pegu–Pyinbongyi area, 17th Division between Pyinbongyi and Pyu, 19th Division in the Toungoo–Yamethin area with one brigade operating on the Toungoo–Mawchi road and another on the Meiktila–Kalaw road, and 255th Tank Brigade, less detachments with divisions, at Pegu.<sup>3</sup> In the Irrawaddy valley 7th Division, with 268th Brigade under command, was in the Thayetmyo–Paukkaung–Prome area and 20th Division was deployed along the Prome–Rangoon road between Paungde and Hmawbi, both under the direct command of army headquarters.<sup>4</sup> The 26th Division, awaiting transport to India, and 6th Brigade were at Rangoon. The 254th Tank Brigade was moving to Rangoon for return to India as transport became

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<sup>1</sup> See Map 16, facing page 600.

<sup>2</sup> See pages 28–29.

<sup>3</sup> See Map 1, facing page 1 and Sketch 2, facing page 48. For details of the deployment of IV Corps see pages 20–21.

<sup>4</sup> For details of deployment of formations in the Irrawaddy valley, see page 19.

available and 22nd (E.A.) Brigade was on the move from Taungup in Arakan to Prome.<sup>1</sup>

Air support for 12th Army was provided by 221 Group R.A.F., with headquarters at Rangoon, consisting of four squadrons of Thunderbolt fighter-bombers, one fighter-reconnaissance squadron, four Spitfire squadrons, a Beaufighter squadron, and two squadrons of Mosquito light bombers. Owing to bad visibility, appalling flying conditions and the often close intermingling of the opposing forces when and where they were in contact, there was little the R.A.F. could do in close support of ground troops. The main task of 221 Group was therefore to attack targets in Japanese-occupied territory reported by Force 136.

Stopford, who had actually assumed command in Burma on the 24th May when Slim left for India, issued his first operation instruction as commander of 12th Army on the 28th. To IV Corps he gave the task of patrolling westwards to harry the Japanese *28th Army* in the Pegu Yomas which was preparing to escape across the Sittang valley, and of blocking the main routes from the Yomas to the Sittang River. In addition a brigade group was to operate eastwards along the Meiktila-Kalaw-Taunggyi road, and another along the Toungoo-Mawchi road while a third maintained an offensive-defensive on the west bank of the Sittang in the area known as the Sittang Bend.<sup>2</sup> In the Irrawaddy valley 7th Division, with 268th Brigade under command, was to mop up stragglers in the Allanmyo-Kama-Prome area and patrol offensively into the Pegu Yomas, while 20th Division carried out a similar task between Paungde in the north and Hmawbi in the south. The 6th Brigade and 255th Tank Brigade (less detachments with divisions) were to be in army reserve in Rangoon, but had the responsibility of establishing small garrisons in Syriam and Bassein and co-operating with the navy in patrolling the Irrawaddy delta.

The main features of the operations during June were the gradual reduction of forces in the Irrawaddy valley, culminating in the move of 7th Division to the Pegu-Sittang Bend area in relief of 5th Division (the first of the 12th Army divisions required for the invasion of Malaya), and the steady build-up of the IV Corps cordon on the Rangoon road as information of the Japanese concentrations in the Pegu Yomas came to hand. The 20th Division remained on the Prome road until the end of hostilities, but the gradual disappearance of Japanese from its sector enabled units to be lent to IV Corps when required. The policy to be adopted in the Irrawaddy valley was that, if Japanese were found in strength in prepared positions, they were to be surrounded and no further action taken until

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<sup>1</sup> See page 29.

<sup>2</sup> See Sketch 2, facing page 48.

starvation forced them to try to break out. Throughout the month there was always fighting going on somewhere but it was mainly patrol actions by day and ambushes by night. Only on the Kalaw and Mawchi roads and in the Sittang Bend in the IV Corps sector, and at Paukkaung on the Irrawaddy front where the Japanese had established a rallying point for stragglers escaping into the Pegu Yomas,<sup>1</sup> was there any action in which a battalion or larger force was involved.

On various occasions, as described in earlier volumes of this history, the opposing forces engaged in the fighting in Burma had gone through periods of extreme hardship, but probably the monsoon of 1945 was the worst of all, particularly for the Japanese with their hopes of survival rapidly disappearing. During June conditions got steadily worse as the monsoon strengthened and pouring rain alternated with sweltering oppressive heat whenever a break in the cloud resulted in a few hours of sunshine. In the plains the flood level rose steadily, even tracks above flood level often becoming nearly knee-deep in mud and the seriously wounded drowned unless quickly picked up. In the hills, paths turned into mudslides and streams into raging torrents, while everywhere vehicles slithered off the so-called all-weather roads into ditches or down mountain sides. Added to these difficulties were myriads of biting insects, prickly heat and jungle sores which made life about as pleasant as the mediaeval concept of purgatory. Fighting, although on a small scale, was nearly always bitter since the Japanese fought desperately for survival against opponents determined to ensure that few if any of them would live to fight another day. Tactically the situation changed little during June, for the Japanese were still trying to assemble their scattered units and organize them for the break-out and commanders on both sides were mainly interested in discovering their opponents' dispositions and strengths, since on this information depended the success or failure of *28th Army's* break-out from the Pegu Yomas.

At the beginning of June the Japanese in the Irrawaddy valley were dispersed in parties from a dozen to over a hundred strong, all making their way towards the Pegu Yomas by way of strong points near the main road established by *28th Army* as rallying places. The largest of these was at Paukkaung where it was estimated that the garrison was about 1,000 strong.<sup>2</sup> The 7th Division held the northern part of the Prome road cordon with 114th Brigade attempting to destroy the force at Paukkaung, the 33rd mopping up in the Prome area and the 89th in reserve resting at Thayetmyo. To the south was

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<sup>1</sup> See pages 18-19.

<sup>2</sup> In fact what was left of *54th Division* and a large number of administrative personnel (in all some 9,000, including sick and wounded) were at Paukkaung with twelve mountain and ten battalion and regimental guns.

20th Division with its brigades centred on Paungde, Tharrawaddy and Hmawbi. Clashes were frequent and casualties often heavy for small-scale fighting; in one action, near Letpadan, the enemy left eighty-seven dead but this was exceptional for on this occasion the Japanese made a deliberate attack in strength on one of the division's strong points.

By this time the Japanese could get little or no information from the Burmese who were now extremely unfriendly, whereas IV Corps' Intelligence staff received every assistance from the inhabitants and was able to build up a comprehensive picture of Japanese dispositions and forecast their probable moves with considerable accuracy. It might have seemed that there was little need for vigilance because the enemy was in a hopeless position, but past experience prevented anyone in 12th Army having any delusions about the situation. The Japanese soldier, a dangerous opponent at any time, was doubly so when cornered.

On the 19th June 7th Division began its move to the Irrawaddy, a brigade at a time, to relieve 5th Division in the Pegu area and its place was taken by 268th Brigade and 22nd (E.A.) Brigade, which had recently arrived in the Prome area from Taungup. The large Japanese force at Paukkaung had meanwhile withdrawn deep into the Pegu Yomas and, by the time 7th Division's move ended, fighting in the Irrawaddy valley had virtually ceased. The division moved without two of its British battalions: 2nd K.O.S.B. (89th Brigade), replaced by 3/6th Gurkhas from India, and 2nd South Lancashire (114th Brigade), replaced in July by 1st Royal Battalion 9th Jats from the Lushai Brigade.<sup>1</sup> During the move Crowther (89th Brigade) was promoted to command 17th Division in place of Cowan who had commanded it with distinction since March 1942.<sup>2</sup>

In the Sittang valley IV Corps was involved throughout June in almost continuous fighting, at times severe on the Kalaw and Mawchi roads and in the Sittang Bend, but on the axis of the main road there was nothing heavier than patrol engagements. From the beginning of the month there was, however, steadily increasing evidence from patrols, captured Japanese stragglers, members of the B.N.A., guerrilla units and clandestine forces that some 13,000 Japanese were moving northwards in the Yomas across the upper reaches of the Pegu River. It was believed that this force did not

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<sup>1</sup> Both the British battalions were below half strength as a result of casualties and repatriation to the United Kingdom (under scheme 'Python') of men with three years and eight months service in the Far East (see Volume IV, Chapter III). The battalions were sent to the United Kingdom in July.

<sup>2</sup> Cowan later commanded the British occupation forces in Japan. Lieut.-Colonel H. R. R. Conder (K.O.S.B.) commanded 89th Brigade with acting rank until the arrival of Brigadier I. C. A. Lauder on the 24th July.



2. Patrol in the Sittang valley near Waw.



3. Trying to clear floods at Pegu airfield, May 1945.



4. Japanese surrendering at Mokpalin.



5. Convoy in the Rangoon River, May 1945.

include any part of *54th Division* and that no attempt to break out of the Yomas would be made before July – an appreciation which proved to be accurate. At the same time there were reliable reports that east of the Sittang a force of some 2,000 Japanese had moved north from Bilin to Papun to join a force of about 1,000 already there. Although this move could have been made merely as an internal security measure to deal with guerrillas, it could also indicate preparations for a counter-stroke across the Sittang to help the break-out of the large force known to be in the Pegu Yomas. It was therefore concluded that a break-out might be attempted in the Penwagon area in conjunction with an offensive in or north of the Sittang Bend.

The situation was complicated in mid-June by the discovery that two strong columns, believed to be from *54th Division* and commanded by Miyazaki and Koba, were moving towards the road north of Toungoo. Messervy decided it was advisable to strengthen the cordon in that area, where a single brigade of 19th Division was covering the 120 miles of road northwards to Yamethin,<sup>1</sup> and ordered 17th Division to send a brigade to the Kalaw road to relieve 64th Brigade which 19th Division was to use to reinforce the cordon on the main road. This left 17th Division with two brigades to cover the eighty-mile sector between Pyu and Payagyi, but even then it was still thicker on the ground than the 19th.

Shortly before being relieved 64th Brigade (Flewett), after heavy fighting, had taken Kalaw on the 9th June. The Japanese then broke contact and withdrew east and south, and it was not until the 17th that patrols regained contact with them entrenched in the hills overlooking Heho, twenty-four miles to the east. At this juncture 99th Brigade of 17th Division began to arrive and there was a lull in operations while it took over and learnt its way about the wild and mountainous country in which it was to operate.

On the Mawchi road 98th Brigade (Jerrard), after meeting with increasing opposition beyond MS 12 from a fresh formation identified as *144th Regiment* of *55th Division*, had reached MS 20 on the 12th June. By this time the road was showing signs of breaking up and all tanks had to be withdrawn. The 62nd Brigade (Morris) then relieved 98th Brigade and resumed the advance on the 16th. By the 25th it reached the chaung which crosses the road about MS 27, but here its advance came to a halt since the chaung had risen seven feet in one night, increasing its width by 100 yards and bringing the end of the ferry into midstream.

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<sup>1</sup> The deployment on the ground was not as thin as might seem as there were only certain areas through which it was possible to reach the Sittang during the monsoon, which was then at its height.

In the Pegu area the month began with Japanese attacks on outposts of 4th Royal West Kent in the Pegu Yomas ten miles west of Payagale, in one of which they left behind thirty-five dead.<sup>1</sup> During the third week they became increasingly aggressive east of Pegu, and from across the Sittang Japanese field artillery, with perfect observation and defiladed gun positions, dominated the whole area and began to harass the garrison of Nyaungkashe, which was prevented by the floods from digging or changing its positions and suffered accordingly. On the 22nd June, 7th Division began to take over from 5th Division. During the takeover Japanese infiltrated to Nyaungkashe, but were driven out by a counter-attack made through water waist deep in which 4/8th Gurkhas lost twenty-eight men in hand-to-hand fighting. For the next few days there was comparative peace in the area except for shelling, but the flood level steadily rose and the defenders were forced by degrees to give up trenches and build up such protection as they could.

At the beginning of July, just before the battle of the break-out began, the dispositions of 12th Army were broadly: in the Irrawaddy valley 268th Brigade in the Prome area, until relieved in mid-July by the Lushai Brigade,<sup>2</sup> and 20th Division with 22nd (E.A.), 100th, 32nd and 80th Brigades in that order from north to south; in the Sittang valley IV Corps with 99th Brigade of 17th Division on the Kalaw road, 19th Division with two brigades on the main road from Yamethin to Pyu and a brigade on the Mawchi road, 17th Division, less one brigade, from Pyu to Payagyi and 7th Division from Payagyi to Hlegu with 89th Brigade in the Waw-Sittang Bend area. In Rangoon, South Burma District had 5th Division, which was concentrating at Mingaladon to refit and train for 'Zipper',<sup>3</sup> and 6th Brigade.

Fighting in the Irrawaddy valley had ceased except for the rounding-up of Japanese stragglers and bands of Burmese dacoits who began to appear in territory no longer occupied by troops. In the Sittang valley IV Corps was closely watching the moves of 28th Army in the Pegu Yomas and waiting for it to try and break out, while holding back attempts by the *Matsuyama Force* and by 33rd Army from across the Sittang to assist it.<sup>4</sup> In Rangoon work was going on night and day to rehabilitate the port and establish a base

<sup>1</sup> See Sketch 2, facing page 48.

<sup>2</sup> The Lushai Brigade had fought with 14th Army from April 1944 to January 1945 when it was withdrawn to India. In July it was moved by sea from Calcutta to Rangoon and thence by road to Prome. The 268th Brigade on relief was sent back to India for disbandment, leaving 1st Chamar Regiment with the Lushai Brigade to replace 1st Royal Jats, which had been transferred to 7th Division (see page 38). The 268th Brigade was later re-formed as part of the British Commonwealth Occupation Force for Japan; see page 229 fn.

<sup>3</sup> The 5th Division was, however, available for operations in emergency.

<sup>4</sup> For the *Matsuyama Force*, see page 44.



for the maintenance of 'Zipper' and the operations of 12th Army in Burma.

By the beginning of June what was left of *28th Army* (nearly 30,000 strong including administrative units) had reached the comparative safety of the Pegu Yomas where Sakurai, the army commander, intended to hold out until a favourable opportunity arose to break out eastwards to and across the Sittang. Kimura (*Burma Area Army*) wished him to hold on in the Yomas until early 1946, after evacuating his sick and as many administrative personnel as he could spare, in co-operation with *33rd Army* which was operating on the Sittang River. By mid-June, however, Kimura had come to the conclusion, already reached by Sakurai, that it would be impossible for *28th Army* to remain in the Yomas throughout the monsoon and authorized withdrawal to Tenasserim to begin at the end of June.

At this time Sakurai knew little about the other two Japanese armies in Burma except that they were retreating southwards east of the Sittang, covered by *18th Division* which was occupying the east bank of the Sittang from Shwegyin to Mokpalin and had raiding forces west of the river. What was worse, he had had no communication with his own *54th Division* (Miyazaki) since the end of April, or with the *Kanjo Force* (two battalions of *112th Regiment*) since it had evacuated Mount Popa on the 20th April.<sup>1</sup> A liaison party, however, made contact with *54th Division* on the 20th June and signal communication was restored.

On the same day the *Kanjo Force*, which had dragged two heavy howitzers all the way from Mount Popa and reached the Pyu area early in June, crossed the Sittang without being detected and headed for the rallying point, Kyaukkyi, which it had learnt about from a chance encounter with a patrol in late May north-east of Prome. Except for meeting that patrol the *Kanjo Force* had seen no signs of *28th Army*, and, as its wireless sets had long been useless, could not get in touch with Sakurai.

Having established contact with *54th Division*, Sakurai found himself in a position to make plans and fix a date for the break-out. Shortage of food and steadily rising sickness made it imperative to make the effort at the first possible moment and so, although Miyazaki pressed for more time, Sakurai decided that it should begin on the 20th July, which would give everyone a little over three weeks to complete their preparation from the date of his order. The alternatives open to Sakurai were, in fact, starvation if he stayed where he was, heavy losses if he tried to break out, or surrender. The

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<sup>1</sup> See Volume IV, Chapter XXXI.

last was not considered, and he set to work to see what could be saved out of his force, which was hemmed in on all sides in the barren scrub jungle of the Pegu Yomas with no air support and little transport. Many of the troops were sick or wounded and all were undernourished, but there was no possibility of improving their rapidly diminishing supplies. All oxen and most horses had been eaten, the only vegetable food available was bamboo shoots and various types of edible grasses and jungle plants, and rice in abandoned fields was being harvested and laboriously hulled in steel helmets. From as early as April efforts had been made to build up supply dumps in the mountains, but the speed with which the Prome area was overrun by Allied armour had resulted in the destruction of a large part of the supplies in the area, and further amounts were destroyed by R.A.F. bombing or captured by guerrillas.<sup>1</sup>

Sakurai came to the conclusion that, although technically the best place for crossing the Sittang was north of Toungoo where the river was comparatively narrow and ran between high banks, giving good positions for covering forces and freedom from flood in the assembly areas on both sides, it was so obvious that there would be little chance of surprise, and he knew that his men were in no condition to fight their way across the river. Before issuing final orders he decided to hold a war game at his headquarters at Pinmezali to study the plan in detail. One of the major problems was how to provide the means for crossing the wide, fast-flowing Sittang since there was no bridging material and it was quite certain that guerrillas and hostile civilians would remove all country boats. It was decided that each man in the army was to make and carry three 4-metre lengths of bamboo bark rope and that every two men would carry between them a 5-metre bamboo pole seven to ten centimetres in diameter. It was estimated that twenty-four of such poles would make a raft capable of carrying the equipment of and supporting ten swimmers. Collection of this material and food began at once, and route marches and exercises to build up the men's strength were carried out daily. The route marches were, however, soon abandoned when it was found that they weakened rather than strengthened the men, whose need was rest.

It was agreed that the best area to make the crossings would be south of Toungoo but, in spite of further representations that the 20th July was too soon, Sakurai was adamant that owing to the administrative situation the date must stand. The army was divided into four groups and a break-out area allotted to each. The southern-

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<sup>1</sup> The greatest single loss by bombing was 550 tons of a 700-ton stockpile at Letpadan awaiting removal to the Pegu Yomas.

most of the four, the *Kan-I Group* (4,350 strong), was to move from Paunggyi and cross north of Nyaunglebin; the *Shimbu Group* (6,821 strong, nearly all from *55th Division*) was to move from Theme and cross at Penwagon; the *Army Headquarters Group* (7,293 strong) was to move from Pinmezali and cross north of Kanyutkwin; and the *54th Division Group* (9,300 strong), located farther north, was to cross between Pyu in the south and Toungoo in the north<sup>1</sup>. Miyazaki divided the *54th Division Group* into four columns: one, commanded by Koba and consisting of *154th Regiment* and a proportion of divisional troops, was to move by way of Yetho and cross just south of Toungoo, while the rest of the division in three columns crossed in the Pyu area. Groups were to move off from their concentration areas at times and dates which would ensure that each one crossed the Mandalay road soon after dark on the 20th July. Sakurai felt surprise could be achieved provided the date could be kept secret, and that a large number of simultaneous crossings in the dark would ensure that some columns would get across the road unmolested. The imposition of wireless silence was more or less a formality because there were few batteries left and efforts by *Burma Area Army* to have them dropped by air or to get them in by long distance patrols had failed.

On the 2nd July a fighting patrol of 1/7th Gurkhas ambushed and dispersed a Japanese column on the fringe of the Pegu Yomas, ten miles south-west of Penwagon. The Japanese left behind nineteen dead, all from *112th Regiment*, and, among other papers, a copy of a *Shimbu Group* operation order of the 14th June giving its break-out plan in great detail but without, of course, the date, which had not then been decided. From this it was appreciated that the main break-out area was to be between Pyu and Nyaunglebin and that the effort would probably be made in late July. Messervy therefore decided to reinforce that area,<sup>2</sup> and sent Flewett with Headquarters 64th Brigade, then in 19th Division reserve at Toungoo, to take over the sector between the Pyu and Kun Chaungs in which there were three suspected break-out routes. In the area were three battalions (later reinforced by a battalion of Flewett's own brigade), a detachment of tanks and of medium guns and two batteries of artillery. At the same time three battalions (two from 20th and one from 7th Division) were moved into 17th Division's sector as a reserve 'pool'. It was in this sector, reinforced as a result of the captured order, that *28th Army Headquarters Group* and the main group of *54th Division*

<sup>1</sup> See Sketch 2, facing page 48. For composition of the groups see Appendix 2. The strengths included 2,107 sick and wounded and many non-combatants such as nurses, technicians and civilian employees.

<sup>2</sup> Shortly after issuing this order Messervy went on leave and Major-General F. I. S. Taker, who had commanded 4th Indian Division in the Western Desert and Italy, was appointed to officiate in his absence.

were intercepted and roughly handled. The actual date of the break-out became known on the 18th July when a Japanese officer and a *Kempei Tai* sergeant acting as liaison officers were captured.<sup>1</sup>

While *28th Army* was making its final preparations for the break-out, *33rd Army* began diversionary operations in the Waw-Sittang Bend area, while the *Matsuyama Force*, consisting of *15th* and *56th Divisions* and elements of *55th Division* under command of Lieut.-General S. Matsuyama, deployed to hold the southern Shan States (for which *28th Army* was expected to make) and continued to oppose the advance of IV Corps formations on the Kalaw and Mawchi roads. In the Waw-Sittang Bend area *53rd Division*, about 2,000 strong, moved on Myitkyo and *18th Division*, about 3,000 strong, moved on Nyaungkashe and Abya (all held by 89th Brigade of 7th Division). All three places were attacked simultaneously on the night of the 3rd July. Japanese guns from across the Sittang concentrated on Nyaungkashe, which was held by two companies of 4/8th Gurkhas with a third at the west end of the Sittang bridge. At Sathwagyon, the eastern outpost of Abya, the Japanese broke into the defences but were driven out by an immediate counter-attack by 1/11th Sikhs. The posts at Myitkyo and Nyaungkashe held firm, but the Japanese succeeded in cutting the only communications to both, along the high-level canal bank and the railway embankment respectively. This was serious as it was very difficult even in good weather to drop supplies on to such small posts, and anything which missed the target dropped into the floods and was lost.

In spite of the unflinching help of the R.A.F. which, whenever visibility made it possible, flew low over the Japanese gun positions in the hills east of the Sittang, thus temporarily silencing them, the situation at Nyaungkashe became steadily worse and casualties among 4/8th Gurkhas, who had been prevented by floods from digging in, mounted rapidly. A salvo of shells obliterated the regimental aid post, killing and wounding everyone in it, and on another occasion 143 shells fell in fifteen minutes in the small defended area. On the 7th July Brigadier A. F. Hely, commanding 7th Division in the absence of Evans, who was on leave, ordered the position to be evacuated and the three field guns which could not be got away to be destroyed. The Gurkhas succeeded in withdrawing their Sittang bridge outpost into Nyaungkashe without interference, but their platoon post on the embankment behind the village with

<sup>1</sup> The *Kempei Tai* were Japanese Military Police, but with much more widespread functions than their British counterpart. Their activities included espionage, counter-espionage, fifth column and subversive movements and propaganda, security, the collecting of information and control of agents in occupied areas.



three medium machine-guns of 13th Frontier Force M.G. Battalion was attacked all day. The machine-guns were put out of action by direct hits from shells and mortar bombs, and only seven men, of whom five were wounded, were left when the time came to withdraw. At 9.45 p.m. the three companies, in a hollow square with their wounded, wireless sets and mortars inside, moved across country through the floods to Sathwagyon, which was held by the battalion's fourth company. Most of the patrols of 1/11th Sikhs and 4/15th Punjab (the leading battalions of 33rd Brigade which was about to relieve the 89th in the area) saw Japanese on the move, but the withdrawing force met no one. The reason became clear when next day it was found that the Japanese had also withdrawn. During the night of the 7th the Gurkha battalion (3/6th) at Myitkyo was withdrawn to a position on the canal some two miles to the south-west where it could be more easily maintained.

For the next few days there was a lull, during which 33rd Brigade (Vickers) took over the Waw-Sittang Bend area and Headquarters 89th Brigade, leaving two battalions behind under command of 33rd Brigade, moved with its third battalion to Hlegu to rest. On the 10th the Japanese were found to have occupied Nyaungkashe and Myitkyo but there were no further attacks, and within a few days there were reports that they were thinning out. The reason for this became apparent when Japanese patrols began to be aggressive in the Bend itself west of the Sittang bridge. There were several sharp engagements, culminating on the 27th July when a detachment of 1st Queen's Royal Regiment in a spirited hand-to-hand fight near Letpanthonbin killed thirty-three for a loss of eleven killed and twenty-three wounded. This marked the end of the fighting in the Bend, but the Japanese made their final effort on the 2nd August when they attacked and drove in the platoon outpost position at Sathwagyon. They held the village for one day and then withdrew, presumably because 28th Army's break-out operation had by that time ended and diversionary action was no longer needed.

No attempt will be made to describe in detail the fighting during the break-out. It is a story of interceptions on the main Pegu-Toungoo road with brief, hard-fought actions in darkness and pouring rain. The Japanese losses, which amounted to about half their strength, are an adequate commentary on the severity of the fighting.<sup>1</sup> Some idea of what happened can, however, be gathered from the fate of the various enemy columns obtained from Japanese records.

The heads of most of the groups reached the road at the scheduled time and some got across it undetected, but only one – the *Shimbu*

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<sup>1</sup> For the Japanese losses see Appendix 3.

*Group* – was not intercepted at any stage of its move; it, nevertheless, came the nearest of any group to complete disaster. One of its columns was detailed to attack Penwagon, a diversion which was so successful that the rest of the group in three columns crossed the road unseen. Only then did its troubles begin, because it blundered into widespread swamps. The remnants of two of these three columns reached the rendezvous east of the Sittang three weeks later and the third five days later still, on the 15th August. A graphic account of what happened exists:

‘During the day the men lay concealed on small floating islands of bushes that dotted the swamp and at night floundered through the morass, often up to the neck in water, feeling for a footing in the inky blackness. During this nightmare march losses were heavy. There was no food and exhausted men lost consciousness and sank into the bog, their comrades unable to help them. Many went mad from the horrors of the swamp, others made their way back to the west. Only those in the best [sic] physical condition and with the highest morale survived to complete the march’.

The *Army Headquarters Group* moved in three columns, two of which, the right and centre columns, were intercepted west of the road and did not get across it until the 21st July. The left column, with which Sakurai and his headquarters moved, ran into difficulties west of the road on the 19th when the Kun Chaung came down in spate, turning it into a 7-knot torrent, 120 yards wide, and making the fords unusable. Sakurai decided to wait rather than use the bamboo raft-making materials carried by the men for the Sittang crossing, and it was not until the 24th July that the column crossed the road. As might be expected in the circumstances, it was intercepted, lost heavily and became split up. The survivors of the group finally assembled at their rendezvous in the Kyaukkyi area on the 2nd August. All the columns of the *54th Division Group*, including the *Koba*, were intercepted and, as they had to fight their way across the road, lost heavily: of the 9,300 officers and men who began the break-out on the 20th July, only about 5,300 reached the rendezvous east of the Sittang. They had lost all their guns and mortars, and their remaining small arms consisted of about 1,500 rifles, 80 machine-guns, 40 grenade throwers and automatic rifles with approximately 20,000 rounds of small arms ammunition and 100 grenades.

The break-out was an heroic effort on the part of the Japanese *28th Army*. Half starved, with no transport or guns and no air support, with miles of flooded country and a great river in flood between them and their goal, and a formidable army with tanks, guns and overwhelming air support barring the way, surrender might have seemed to be the only answer, and yet perhaps most of the 660

prisoners-of-war were taken only because they were incapable of further effort.

By the 3rd August there were no Japanese other than a few patrols and stragglers west of the Sittang, and what was left of their main forces were believed to be withdrawing into south Tenasserim. On the Kalaw road there was sporadic patrol contact east and south of Taunggyi; and on the Mawchi road 2nd Royal Berkshire of 62nd Brigade reached the top of the escarpment at MS 28 to find little but a few skeletons and a destroyed 150-mm. gun. The advance continued slowly, as the road was heavily and ingeniously booby-trapped.

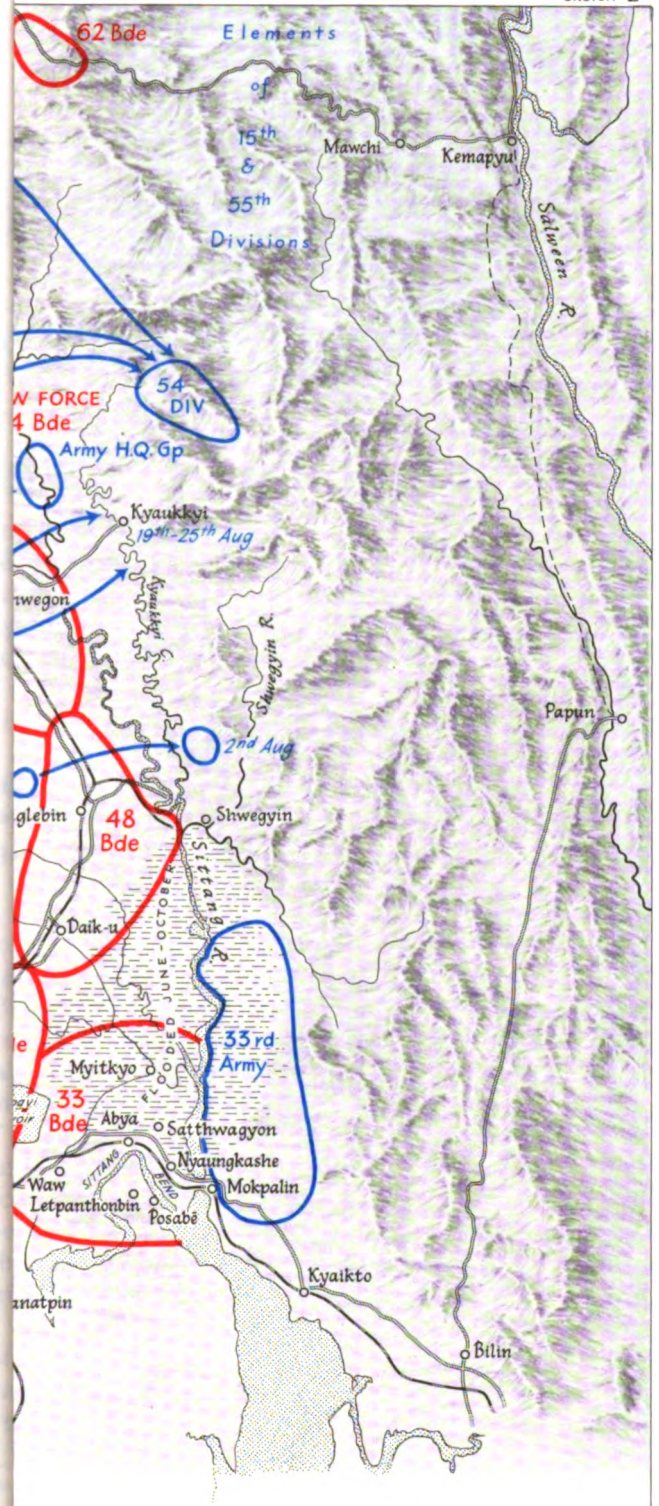
It was clear that the time had come for 12th Army to regroup so that it could release forces needed for 'Zipper', and prepare to clear Tenasserim. By this time nearly all its formations were under command of IV Corps and on the 7th August a corps order was issued for the relief of 7th Division and the redistribution of the corps to enable it to continue harassing the enemy withdrawing from the Kalaw-Taunggyi area, to continue the advance on the Toungoo-Mawchi-Kemapyu road, to contain and drive back the enemy on the Mokpalin-Shwegyin front and, at the same time, to provide as much opportunity as possible for rest and training.

To effect this 22nd (E.A.) Brigade was to be allotted to IV Corps and take over the Mawchi road. The 19th and 17th Divisions were to move southwards by stages until 17th Division had taken over the Waw-Pegu-Sittang Bend area from 7th Division, which was then to concentrate in the Hlegu area where it was to be maintained by IV Corps and be at its disposal for operations only if required. Its training for further operations was to be the responsibility of 12th Army.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> The 7th Division was earmarked for the second phase of 'Zipper'.





Break-out by the Japanese 28th Army

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# CHAPTER V

## MILITARY ADMINISTRATION IN BURMA

(April—August 1945)<sup>1</sup>

*See Map 1*

**D**URING the Japanese occupation of Burma, a left-wing and extremely nationalistic underground movement known as the Anti-Fascist Organization (A.F.O.) grew up. The Burma National Army, originally raised by the Japanese, became its military wing under the leadership of Aung San, who was a member of the executive council of the A.F.O. From the end of 1943, Force 136 made attempts to get in touch with the A.F.O., but it was not until a year later that any real contact was made and it was learnt that the B.N.A. was preparing to rise against the Japanese. Force 136 then made plans to send in agents to raise and arm A.F.O. guerrillas. In February 1945 Mountbatten ruled that no arms were to be issued to the A.F.O. or any other political body in Burma as an organization, but that, subject to his approval, arms could be issued to limited numbers of members of these political bodies.<sup>2</sup>

On the 27th March 1945 Mountbatten told the Chiefs of Staff that a nationalist rising in Burma against the Japanese was imminent and that he considered it essential to avoid any policy which would lead to suppressing the nationalist movement by force, since that would entail an extra commitment of forces in Burma and delay the civil reorganization of the country. The War Cabinet, aware that the political consequences of supporting the movement and its leaders might be far-reaching, replied that they attached the greatest importance to its being put into its proper perspective in the eyes of the Burmese as a whole and its leaders not given the impression that they were being regarded as liberators or political leaders of the country.<sup>3</sup>

Despite the efforts of Force 136 to delay the rising of the B.N.A. until 14th Army had advanced closer to Rangoon, it took place about the 27th March. At the beginning of April Slim decided that

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<sup>1</sup> For a detailed account of the military and political problems in Burma at this time the reader is referred to Donnison, Chapter XIX.

<sup>2</sup> See Volume IV, page 251.

<sup>3</sup> See Volume IV, pages 335-6.

he ought to meet Aung San so that the activities of the B.N.A. could be co-ordinated and the greatest value got from them, and asked permission to do so. Mountbatten agreed that Force 136 should try to get in touch with Aung San and take him to 14th Army Headquarters. Aung San proved to be elusive, and it was not till the 9th May that Force 136 reported that he was on his way to Thayetmyo with the object of placing his services at the disposal of the Allied forces.<sup>1</sup> By this time, however, the military situation had entirely changed. Two Japanese armies (15th and 33rd) had been dispersed and driven east of the Sittang except for a detachment holding a small bridgehead in the Waw area, the remaining (28th) army was dispersed in south-west Burma, part of it being still west of the Irrawaddy,<sup>2</sup> and Rangoon had fallen. The B.N.A. was now of little or no value from an operational point of view.

On the 10th May Slim reported that detachments of the B.N.A. (purporting to act under their own constitution) were seriously retarding the restoration of law and order by dacoity and refusing to obey either the Allied military or civil authorities, and asked for an early decision and proclamation on the legal status of the organization. In reply Mountbatten gave instructions that, when Aung San reached the Allied lines, he was to be dealt with by military officers, and must be required to disclose the strength of the B.N.A. and to place himself and his army unreservedly under Allied command. On the 15th Mountbatten referred the matter to the Chiefs of Staff and told them that a final decision on the control of the B.N.A. was now urgent. He suggested that the B.N.A. and all guerrilla forces in Burma should come under the command of A.L.F.S.E.A. and thus under military law; any armed bands which did not recognise Aung San's authority, or which had not been raised to fight the Japanese, could then be treated as dacoits and dealt with accordingly. He said that he intended to give members of the B.N.A. and guerrilla forces who passed the necessary medical test the chance of transferring in due course to the regular Burma Army, the rest being disarmed and disbanded.

On the 22nd May the Chiefs of Staff sent Mountbatten the War Cabinet's instructions on the handling of the B.N.A. The Cabinet recognized that some military value had been gained by exploiting the movement, but since the inevitable encouragement thus given would leave a legacy of great difficulty for the civil government it should not be increased beyond what was strictly necessary for operational reasons. There should therefore be no discussion of political issues with Aung San or his followers, and the Governor of

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<sup>1</sup> See Map 1, facing page 1.

<sup>2</sup> See Volume IV, Chapter XXXII.



Burma should be consulted on all points involving political issues. Any declaration that the B.N.A. was illegal was clearly out of the question, and the problem would therefore have to be dealt with in two phases. In the first Mountbatten could continue to make use of the B.N.A., if he required it for operational reasons, and provide pay and rations if this would prevent the organization from commandeering supplies from the countryside. In the second phase, which would arise when there was no further operational use for the B.N.A., it was to be subjected to sufficient control to ensure the surrender of its arms. It could, however, be maintained and organized as a guerrilla or auxiliary force in suitable centres, preferably under British officers. Members of the B.N.A. could be informed that they were being maintained in this way in case further need should arise for their services against the enemy and that, when civil government was restored, opportunities might arise for individuals who volunteered to be enrolled in the Burma Army.

Aung San, wearing a uniform similar to that of a Japanese major-general, contacted troops of XXXIII Corps near Allanmyo on the 15th May and was flown to 14th Army Headquarters at Meiktila where Slim saw him next morning. Aung San made it clear that he considered himself the military representative of a provisional government of Burma and as such had come as an Allied commander to treat with the British, and that he was prepared to present any proposals for the future of the B.N.A. to his provisional government. Slim told him that he and his army had no legal status, and suggested that he should consider his army eventually becoming part of the future defence forces of Burma under the discipline of the India and Burma Army Act. Although Aung San said he was willing to place his army under Allied command as a recognized ally, he showed no wish to give his allegiance to anybody other than his provisional government.<sup>1</sup> Slim reported the interview to A.L.F.S.E.A. and asked for instructions on what further action he should take regarding Aung San. Mountbatten passed on Slim's report on the interview to London and told Slim that he should make it clear to Aung San that no form of civil government could operate in Burma while the country was under military administration. On the 18th May Aung San left Meiktila for Rangoon to contact members of the Supreme Council of the A.F.O. to get their reactions to Slim's suggestions, having agreed to meet Slim again in Rangoon on the 23rd.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Aung San stated that the B.N.A. was disposed in seven zones: 1,500 men in the Paungde area, 400 in the Pyapon area, 6-700 in the delta, 2,000 (including some Karen irregulars) in the Pegu area, 1,200 in the Pyinmana area, 200 in Tavoy and 1,000 in the Thayetmyo area.

<sup>2</sup> Aung San stated that all policy decisions had to be taken by the eight members of the council, of which he was one. Thakin Soe was the president of the council and Than Tun its general secretary.

At their next meeting Slim told Aung San that he would agree to the B.N.A. joining the Allied forces on the following terms: he would employ only those organized bodies which were operating in an offensive role against the Japanese, provided that such bodies placed themselves unreservedly under the control and command of the local British commander with whom they were or would be operating, that he would provide rations for those bodies and that any members of the B.N.A. not then or in future actively employed in operations would be allowed to present themselves for recruitment in the future regular Burma Army. An organization was being set up for this purpose and Aung San was to undertake not to interfere in any way with its activities or prevent voluntary enlistment. Aung San replied that he had been authorized to accept these terms but had been asked to convey the desire of the A.F.O. to be consulted on all important matters relating to the forces that he would place under Slim's command before any final decisions were made or orders issued. The A.F.O. also wished the B.N.A. to be reorganized on a regular basis with up-to-date equipment so that a sizeable unit could be sent as soon as possible to operate with British forces outside Burma. In reporting these negotiations Slim said that there could be no possibility of Aung San being under any misapprehension as to the future of the B.N.A., but a conciliatory attitude might be a useful step in leading to the peaceful rehabilitation of Burma.

On the 30th May Mountbatten convened a meeting in Delhi at which Sir Reginald Dorman-Smith (Governor of Burma), Leese (A.L.F.S.E.A.), Slim (14th Army), Stopford (12th Army) and senior Civil Affairs officers were present. The whole question of the handling of the A.F.O. and B.N.A. and the eventual handover from a military to a civil administration was discussed.<sup>1</sup> The meeting agreed that it would be unwise to attempt to round up the whole of the B.N.A. against its will or to declare the organisation illegal, for such steps might result in civil war. The only practical course was to find ways and means of controlling and absorbing the B.N.A. and securing its co-operation, which could best be done in the two phases suggested by the War Cabinet. Mountbatten said he was in favour of handing over the main part of Burma to civil government as soon as the Japanese had been mopped up, without waiting for the complete clearance of such areas as Tenasserim, provided he could be assured that, after the transfer, he would have the necessary overriding priority for the use of various facilities in the Rangoon area, including the port. Dorman-Smith replied that he would put no difficulties in the way of Mountbatten's military requirements. It

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<sup>1</sup> About this time the A.F.O. changed its title to the Anti-Fascist Peoples' Freedom League (A.F.P.F.L.).

was agreed that it would be useful if Dorman-Smith could interview suitable representatives of all parties in Burma to explain to them the British Government's policy on the granting of Dominion status and to give them the opportunity of co-operating; a suitable venue for such a meeting would be on board a British warship in the Rangoon River, since this would not only overcome the difficulty of the Governor returning to Burma before his civil administration could be restored, but would obviate the politically difficult and undesirable course of bringing Burmese representatives out of Burma. At the end of the meeting Mountbatten instructed Stopford to submit recommendations on the earliest time for the handover from military to civil government in part of Burma. Reporting the results of the conference to the Chiefs of Staff, Mountbatten said that, although it might not be possible to avoid political unrest in Burma completely, he was confident that the policy laid down by the British Government and the decisions taken at the conference would provide a sound basis on which to work.

On the 11th June Stopford saw Aung San, who proved to be most co-operative and agreed to visit all divisional commanders to discuss with them the general employment and administration of B.N.A. units operating in the field. He said he was no longer recruiting and expressed the hope that it would be possible to employ the maximum forces in the field rather than to disband them. Aung San also asked if Mountbatten would grant him a short interview in Rangoon.

After a victory parade held in Rangoon on the 16th June,<sup>1</sup> Mountbatten entertained some fifty Burmese to tea and gave Aung San and Than Tun (General Secretary of the A.F.O.) the chance to stay behind when the others left, thus avoiding the impression that special negotiations were being conducted with the A.F.O. At this meeting Mountbatten re-emphasized that he was responsible for military administration and not for either civil government or for political matters. It was for that reason that he had placed H.M.S. *Cumberland* at the disposal of the Governor for a meeting with the Burmese political leaders on the 20th. He was anxious, he said, to avoid any clash with the A.F.O. and B.N.A. Than Tun and Aung San said in reply that the policy of their organization was to collaborate in every way with the military administration. Aung San asked whether gratuities could be paid to those members of the B.N.A. who were not accepted for the regular army, since such action would support them and keep them out of mischief until they could be settled into civilian life. Mountbatten agreed that this suggestion deserved consideration. He then drew Aung San's attention to reports that members of the B.N.A. were misbehaving themselves

<sup>1</sup> A detachment of the B.N.A. (wearing uniform similar to that of the Japanese and goose-stepping) took part.

and asked Aung San if he would send the culprits written orders to place themselves under the orders of the local Allied military commander and give up their arms if required to do so. Aung San agreed to do his best but said that the culprits might well belong to armed bands who claimed to belong to the B.N.A. but did not. Mountbatten pointed out that that made no difference: if they claimed to be B.N.A. then they must obey Aung San's orders or else admit they were illegally armed dacoits. The same day Mountbatten authorized Stopford to proceed with the reconstitution of the regular Burma Army and the enrolment of suitable volunteers, including members of the Patriotic Burmese Forces (P.B.F.) which, on the suggestion of Aung San, the B.N.A. was now called.

On the 20th June Stopford told Mountbatten that he was about to ask Aung San to disarm and disband units of the P.B.F. which were no longer required for operations. He was forming a travelling recruiting centre which would register those men who wished to enlist and who passed the security and medical tests; all men disbanded but not enrolled into the new Burma Army would be paid two months gratuity according to their rank and all men registered would be given three months leave on full guerrilla pay plus subsistence allowance, at the end of which time they would be expected to report for final enlistment. All arms were to be handed in, whether their owners were accepted or not. Disbandment would begin not later than the 30th June, though some detachments would remain on operations after that date. Mountbatten decided that the intake ceiling for the P.B.F. would for the time being be limited to 2,500 on the understanding that Stopford would not be placed in the position of having to reject suitable candidates because of this ceiling.

Stopford's programme soon ran into trouble. On the 6th July, at a meeting at Headquarters 12th Army, Aung San took exception to the word 'disbandment' in Stopford's directive to the recruiting organization. At a second meeting called on the 9th to try to get round this point, Aung San objected that no promise of re-enlistment was being given at the time of disbandment. Although it was explained to him that the verification of recruits both medically and from the point of view of character took time and that no firm undertaking could be given to any individual until verification had been made, Aung San remained unsatisfied. A third meeting was held on the 11th July to try to overcome Aung San's doubts. At this he sought assurance that the battalions of the new Burma Army into which ex-P.B.F. would be incorporated would be class units; that they would as far as possible be officered throughout by Burmese or Karen officers as the case might be; that Shans, Kachins and Chins would be allowed to form class battalions; and that, in assessing the rank which each officer, warrant officer and N.C.O. of the P.B.F.

would be given, adequate weight would be placed on the experience the individual had had in the war, such assessment being made by a small board consisting of representatives of the existing Burma Army and the P.B.F. It was explained to him that the class system had already been accepted,<sup>1</sup> and that it was the intention that officers of the P.B.F. would receive ranks commensurate with their competency, their service in the P.B.F. and the general grading of other officers of the Burma Army; the other points raised were not within the competency of 12th Army to guarantee and they would have to be decided later by those responsible for the organization of the Burma Army. Aung San said, however, that he wished to have an authoritative statement on these points; without it he could not be expected to assure his men that all was well and order them to lay down their arms.

After having discussed the problems raised with Dorman-Smith and others, Mountbatten met Aung San in Rangoon on the 15th July and told him that his stipulations were agreed to in principle, but that, although the ultimate aim was to staff the Burma Army with Burmese officers, it would at first have to be stiffened with British officers. Its eventual composition, command and control was not a matter that he (Mountbatten) could decide since it would presumably be the subject of a treaty between the Dominion of Burma and Great Britain. Aung San agreed to the incorporation of the P.B.F. within the Burma Army provided it were carried out in accordance with the stipulations accepted by the Supreme Commander. Mountbatten then directed Stopford, in consultation with Aung San, to begin the process of embodying suitable volunteers into the Burma Army and of disbanding the remainder forthwith.

Early in August the situation began to deteriorate. On the 10th, with the concurrence of 12th Army, Aung San held a meeting of the P.B.F. zone commanders at Pegu, at which he was expected to speak of its incorporation into the regular Burma Army and explain the terms of enrolment. This he did not do and the conference passed a resolution that the new Burma Army should be formed around the nucleus of the P.B.F. and indigenous guerrilla units; until this was agreed, disbandment should be suspended. Two days later the Supreme Council of the A.F.P.F.L. endorsed the resolution.

On the 24th August Stopford reported that there were indications of an underground movement being set up, and gave a warning that the policy of enrolling the P.B.F. might not be successful. He had instructed Headquarters P.B.F. to send representatives to Headquarters IV Corps to prepare the ground for the arrival of the recruiting organization which was to carry out the enrolment, but

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<sup>1</sup> The programme included four Burman, two Karen, two Kachin and two Chin battalions.

the P.B.F. had stated its inability to send anyone in view of its resolution of the 12th. The process of disbandment, disarming and enrolment had therefore come to a standstill,<sup>1</sup> and arms were reported to be going underground.

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<sup>1</sup> Up to the 24th August in the delta area 1,508 P.B.F. had been examined, of whom 583 had been rejected on medical grounds, and 550 arms had been handed in.

## CHAPTER VI

# NAVAL OPERATIONS IN THE BAY OF BENGAL (May—July 1945) AND THE OCCUPATION AND BUILD-UP OF THE COCOS ISLANDS AS AN ADVANCED AIR BASE

*See Map 16 and Sketch 3*

BY the end of February 1945 the only ships of the Japanese *10th Area Fleet* (Vice-Admiral S. Fukudome) based on Singapore which were fit for action were the cruisers *Ashigara* and *Haguro*, the destroyer *Kamikaze* and a few auxiliary craft. In the months that followed they were employed in covering the movement of troops from Singapore to Saigon and from Borneo to Sourabaya, and the evacuation of the garrisons of the Andaman and Nicobar Islands.<sup>1</sup> The major effort to rescue the garrisons of the Andamans and Nicobars, a hazardous task as the Allies had command of the Bay of Bengal, began immediately after the loss of Rangoon. Early in May intelligence reports were received which indicated that a Japanese cruiser and destroyer were due to sail on the 10th from Singapore for these islands, and that day two submarines (*Statesman* and *Subtle*) on patrol in the Strait of Malacca sighted two enemy ships proceeding in a north-westerly direction. These were the *Haguro* and *Kamikaze* which were taking supplies to the islands and were to bring back all the troops they could carry. That afternoon a force, consisting of the battleships *Queen Elizabeth* (Vice-Admiral H. T. C. Walker) and *Richelieu*, the cruiser *Royalist* (Commodore G. N. Oliver) with four escort carriers (*Hunter*, *Khedive*, *Shah* and *Emperor*), the cruisers *Cumberland* and *Tromp* and eight destroyers, sailed for the Ten Degree Channel between the Andamans and Nicobars to intercept the Japanese ships.

On the 11th a Japanese reconnaissance aircraft sighted some of the force west of the Nicobars and the enemy ships reversed course and made for Penang. Appreciating that, if he could avoid being sighted again, the Japanese ships might make a second attempt to carry out

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<sup>1</sup> See Map 16, facing page 600.

their mission, Walker also changed course and sailed in the direction of the north-western tip of Sumatra. At the same time he asked that all the available warships remaining at Trincomalee (the cruiser *Nigeria* and the destroyers *Roebuck*, *Racehorse* and *Redoubt*) should be sent to join him. On the evening of the 14th he detached the *Cumberland*, the four carriers and the 26th Destroyer Flotilla (Captain M. L. Power) with orders to reach a point some fifty miles west of the Six Degree Channel (south of the Nicobars) by 7 a.m. on the 15th. The *Haguro* and *Kamikaze* did make a second sortie and were sighted by an aircraft from the *Shah* operating from the *Emperor* to the north-east of Sabang at 10.50 a.m. on the 15th. The Japanese evidently knew of the proximity of the British force for the ships had again abandoned their mission and were steering south-eastwards towards Penang. At 3 p.m. three aircraft from the *Emperor* attacked them without success, though it was later learned that the *Haguro* received slight damage from near misses. Meanwhile Walker had ordered the 26th Destroyer Flotilla, consisting of the *Saumarez*, *Verulam*, *Vigilant*, *Venus* and *Virago*, to intercept the enemy. By 1 p.m. the position of the enemy ships was fairly accurately assessed and Power altered course to ensure an interception. By 11.22 p.m. firm radar contact was made and shortly after midnight it showed that the flotilla was within fourteen miles of its quarry. Power then formed his flotilla into a star formation and ordered it to attack at 1 a.m. The enemy, aware of the impending attack, twice changed course and in doing so first made towards the *Venus* and then towards the *Saumarez*. The latter engaged the *Kamikaze* at point-blank range as the two ships passed close to each other moving in opposite directions and inflicted some superficial damage, but herself came under fire from the *Haguro* and received three hits which temporarily disabled her. The *Haguro* then altered course several times but at each change found herself confronted by a destroyer. The *Saumarez*, *Verulam*, *Venus* and *Virago* all attacked with torpedoes; hit several times, the *Haguro* sank at 2.9 a.m. on the 16th May, some forty-five miles south-west of Penang. The *Kamikaze* escaped, with only slight damage from gunfire.

From the 16th May till the 15th June the cruiser *Phoebe* (replaced later by the *Ceylon*) and some sloops of the Royal Indian Navy maintained a patrol between Mergui and Port Blair which prevented the enemy garrison of the Andamans being evacuated to or supplied from the Tenasserim coast by small vessels.<sup>1</sup> On the 5th June the 10th Destroyer Flotilla (*Tartar*, *Eskimo*, *Nubian*, *Penn* and *Paladin*) sailed from Trincomalee to attack shipping between the Nicobar Islands and Sabang, off the north coast of Sumatra. Shortly after

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<sup>1</sup> After the 15th June the patrol was maintained by a single sloop or frigate.



daybreak on the 12th the flotilla (less the *Penn* and *Paladin*), acting on information from the submarine *Trident*, intercepted and sank the auxiliary supply vessel *Kuroshio Maru* and *Submarine Chaser 57* some twenty miles north-west of Sabang. Although attacked by enemy aircraft during the day, the flotilla withdrew westwards without loss. The *Penn*, detached with the *Paladin* to patrol off the south-west coast of Sumatra, sank an enemy landing craft on the 12th June.

The sinking of the *Haguro* left the *Ashigara* the only ship of any real fighting value in the 10th Area Fleet. Escorted by the *Kamikaze*, she sailed on the 3rd June to Batavia to bring back troops to Singapore, and on the 7th left Batavia with some 1,200 aboard. Beyond the western end of the Sunda Strait she was allowed to sail unescorted for it was thought that in the shallow waters of the Bangka Strait she would be safe from attacks by Allied submarines. Owing to a disagreement between the Japanese naval and army authorities in Batavia she was also without air cover. Since September 1944 British submarines of the 8th Flotilla, based on Fremantle and operating under the commander of the U.S. 7th Fleet, had been patrolling the Java Sea, and the South China Sea in co-operation with American submarines. One of these submarines, the *Trenchant* (Commander A. R. Hezlett), had been ordered to shift station from the Java Sea to the coast of Malaya, but, when he learned from reports made by American submarines that a Japanese heavy cruiser had entered Batavia, Hezlett obtained permission to patrol off Sumatra since he expected the ship would return to Singapore. He proceeded to the northern end of the Bangka Strait and early on the 8th sighted the *Kamikaze* sailing alone. Unfortunately he himself was sighted and, being forced to take avoiding action, was able to fire only one torpedo which missed. About noon, however, he saw the *Ashigara* coming up the narrow strait from the south on a steady course. He fired a full salvo of eight torpedoes, of which five hit the cruiser, and half an hour later she sank. Among those who lost their lives was Vice-Admiral Hashimoto, commander of the 5th Cruiser Squadron. The only Japanese naval vessels based on Singapore which were now left fit for action were the destroyer *Kamikaze* and a few auxiliary craft.

In July the East Indies Fleet began the task of sweeping mines from the approaches to possible Allied landing places. Between the 5th and 10th 167 moored mines were destroyed off the east coast of the most northerly island of the Nicobars in an operation covered by the cruiser *Nigeria*, the escort carriers *Ameer* and *Emperor* and the destroyers *Roebuck*, *Eskimo* and *Vigilant*. This force also bombarded the island as well as Nancowry to the south, and carried out a number of air strikes. Between the 24th and 26th July the area off

Phuket Island was swept for the loss of one minesweeper (*Squirrel*) in an operation covered by the battleship *Nelson*, the cruiser *Sussex*, two escort carriers and four destroyers.<sup>1</sup> This force also carried out a number of air strikes on targets on the Kra Isthmus. On the 26th, however, for the first time in South-East Asia, ships were attacked by suicide (*Kamikaze*) aircraft. Three of the attacking aircraft were shot down by the *Sussex* and the *Ameer*, but one succeeded in hitting the minesweeper *Vestal*, which caught fire and had to be sunk. This small action proved to be the last of the war in which ships of the East Indies Fleet were involved. It was not, however, the last operation by British naval vessels in those waters; on the 31st July two submarines of the 8th Flotilla (*Stygian* and *Spark*) towed the midget submarines *XE3* and *XE1* to the vicinity of Singapore to attack the damaged cruisers *Takao* and *Myoko*, which were lying in the Johore Strait.<sup>2</sup> *XE3* succeeded in further damaging the *Takao* but *XE1*'s attack was unsuccessful.<sup>3</sup>

The Cocos Islands, consisting of two coral atolls, lie in the Indian Ocean some 650 miles south of Sumatra, 1,760 miles south-east of Ceylon, 1,040 miles south-south-west of Singapore and 1,330 miles from western Australia. During the war the cable station on Direction Island in the southern atoll continued to function as a vital link between the United Kingdom, Australia and New Zealand. To lessen the risk of drawing the attention of the Japanese to it, the sea-plane anchorage between Direction and Horsburgh Islands was not used. The garrison consisted of a platoon of the King's African Rifles located on Horsburgh Island, with two 6-inch guns to cover the anchorage. The local inhabitants all lived on Home Island.<sup>4</sup> Despite the importance of the islands as a communication centre the Japanese made no attempt either to raid or to occupy them and contented themselves with sending over a reconnaissance aircraft about once a month.

In July 1944, during discussions on the role of the British and Dominion forces in the Pacific, the British Joint Planning Staff was directed to investigate the use of the islands as a staging post between Ceylon and Australia so that, if need be, air reinforcements and landing craft could be moved at short notice between S.E.A.C. and the American South-West Pacific Area. The planners envisaged the

<sup>1</sup> Walker had transferred his flag on the 12th July to the *Nelson* from the *Queen Elizabeth*, which subsequently returned to the United Kingdom.

<sup>2</sup> The *Takao* and *Myoko* had been damaged in the Battle of Leyte Gulf in October 1944.

<sup>3</sup> For their successful attack on the *Takao* in restricted waters the crew of *XE3*, Lieutenant I. E. Fraser, D.S.C., R.N.R. and T/Acting Leading Seaman J. J. Magennis, were both awarded the Victoria Cross.

<sup>4</sup> See Sketch 3, facing page 62.

islands being used primarily as a transit base, but the S.E.A.C. planning staff pointed out that they would also be of value as a base for photographic reconnaissance and bombing of the Malaya-Netherlands East Indies barrier. They went on to say that, although the Japanese had been sending over a reconnaissance aircraft, it was unlikely that they would make any attempt to occupy the islands in view of their shipping shortage and overall strategic position. If, however, airstrips were built on the islands, there might be a risk of naval bombardment or a raid by a force of up to battalion strength to destroy installations.

When Mountbatten visited London in August 1944 he discussed the project with the Chiefs of Staff, and on his return to Kandy at the end of the month asked for early approval for the development of the islands as an intermediate staging base for landing craft and aircraft between Ceylon and Australia. The resources required to develop the airfields and accommodation would, however, have to be provided from outside his theatre, since S.E.A.C. could not find them without adversely affecting the operations ('Capital' and 'Dracula') then being planned for Burma.<sup>1</sup> The Chiefs of Staff approved the project with a target of some 500 four-engined aircraft in transit each month and a weekly major landing craft convoy of thirty-six vessels, but said that S.E.A.C. and India Command would have to find the bulk of the resources. They left the timing of the project to Mountbatten but asked that it should be carried out as soon as it could be done without interfering with his projected operations. When the decision was taken at the Octagon Conference in September 1944 to send a British fleet to the central Pacific instead of forming a task force in the south-west Pacific,<sup>2</sup> there was no longer any need to send landing craft to Australia, and Mountbatten was therefore told to confine the project to the provision of facilities for staging aircraft.

Mountbatten gave A.L.F.S.E.A. the task of developing the islands and building two all-weather heavy bomber strips on West Island. In November 1944 he reported that, because of the shortage of escort craft and the need for naval support for the projected assault on Akyab in January 1945, he could not sail the first convoy for the Cocos Islands until after the 15th February 1945; the target date for the development of the islands would therefore be the 1st June 1945 although one heavy bomber strip should be ready by the 1st May. The extension of 'Capital' in Burma, however, delayed the implementation of the scheme and on the 3rd February Mountbatten told the Chiefs of Staff that no transit aircraft could be accepted before

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<sup>1</sup> See Volume IV, Chapter I.

<sup>2</sup> See Volume IV, pages 8-9 and 12.

the 1st June. On the recommendation of his Air Commander-in-Chief, he asked permission to enlarge the project so that two of his heavy bomber squadrons and one Catalina (flying-boat) squadron could operate from the islands to carry out photographic reconnaissance missions, strategic bombing, minelaying and long-range anti-submarine patrols. The Chiefs of Staff agreed to this provided it did not delay the readiness of the transit base or prejudice its capacity or security.<sup>1</sup> D-day for the project was fixed as the 25th March 1945, the total force needed amounting to some 6,500 men under command of an R.A.F. officer. It was estimated that a fighter strip could be operational by D+11 and could be extended by D+20 to accommodate Beaufighters.

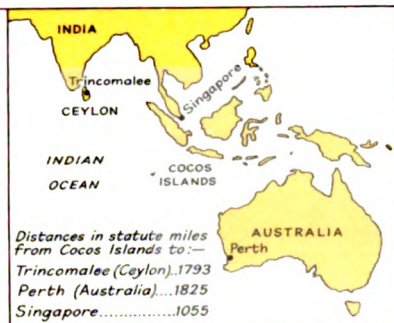
When it became apparent in May 1945 that the monsoon would prevent an adequate all-weather air base being established in south Burma in time to support the projected invasion of Malaya in August, the possible use of the Cocos Islands as an advanced air base (which would be the same distance from Port Swettenham as was Rangoon) acquired a new importance to S.E.A.C. On the advice of his Air Commander-in-Chief, Mountbatten therefore decided that the one all-weather runway built to heavy bomber standard should be extended instead of a second strip being built, so that the base would be ready for use in time for the invasion of Malaya. Early in June Mountbatten directed the S.E.A.C. Joint Planning Staff to investigate the possibility of the Cocos Islands being able to operate two heavy bomber squadrons for the invasion of Malaya and four for the attack on Singapore. The planners came to the conclusion that two heavy bomber squadrons could be based on the islands during July, a third by the 10th September and a fourth by the 1st October, and, provided the flow of transit aircraft was not increased,<sup>2</sup> that the operations of the four squadrons from the 1st October would not interfere with the primary function of the base as a staging post. On the 26th June the Chiefs of Staff assured Mountbatten that the planned flow of transit aircraft was unlikely to be increased but that, if it were, he would be given ample notice.

The all-weather main airfield was completed by the end of July 1945, and two Liberator squadrons from Calcutta were flown in to operate under Advanced Headquarters 231 Group R.A.F. to provide additional air support for the invasion of Malaya.

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<sup>1</sup> The Air Ministry had meanwhile considerably reduced the flow of transit aircraft which would be using the Cocos Islands each month.

<sup>2</sup> The estimated monthly figures for transit aircraft were: from June to November 1945, 86; from December 1945 to February 1946, 154; and thereafter 172.



O C E A N

Refuge

DIRECTION  
ISLAND



HOME  
ISLAND









# PORT DICKSON - PORT SWETTENHAM

0 Miles 25

ROADS RAILWAYS

Contour at 250ft and then every 1000ft interval

Swamps are shown in green





## CHAPTER VII

# PLANNING FOR THE INVASION AND DEFENCE OF MALAYA

(May—July 1945)

*See Maps 2, 11 and 16*

ON the 9th May Mountbatten directed his three Commanders-in-Chief to appoint Joint Force Commanders for the invasion of Malaya (operation 'Zipper') forthwith and instruct them to prepare by the 25th June their joint plan for a D-day in the second half of August. The Force Commanders chosen were Lieut.-General O. L. Roberts (XXXIV Corps), Rear-Admiral B. C. S. Martin (Flag Officer Force 'W') and Air Vice-Marshal The Earl of Bandon (224 Group R.A.F.).

On the 15th May the S.E.A.C. Joint Planning Staff produced a staff study of the operation to be used as a basis for the allocation of resources and as a guide for detailed planning. The Port Dickson-Port Swettenham area seemed to them to be the most suitable one for the assault, since the beaches there were the only ones on the west coast of Malaya thought to be practicable for a quick discharge of vehicles, and an invasion force landed in that area could reach the Johore Strait more quickly than from any other bridgehead, even if it were nearer Singapore.<sup>1</sup> The best beaches for the assault and for the maintenance of a large force seemed to be a stretch of some 4½ miles between Cape Rachado and Port Dickson, and one some 5 miles in length between Morib and Kg Bagan Lalang.<sup>2</sup> The former had firm sand and good exits but the latter seemed to have mud mixed with sand and generally unsatisfactory exits.

For the assault the joint planners put forward two courses: either simultaneous landings by one division over the Morib beaches to secure the Kelanang and Port Swettenham airstrips and by one over the Port Dickson beaches to secure Seremban, both supported by armour, with a follow-up division landing over either beach to secure Kuala Lumpur; or a two-division landing on the Morib beaches, also supported by armour, to secure the Kelanang and Port Swettenham airstrips and Kuala Lumpur, with a follow-up division

<sup>1</sup> See Map 11, facing page 282.

<sup>2</sup> See Map 2, facing page 63.

landing on the same beaches to secure Port Dickson and Seremban. Since the rapid capture of a beachhead was the primary object of the operation, they favoured the second course on strategical and tactical grounds but they emphasized that they were in some doubt about the feasibility of the Morib beaches for the landing and the subsequent maintenance of two assault divisions. If their doubts were not allayed, the first course would be preferable since it would ensure the use of the better Port Dickson beaches from the outset in case the Morib beaches proved unsuitable for maintenance.

Japanese naval opposition was expected to be negligible and it was thought that by August they would have not more than 150-175 aircraft spread over Siam, Indo-China, Sumatra and Malaya, of which only about three-fifths would be serviceable. It was known that Japanese military formations were being moved from the Netherlands East Indies to the Asian mainland, and it was thought that Japanese strength in Malaya by the 1st September was likely to be one division in the Kra Isthmus, one in northern Malaya with two of its regiments north of Penang and the third in the Kuala Lumpur-Port Swettenham-Ipoh area, and about nine battalions on Singapore Island. Opposition to the 'Zipper' landings might therefore be one battalion on D-day rising to about  $1\frac{1}{2}$  divisions by D+31.

In view of the light opposition expected in the early stages and the need to secure the exits from the plain in the Tampin area, the planners recommended that the advance from the bridgehead to the Johore Strait should begin at the first possible moment along both the main inland and the coastal roads. Any amphibious assault on the coast farther to the south to aid the advance would have to be mounted from Indian ports or from Rangoon and would be difficult to time. Its build-up would moreover be very slow since beaches there were generally unsuitable. They estimated that, if two divisions had to be left to defend the bridgehead, the earliest date by which a corps of two divisions could reach the Johore Strait would be D+65, but if only one division were left in the bridgehead the date could be advanced to D+45. On the 18th May Mountbatten approved this study and the three Commanders-in-Chief were instructed to use it as a basis for planning.

The assault was entrusted to XXXIV Corps which, when first formed in March 1945, consisted of 23rd Indian Division, 81st (W.A.) Division, 3 Commando Brigade and 50th Tank Brigade, and to bring it up to the required strength of four divisions it was allotted 36th Division on arrival from central Burma in April-May, and 26th Indian Division on arrival from Rangoon in May-June. Since the West African division was due for repatriation in September, it was replaced by 25th Indian Division (withdrawn from Arakan in

March–April), but it was found that the need to replace its British officers and men qualifying under the 'Python' scheme for repatriation to the United Kingdom after serving 3 years 8 months in the Far East would result in the formation not being fit for action until the end of August.<sup>1</sup> Since 36th Division, also badly affected by 'Python', was in a worse position since its troops had to be given leave after their long spell in north Burma, a substitute had to be found for it. The 2nd British Division could not be used since some 10,000 of its officers and men were due to be repatriated during the autumn of 1945. The only possible alternative was therefore to detail 5th Indian Division, then engaged in operations in south Burma. This meant that one division out of the four would have to be embarked from Rangoon. Thus the constitution of XXXIV Corps on the 1st June for planning purposes was 23rd and 25th Divisions and 50th Tank Brigade located in India, 26th Division on arrival in India from Burma and 5th Division in Burma.

On the 30th May Mountbatten convened a meeting at Rear Headquarters S.E.A.C. in Delhi with his three Commanders-in-Chief and the Joint Force Commanders to consider various aspects of 'Zipper', and to decide on the date for D-day. Martin (Force 'W'), in explaining the factors which had to be weighed in selecting the day, said that the only two feasible dates when tides would be suitable were the 27th August and the 9th September. A landing on the 9th September would have to be made before dawn but either date was practicable from the naval point of view. The Earl of Bandon said that the R.A.F. could be ready by the 27th August, and India's Deputy Director of Shipping Transport said that the necessary shipping could also be ready by then.

Leese, however, supported by Slim, Christison and Roberts,<sup>2</sup> urged that the later date should be chosen since XXXIV Corps would be ready only with very great difficulty for a D-day in August owing to the effects of 'Python' on 25th Division, the fact that one of the component regiments of 50th Tank Brigade had not yet reached India from the Middle East and because 5th Division would have to be rested in the dry belt of Burma, which meant its relief from active operations, a move to Meiktila and a move back to Rangoon in time to prepare for embarkation. After hearing the various arguments put forward, Mountbatten agreed with great reluctance to D-day being the 9th September and directed that the Force Commanders should submit their final detailed plans to him not later than the 1st July.

Auchinleck had meanwhile sent the Chiefs of Staff on the 18th

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<sup>1</sup> The qualifying period for 'Python' had been reduced from five years from the end of 1944. See Volume IV, page 27.

<sup>2</sup> Slim had been granted leave in the United Kingdom from early June and Christison had been appointed as acting G.O.C.-in-C. 14th Army during his absence.

May the estimated shipping requirement for the invasion of Malaya, for the capture of Singapore and for other movements in the Bay of Bengal, supplementary to the request made by Mountbatten on the 4th May.<sup>1</sup>

On the 1st June Mountbatten told the Chiefs of Staff that D-day for 'Zipper' could not be before the 9th September because of difficulties over 'Python', and that XXXIV Corps with four divisions under command would control both the invasion of Malaya ('Zipper') and the capture of Singapore ('Mailist'). Headquarters 14th Army and XV Corps would plan the build-up, and the three divisions of XV Corps could begin to move into the bridgehead about D+50 to reinforce 'Mailist', if required, and to clear Malaya. The eventual strength of 14th Army in Malaya would be two corps totalling seven divisions and three armoured brigades. This would leave four divisions for operations in Burma. On the 7th June the Chiefs of Staff replied that they attached the utmost importance to the earliest possible capture of Singapore and were doing everything in their power to meet the shipping requirements. Strategy after the capture of Singapore depended on a number of factors yet undecided, and it might be necessary, in view of other commitments, to accept a very considerable slowing-up and curtailment of S.E.A.C.'s operations once Singapore had been occupied. The allotment of personnel shipping they had made was the absolute maximum and could not be altered in quantity or phasing;<sup>2</sup> any postponement of 'Zipper' beyond the 9th September would conflict with other requirements and probably lead to a reduction. Cargo shipping requirements could be substantially met and every effort had been made to meet Mountbatten's request for 18 L.S.T.s over and above Force 'W'.<sup>3</sup> Of these, 14 would reach India in early August, but the date of arrival of the remainder was uncertain.

The Joint Force Commanders' plan was completed by the 25th June. In it they stressed that there was insufficient information on which to base an accurate appreciation of the Japanese tactical

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<sup>1</sup> See page 8.

	Personnel shipping lift demanded	Personnel shipping lift allocated
July	35,000	35,000
August	115,000	97,000
September	80,000	86,000
October	80,000	80,000
November	75,000	50,000
December	75,000	50,000

<sup>2</sup> See page 8.

reaction to 'Zipper', but they considered that at the worst there would, in addition to the garrison on Singapore Island (some nine battalions), be no more than three enemy divisions in Malaya and the lower part of the Kra Isthmus. These divisions would probably not consist of fully trained and high quality troops. The build-up against a bridgehead on the west coast of Malaya might be of not more than two divisions. They considered it unlikely that the Japanese would put up any serious opposition to the actual landing, and photographic reconnaissance had shown little defensive activity, except for newly-prepared positions at three points on the beaches south of Morib. No prepared defences were to be seen from the air in the Port Swettenham-Kluang area. The Force Commanders agreed with the previous estimate of the negligible enemy naval opposition and thought that the scale of air attack against the bridgehead was likely to be no more than ten to twelve aircraft on D-day, twelve to fifteen on D+1, ten to twelve on D+2 and six to eight on D+3, thereafter decreasing to occasional activity by small numbers of aircraft.

The assault would be supported only by carrier-borne aircraft from D-day to D+8/10, after which land-based aircraft operating from an airstrip within the beachhead would have to take over. It was essential therefore that either the Kelanang or Port Swettenham airstrip, or preferably both, should be secured with the least possible delay. It was also essential that Port Swettenham should be captured, intact if possible, by D+1 at the latest to enable the limited tonnages of vehicles and stores which could be landed over the beaches to be augmented. Infantry could land anywhere along the coast from Cape Rachado to Port Swettenham, except where it was fringed with mangrove. The Port Dickson beaches were easily the best for a landing on the whole of the west coast of Malaya, but the Japanese would probably expect a landing to be made there and it was therefore desirable to avoid using them for the initial assault. There were two beaches immediately south of Morib over which a reasonable rate of discharge of vehicles and stores might be achieved, but the rate would be insufficient for the whole force. It would therefore be necessary to secure both the Port Dickson and the Port Swettenham areas as early as possible. Both beaches, however, were flat and thus a high proportion of amphibious vehicles was essential.

The suitable beaches being separated by many miles, there were only two possible courses: either to land two divisions using both sets of beaches on D-day, or to assault over the Morib beaches on D-day and the Port Dickson beaches three days later. The Force Commanders decided that the best course would be to put the main assault on D-day in over the northern part of the Morib beaches to secure the airstrips and Port Swettenham, with a subsidiary assault

over the southern part of the Morib beaches to secure the bridges at Sepang and, by threatening Port Dickson from inland, to draw off the forces which might otherwise oppose the later landing on the Port Dickson beaches. An adequate bridgehead could be formed by gaining the general line Cape Rachado–Seremban–Kuala Lumpur–Kuala Selangor. This line was some ninety miles in length and would require at least two divisions for its defence.

Their plan in more detail was that the D-day convoys carrying 25th Division and 37th Brigade of 23rd Division from Indian ports and the convoy carrying 5th Division from Rangoon would reach the lowering position off the Morib beaches at 3.30 a.m. on the 9th September, and the initial assault would go in at 6.45 a.m. The 25th Division would be landed immediately south of Morib to seize the Kelanang and Port Swettenham airfields, while 37th Brigade would be landed simultaneously at the southern end of the Morib beaches to secure the Sepang bridges and exploit to Port Dickson. After the whole of 25th Division had been landed, 5th Division would also be landed over the Morib beaches with the task of clearing the road southwards and exploiting to Seremban and Kuala Lumpur.

The naval fire support on the 25th Divisional front would be provided by a battleship, a cruiser, four destroyers, two sloops and thirteen landing craft, and on the 23rd Divisional front by one cruiser, two sloops and eleven landing craft. One battleship would be held in reserve. The 21st Aircraft Carrier Squadron would provide cover for the assault area, carrier forces and convoys as well as support for the army; seven carriers, each with twenty aircraft, would be allotted to the assault area and the remaining two carriers of the squadron would operate separately in the Strait of Malacca.

The 5th Division, landing later on D-day, would have a call on 25th Division's support group and on naval aircraft during its assault. Tactical air support would be provided by heavy bombers operating from the Cocos Islands and south Burma. It was hoped that tactical support by land-based aircraft from within the bridgehead would be available from D+6 and that the strength of 224 Group R.A.F. would be built up to some twelve squadrons by D+12.

On D+3 (12th September) 23rd Division (less 37th Brigade) and 3 Commando Brigade would assault south of Port Dickson to capture the port, if 37th Brigade had not yet done so, and secure the general line Cape Rachado–Seremban. During its landing the division would be covered by the same naval forces allotted to the division on D-day and by any not required by 25th Division. The D+3 convoy would also carry Headquarters XXXIV Corps and some corps troops, including artillery and R.A.F. ground personnel. With the arrival of a third convoy on D+8 (17th September) there would be three divisions, two brigades and an armoured brigade in the bridge-

head, bringing the total strength of XXXIV Corps and R.A.F. in Malaya to some 118,000 men and 10,400 vehicles.<sup>1</sup> The fourth, fifth and sixth convoys, arriving on D+23 (2nd October), D+31 (10th October) and D+44 (23rd October), would carry 26th Division and bring the corps up to its full strength of four divisions.<sup>2</sup> The build-up would continue with a convoy on D+53, by which time Headquarters 14th Army and all its attached troops required for the first phase would have been landed in Malaya.<sup>3</sup> The remaining three divisions and two tank brigades required for the second phase of 'Zipper' would follow in later convoys.

In examining the advance on Singapore the Force Commanders decided that, since stress had been laid on capturing the port and dock facilities at Singapore intact, the defeat of the Japanese army was merely incidental to the task and could be left to the stage subsequent to the capture of the island. In the operations leading up to the capture of Singapore, every effort should therefore be made to prevent the enemy from concentrating his forces on the island. Once a landing had been made in Malaya it would be evident that the ultimate Allied objective was Singapore, which meant that surprise could be achieved only by the speed and method of the advance. Since it might be possible to persuade the Japanese that the intention was merely to secure a bridgehead of sufficient size to cut their communications between north and south Malaya with a view to a relatively slow build-up and subsequent advance on Singapore, any action taken until the advance began should appear to support this intention but, once the advance did begin, it should be carried out at speed, full use being made of amphibious operations.

The action taken would have to depend on the information available at the time on the Japanese dispositions and their reactions to the landing. The first consideration must be the security of the bridgehead and the maintenance of the greatest possible degree of flexibility. There were two alternative conditions: in the first, if opposition to the south appeared likely to be light and the bridgehead could be held by two divisions, the advance should begin as soon as possible after D+10 with one division, supported by armour, moving down both the inland and the coastal roads, with the commando brigade, and possibly an infantry brigade, carrying out amphibious hooks, sufficient shipping and landing craft for this purpose being held at 48 hours' notice.

In the second case, if enemy strength against the bridgehead and/or between it and Singapore was considerable, it would be necessary to await the arrival of the fourth division and to use two divisions

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<sup>1</sup> See Appendix 7.

<sup>2</sup> For the outline order of battle for 'Zipper' see Appendix 4.

<sup>3</sup> For the proposed build-up for 'Zipper' see Appendix 5.

and the commando brigade, possibly assisted by a parachute brigade. The southward advance could not in this case begin before D+25. One division would advance as in the first course while the other with the commando brigade and a parachute brigade would carry out an amphibious operation with the object of getting astride the main road as quickly as possible and seizing an airfield. The general concept of the operation was similar to the first course, but more emphasis was to be laid on containing as many Japanese as possible in the Gemas area, driving them east rather than south. Tactical air support would be gradually increased up to D+23 to some 19 tactical squadrons on three airfields in the bridgehead. Further airfields would be secured during the southward advance.

Because of unpredictable factors, such as the degree of resistance north of Singapore and the strength of the enemy garrison in Singapore Island, the Force Commanders were at this stage unable to formulate a plan for the capture of the island ('Mailist'). They thought, however, that the forces required would be two divisions, a commando brigade, a tank brigade and a parachute brigade, supported by two regiments of medium and two of self-propelled (S.P.) artillery, a Royal Marine amphibious assault regiment and an L.V.T. assault company, R.A.S.C.

When the plan was discussed on the 8th July at a conference in Kandy, at which the three Commanders-in-Chief and the Force Commanders were present,<sup>1</sup> the latter said that from the naval point of view the very flat Morib beaches were very far from being satisfactory for technical reasons. From the army point of view there was a shortage of headquarters ships; personnel shipping was only just adequate with no reserve; shipping for vehicles was also on so narrow a margin that cuts had had to be made in heavy vehicles which would slow up the deployment ashore and exploitation towards Singapore; and air support for the assault would be meagre. It had been thought, when planning began, that there would be little resistance in the assault area, but it now seemed that the Japanese were building up their forces and strengthening their defences. It might well be that by the time the operation was launched in September the defence in the beach areas would be much stronger.

The Force Commanders were told that Supreme Headquarters, through Force 136, was organizing clandestine assistance to help the operation by the collection of intelligence and by organizing local guerrillas who could be ready to take action when ordered by the Force Commanders. The clandestine assistance would be much better organized in Malaya than it had been in Burma, where there

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<sup>1</sup> Leese vacated his appointment as Commander-in-Chief, A.L.F.S.E.A. on the 6th July and Christison became officiating Commander-in-Chief, A.L.F.S.E.A. until Slim took over command on the 16th August.



6. Admiral Sir Bruce Fraser (taken shortly before his promotion to Admiral).



7. Air Vice-Marshal The Earl of Bandon.





8. H.M. destroyers *Venus*, *Virago* and *Vigilant* in action off Sumatra, May 1945.



9. Wildcat aircraft landing on a carrier.

had been less time for preparation and where the speed of operations had been frequently overtaken clandestine plans.

Mountbatten, having noted the difficulties, agreed to the issue of the outline plan to all concerned on the 9th July. The next day he forwarded it to the Chiefs of Staff, and a week later, anxious about the delay in the arrival of the L.S.T.s he had asked for, warned them that D-day would have to be postponed if the Admiralty failed to provide sixty-four L.S.T.s as planned. Two days later the Chiefs of Staff replied that thirty were on their way, eight would sail by the 21st July, four by the 26th, two by the 30th and two more later. With the twenty-four already on station this would make a total of seventy.

It will be of interest at this point to compare S.E.A.C.'s plans for the invasion of Malaya and their estimate of the opposition likely to be met with the Japanese appreciation of how the invasion would be carried out and the actual strength and disposition of the forces which they would have been able to deploy by the 9th September 1945. The *7th Area Army* (General K. Doihara) with headquarters at Singapore was responsible to *Southern Army* (Field-Marshal Count H. Terauchi) for the defence of Malaya, the Andaman and Nicobar Islands, Sumatra, Java and Borneo.<sup>1</sup> For this purpose Doihara had under his command *29th Army* in Malaya and the Andaman and Nicobar Islands, *25th Army* in Sumatra, *16th Army* in Java and *37th Army* in Borneo.<sup>2</sup> In the second half of 1944 the Japanese had considered that the Allies were likely to mount an operation for the capture of the Andamans and Nicobars and their dispositions were made with this in view. When, however, no such attack was delivered by the end of 1944, it was thought that, in conjunction with their operations in Burma, the Allies would assault the Kra Isthmus with the object of preventing reinforcements from reaching Burma from the south and of capturing airfields from which their aircraft could neutralize the reinforcement routes into Burma from the east, particularly the Burma-Siam railway.

Between January and April 1945, realizing that the situation in South-East Asia was developing in favour of the Allies and that the threat to Malaya and Singapore was growing, *Southern Army* decided to reinforce *7th Area Army*. The *46th Division* was transferred from *2nd Area Army* (responsible for the North Australian front) to Singapore, and *70th Independent Mixed Brigade* (four battalions) from Indo-China to Kuala Kangsar in Malaya, both formations coming

<sup>1</sup> See Volume III, page 375.

<sup>2</sup> See Appendix 10 and Map 16, facing page 600

under command of *29th Army*.<sup>1</sup> The loss of Rangoon early in May 1945 completely changed the situation in South-East Asia for the Japanese. The threat to Singapore, up till then remote, now became a serious problem needing urgent attention, for the Allies could devote a large part of their strength towards the capture of the port. A series of conferences took place at *Headquarters 7th Area Army* in Singapore and at *Headquarters 29th Army* in Taiping during May to decide what action should be taken to meet the new situation.

The Japanese appreciation of Allied intentions was reasonably accurate. They expected that aircraft based in Burma would step up the bombing offensive against the Kra Isthmus and Malaya during June and July with the object of disrupting communications. In August landings would be made on Phuket Island, or on northern Sumatra, or on both with the object of securing air bases from which to support subsequent operations. A landing on Phuket Island would be carried out by not more than one division, but probably by only one brigade, and on northern Sumatra by one division. Following the consolidation of these areas the second and main phase of the operations would be carried out and an assault by four or five divisions would be launched against the Alor Star-Penang area in November or December 1945 with the object of securing the important group of airfields which lay in that area. The main landings would, it was expected, be made on the beaches west of Alor Star with the possibility of subsidiary landings just south of Penang. Any attempt to seize Penang Island was thought to be unlikely. After a month spent in securing the whole or part of this area the Allies would embark on the next phase: an advance south from the bridgehead, which, aided by a series of amphibious hooks down the coast, would culminate in a large-scale landing of some three to six divisions in the area between Port Dickson and Port Swettenham. This force, after occupying Kuala Lumpur, would leave part of its strength to form a block to the north and with the remainder would advance by land on Singapore. The final assault against the island was expected to follow the pattern of the Japanese attack in 1942. It was thought unlikely that the Allies would make any attack on the east coast of Malaya or that they would use airborne forces in any strength. If airborne forces were employed they might be used to cut the north-south line of communications through the Kra Isthmus to prevent Malaya being reinforced from the north. Amendments made later brought forward the date of the

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<sup>1</sup> The *2nd Area Army* was disbanded on the 13th June 1945 and replaced by *2nd Army* (see Appendix 10 and Volume IV, Appendix 7). The *46th Division* was concentrated in Johore by the end of June 1945. The *70th Independent Mixed Brigade* began its move to Malaya on the 1st May but was not completely concentrated at Kuala Kangsar until the end of July 1945.

invasion to September and envisaged the possibility of a landing by Australian forces on the east coast.

The *7th Area Army* issued orders based on this appreciation that the forces in Malaya and Singapore, Sumatra, Java and Borneo were resolutely to defend their territories. It was especially important that Singapore and the surrounding area should be held and that the communications between Java and Singapore should be kept open, since Java was to continue to be the main base for the supply of food, especially rice, for Singapore. The boundary between *7th* and *2nd Area Armies* was to be moved east so that *48th Division* in Timor would be included in *16th Army* (Java), which was to despatch 5,000 troops from the division to Singapore. The *25th Army* in Sumatra was to be relieved of the task of protecting the oilfields, transfer *26th I.M.B.*, an anti-aircraft battery and three searchlight companies to Singapore, and concentrate *2nd Imperial Guards Division* for the defence of northern Sumatra.

The *29th Army*, consisting of *46th* and *94th Divisions*, *35th*, *36th*, *37th* and *70th I.M.B.s*, was to hold on to the Andaman and Nicobar Islands, keep open the main road and rail line of communications from the north to the south of Malaya and defend the area from Gurun southwards, leaving detachments to hold vital localities in the Kra Isthmus and southern Siam, but was not to be responsible for the defence of Singapore Island. In Borneo *37th Army* was to hold all the main air bases and landing grounds in the country for as long as possible, especially Brunei and the surrounding area. The Commanders *Singapore Defence Force* and *10th Special Naval Base Force* were to act in close co-operation to improve the defences in Singapore Island.

Since it seemed in May that *29th Army*, apart from its commitments in the Andamans and Nicobars, would have the impossible task of trying to defend the whole of Malaya from the Kra Isthmus to Johore with two divisions (*46th* and *94th*)<sup>1</sup> and an I.M.B. (*70th*),<sup>2</sup> *7th Area Army* released it from the responsibility for the defence of Penang and the mainland immediately north of Singapore. The area army took over responsibility for the defence of Penang and the State of Johore and assumed command of *46th Division*,<sup>3</sup> which was to be replaced in *29th Army* by the transfer of *37th Division* from Indo-China to Malaya.<sup>4</sup> The *29th Army* would therefore have two divisions and an I.M.B. with which to defend an area from the Kra

<sup>1</sup> The *94th Division* was raised from garrison units already in Malaya around the nucleus of one battalion sent from Manchuria.

<sup>2</sup> The *35th*, *36th* and *37th I.M.B.s* provided the garrisons for the Andamans and Nicobars.

<sup>3</sup> Penang was garrisoned by *15th Naval Garrison Unit*.

<sup>4</sup> The *37th Division* had moved from China to Indo-China. See Volume III, page 233 fn. 1 and Volume IV, pages 122 and 229.

Isthmus to Gemas. Since its strength was clearly still insufficient, *29th Army* proposed to raise a tank battalion (fourteen tanks) in Ipoh and to expand *70th I.M.B.* to the strength of a division by using surplus air force personnel, instructors from training establishments and about a thousand troops from Burma. By the time the war ended the tank battalion, although untrained, had been formed, but the expansion of *70th I.M.B.* had not been approved. It was also decided to bring back four battalions from the Andaman and Nicobar Islands. In anticipation of approval, some 400 men had already been withdrawn from Nancowry, but the withdrawal of further troops from the islands was prevented by the action of the Allied naval forces and the loss of the *Haguro*.<sup>1</sup> The *29th Army* had therefore to formulate its plans on the basis of having *94th* and *37th Divisions*, *70th I.M.B.* and a tank battalion; of these the *I.M.B.* was not expected to be available till July and *37th Division* till September. Since, when planning began in May, it was not expected that the Allies would assault till November, the delay in the arrival of these formations was not then considered to be of great importance.

Basing its operational plan on *7th Area Army's* appreciation of the Allies' probable intentions, *29th Army* decided at the end of May to make northern Malaya its main defence area. In view of the army's weakness and the expected scale of the Allied assault, there appeared to be little hope of offering serious resistance on the beaches in the Alor Star area or even in the beachhead area. It was therefore decided to locate the main defensive positions in the Gurun area where it was hoped that a relatively small force, aided by hills and the marshy nature of the country, would succeed in halting and perhaps eventually defeating a much larger enemy force. To meet the possibility of a break-through in this area or an Allied landing on the beaches south of Prai, it was decided to prepare a secondary defence zone in the Taiping-Kuala Kangsar-Ipoh area.

The *94th Division* was made responsible for the mainland to the north of Penang and ordered to deploy the bulk of its forces between there and the Siamese border, leaving small detachments in the Kra Isthmus and southern Siam, and prepare defensive positions in the Gurun area. On arrival in Malaya *37th Division* was to become responsible for the area from Penang as far south as Telok Anson, and also act as a general reserve ready to move north or south according to how the situation developed. The *70th I.M.B.* was to hold the Kuala Lumpur-Seremban area and detach one of its four battalions to secure Kuantan on the east coast. The brigade was to site its defences facing north in conformity with the general plan, but at the same time was to be prepared to meet an attack from the west.

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<sup>1</sup> See pages 57-58.

The tank battalion and available *I.N.A.* units were to be used respectively to protect the north-south line of communications and to provide an anti-parachutist and anti-guerrilla force for the protection of rear areas. To ensure the maintenance of the army it was proposed to establish three main army dump areas in which two years' supply of food and as much ammunition and equipment as possible were to be placed. These were to be located at Raub with half the available stocks, at Grik with four-tenths and in the Cameron Highlands with one-tenth.<sup>1</sup> These dumps were to be ready by September and units were to hold additional supplies sufficient for six months' operations.

When the war ended in mid-August *29th Army's* dispositions were still very far from complete. Only a few of *37th Division's* units had reached Malaya and the bulk of the division was still in Bangkok awaiting transport. The *70th I.M.B.* was in the Kuala Kangsar area, but was due to move to the Kuala Lumpur area in the last week of August, when the remaining units of *94th Division* still in central Malaya were to move north. Only a tenth of the supplies of rice had been moved into the three army dumps and the movement of ammunition and equipment from Kuala Lumpur had only just begun. No part of *37th Division's* supplies had reached Malaya,<sup>2</sup> and *94th Division* was extremely short of transport. The *46th Division* was, however, in a position to hold Johore.

Reinforcements for Singapore Island had arrived more or less according to plan. By the 6th July *26th I.M.B.* had arrived from Sumatra, thus increasing the strength on the island to five battalions. A number of field, medium and mountain batteries had been moved there from Malaya, Sumatra and Java and artillery and engineer reinforcements had been flown in from the Andaman and Nicobar Islands. About 1,200 of the 5,000 men being transferred from *48th Division* to bring the garrison up to the equivalent strength of a division were, however, lost when the *Ashigara* was sunk.<sup>3</sup> Work on the construction of defences on the island was begun in June and continued uninterruptedly until the end of the war.

<sup>1</sup> The reserve of ammunition to be held in these three *29th Army* dumps was to amount to 160 rounds a rifle, 1,000 rounds a machine-gun and 200 rounds a gun. The only reserve of equipment was a few rifles.

<sup>2</sup> The *37th Division* was not allotted to *7th Area Army* until the 3rd July and was not placed under command of *29th Army* until the 27th July.

<sup>3</sup> See page 59.





## CHAPTER VIII

# THE MOUNTING OF 'ZIPPER'

### FROM INDIA BASE

(July—August 1945)

*See Maps 2 and 16*

**P**LANS for the development of India as the main Allied base in the Far East were prepared as early as November 1942 and work was begun in the spring of 1943.<sup>1</sup> During that year it was decided that the base should be capable not only of maintaining the forces required for India's internal security and the defence of the North West Frontier but also a force of twenty divisions, 154 R.A.F. squadrons and thirty Fleet Air Arm Squadrons allotted to S.E.A.C., a large proportion of which would be engaged in amphibious operations for the recapture of enemy-occupied areas east of India.<sup>2</sup> In addition the base had to maintain the American and Chinese troops in the American China-Burma-India Theatre, and act as a transit area for supplies sent by air to maintain the Chinese war effort. To enable the base to perform its functions the ports of Bombay, Cochin, Madras, Vizagapatam and Calcutta were developed so that they could embark, despatch and maintain the large forces which would be required for amphibious operations,<sup>3</sup> two reserve bases were built at Lahore and Benares to maintain the forces in India and those in S.E.A.C. operating in Assam and Burma, and two others were built at Panagarh (near Calcutta) and Avadi (near Madras) for the maintenance of the amphibious forces. It was planned that India base should be able to meet all operational demands placed on it by May-June 1945.<sup>4</sup>

In October 1944 the Chiefs of Staff instructed Auchinleck to increase the capacity of India base so that it could maintain the equivalent of eighteen divisions (all of which were at that time in India or assigned to S.E.A.C.) for the pre-1945 monsoon operations, and the equivalent of another 9½ divisions (to be deployed by sea and air from Europe shortly after the defeat of Germany) for the

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<sup>1</sup> See Volume III, page 18.

<sup>2</sup> See Volume III, pages 28-29.

<sup>3</sup> See Map 16, facing page 600.

<sup>4</sup> See Volume IV, pages 16-17.

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post-1945 monsoon operations.<sup>1</sup> The base was in addition to maintain certain naval forces, 118 R.A.F. squadrons, 67 U.S.A.A.F. squadrons and 600 American transport aircraft in India, and 91 U.S.A.A.F. squadrons in China. This instruction added the equivalent of  $7\frac{1}{2}$  divisions to the numbers for which India Command had to that date been preparing to maintain, an addition, including army, corps and administrative troops, of some 262,000 men, of whom some 187,000 would be British.

The expansion of the Indian Army to some 2.67 million men, coupled with the loss of her normal sources of supply for rice and petrol in the Far East and the drastic reduction in her imports brought about by shipping shortages, had already put a great strain on India's economy, especially on her railway system, and on her supplies of food grains, a steady flow of which from overseas was essential to ensure her economic stability.<sup>2</sup> In November Auchinleck told the Chiefs of Staff that he could accept on an average some 60,000 men by sea and 18,000 by air and return to the United Kingdom 20,000 by sea and 18,000 by air each month, but that, when amphibious operations were being mounted, the numbers which could be received or despatched would have to be reduced. It was clear that the country would not be able to bear the additional load unless she was given assistance from outside. In January 1945 the Viceroy (Field-Marshal Earl Wavell) defined the assistance as resources needed to handle the load, and general economic help and relief, of which the most important was the supply of food grains from overseas.

It had been decided in London in December 1944 that 70,000 tons of wheat should be sent to India monthly in the first half of 1945 but, with the increased demand for shipping arising from the needs of the liberated areas and military requirements in Europe, and with the failure of the Australian wheat crop, it proved possible to ship only 40,000 tons of wheat monthly from North America from January to April 1945. In April India found that for various physical reasons her internal supplies of grain would fall well below the previously estimated figures and she therefore asked, as an emergency measure, for 50,000 tons to be shipped immediately, and for 135,000 tons a month from May to August. The Minister of War Transport was, however, unable to find the shipping for more than 40,000 tons a month. Since in this situation either the British Government would have to order India to bear a load which its Government did not believe it could carry without disaster, or operational plans would

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<sup>1</sup> The  $9\frac{1}{2}$  divisions were to be made up of four British and three Indian infantry divisions, one British airborne division, one Indian armoured division, one commando brigade and one British tank brigade.

<sup>2</sup> See Volume IV, page 16.

have to be changed to reduce the load imposed on India, the Chiefs of Staff were asked for their advice. They reaffirmed that the import of food grains into India was essential to maintain her stability as a base for operations against Japan. The matter was then referred to the War Cabinet which decided on the 18th April that 100,000 tons of wheat a month should if possible be sent to India for the next six months on the firm understanding that India would in return provide 25,000 tons of rice for Ceylon and 20,000 tons of ground nuts for the United Kingdom. The shipment of 100,000 tons of wheat a month began in July 1945. Auchinleck had meanwhile reported at the end of April that he expected to be able to meet the Chiefs of Staff's latest target for India base by the end of 1945.

Early in July 1945, just as the plan for 'Zipper' had been approved, the Chiefs of Staff once again revised their demands on India base for all forces other than American. They reduced the number of divisions to be maintained in South-East Asia to 15½ (the reduction being accounted for by repatriation of African troops) and the formations to be deployed from Europe from 9½ to 7½ divisions, making a total of 23½ divisions, a reduction of 4½ divisions on the October 1944 requirements.<sup>1</sup> They also reduced the number of R.A.F. squadrons to 87 and 8 flights, but to the existing naval air stations and aircraft to be maintained added Assault Forces 'W', 'X' and 'Y', convoy escorts and four escort carriers (two each periodically based on Cochin and Madras). At the end of July Auchinleck told the Chiefs of Staff that India base was operative and was maintaining the forces then in India and those allotted to S.E.A.C. It was in a position to accept the maintenance load of all the additional forces which could be received from Europe by the end of 1945, and would be able to maintain all the forces included in the Chiefs of Staff's demand of July 1945 by March 1946.

The recapture of Rangoon early in May 1945 and the decision to advance direct on Malaya instead of first seizing advanced naval and air bases on Phuket Island made it unnecessary and inadvisable to await the arrival of forces from Europe.<sup>2</sup> Mountbatten therefore decided to mount 'Zipper' from India with the resources he already had in S.E.A.C. The mounting of 'Zipper' from India base (except for 5th Division from Rangoon which was A.L.F.S.E.A.'s responsibility)<sup>3</sup> involved close co-operation with General Headquarters,

<sup>1</sup> The 7½ equivalent divisions were to be made up of one British and three Indian infantry divisions, one British airborne division, one Indian armoured division, two British armoured brigades, a New Zealand division consisting of two brigades, and one commando brigade.

<sup>2</sup> See page 8.

<sup>3</sup> See Chapter VII.

India. The 14th Army and the Joint Force Commanders therefore prepared their outline plan for 'Zipper' at Delhi. When the outline plan was approved Headquarters 14th Army moved to Secunderabad where it could undertake detailed planning in co-operation with Headquarters Southern Army (to which Auchinleck had given the task of organizing XXXIV Corps' embarkation, since the four main ports to be used in the initial stage of the operation lay within its boundaries); and Headquarters XXXIV Corps moved to Bombay to co-ordinate plans at divisional and brigade level with the naval and port authorities. Southern Army had already been preparing plans to mount the assault on Phuket Island and to accommodate and train the reinforcing formations which were expected to arrive from Europe and take part in the recapture of Malaya. The decision to abandon the Phuket Island operation and to use for 'Zipper' formations withdrawn from Burma made it necessary for Southern Army completely to recast its plans, since the formations concerned had to be moved long distances by rail instead of short distances from their port of disembarkation on arrival from overseas.

The numbers to be embarked in the first phase between D-day and D+53 amounted to about 182,000 men, 17,700 vehicles and 2,250 animals, as well as some 225,000 tons of stores and petrol. Of these, 97,500 men, 9,200 vehicles, 1,400 animals and 87,000 tons of stores and petrol had to be embarked in convoys due to arrive off the beaches in Malaya at specific times on D-day, D+3 and D+8.<sup>1</sup> To ensure the arrival of these large numbers in complete fighting formations, it was planned to use four widely separated Indian ports (Bombay, Cochin, Madras and Vizagapatam) to which two others (Calcutta and Chittagong) were later added. Furthermore, to allow for the differing speeds of the ships and to make certain that fighting formations and units were at sea for the shortest possible time, a slow and a fast convoy had to sail from each port on varying dates according to the distances to the invasion beaches.<sup>2</sup> This meant that, excluding the D-day, D+3 and D+8 convoys sailing from Rangoon with 5th Division, there had to be four fast and three slow convoys sailing from four Indian ports timed to arrive off the selected Malayan beaches on D-day, five fast and four slow convoys from the same ports to arrive on D+3 and five fast and four slow convoys from six ports to arrive on D+8 day.<sup>3</sup> The sailing of the D-day convoys had also to be integrated with the movement of the naval forces protecting them from enemy air and sea attacks, and with a naval minesweeper convoy sailing from Trincomalee. To complete the build-up in Malaya for the first phase of the operation there had

<sup>1</sup> See Appendix 7.

<sup>2</sup> The longest sea voyage was thirteen days and the shortest nine days; see Appendix 6.

<sup>3</sup> See Appendix 6.

to be further convoys from Indian ports timed to arrive at Port Swettenham and Port Dickson on D+23, D+31, D+44 and D+53.<sup>1</sup>

The need to use four Indian ports initially and six later meant that major formations had to be dispersed throughout India weeks before embarkation. To avoid delays in the embarkation and loading programme, formations embarking at a particular port had to be moved to a concentration area within easy distance of the embarkation marshalling area, usually a transit camp at the port. Since the first stage of waterproofing of a large number of vehicles had to be done in the concentration areas and the distance the vehicles could be run between that stage and their embarkation was limited to some 200 miles, concentration areas had to be at or within that distance of the ports. Vehicles had to be loaded on their ships several days before the units to which they belonged embarked, and thus in most cases it was necessary to move them to the concentration areas some three weeks before their units and then call them forward in batches to the marshalling areas at the ports where their final waterproofing had to be done. The vehicles included in the assault convoys (D-day and D+3) had to be landed at the selected beaches properly loaded with their unit weapons, equipment and stores. Since all this meant that some considerable time before embarking units had to be bereft of most of the essential equipment required for their communication and administrative needs, 2nd and 36th Divisions (which were not taking part in the operation) and 81st (W.A.) Division (awaiting repatriation) were used to provide units awaiting embarkation with essential equipment needed for everyday use and the administrative requirements in the concentration areas and the transit camps at ports.

The organization of concentration areas within 200 miles of each of the four ports being used initially involved the preparation of an entirely new concentration area with the necessary accommodation near Madras, the improvement of existing ones and the enlargement of transit facilities at all four ports. Since the already overburdened Indian railways had thereby to carry an even greater load from July to the end of October, all other movements, such as passenger trains for civilians, for troops on leave and for the repatriation of men under the 'Python' scheme, had to be drastically curtailed.<sup>2</sup>

Since the short range of Spitfire fighter aircraft made it impossible to fly them to Malaya, they were to be embarked on the carriers *Smiter* and *Trumpeter* which had been made available for the purpose.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> It was planned that the D+23 and D+44 convoys would carry the fourth (26th) division of XXXIV Corps in addition to corps and army troops.

<sup>2</sup> The volume of internal movement for the positioning of forces to fit the plan and the shipping involved the movement of 1½ million tons of stores and 800,000 men. In addition some 94,500 tons of stores had to be transferred to depots near the ports, requiring the constant use of 6,700 wagons for several months.

<sup>3</sup> See page 9.

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It had originally been thought that on arrival the aircraft would have to be hoisted on to lighters, put ashore and towed by motor vehicles to the nearest airfield, but it was later found practicable to fly them off the carriers.<sup>1</sup> The longer range aircraft were to fly from Rangoon to the captured airfields, a distance of some 1,050 miles, but the R.A.F. ground staffs and their equipment were to be embarked in the appropriate convoys from D-day onwards. Arrangements were also made for a Rear Airfield Maintenance Organization (R.A.M.O.) to be embarked in the D+3 convoy to open up the Port Swettenham airfield as an air base to support the advance towards Kuala Lumpur and along the inland road to Singapore.<sup>2</sup> A wing of 232 Group R.A.F. was to be flown in as soon as possible to provide an airlift rising eventually to some 300 tons a day.<sup>3</sup>

The timetable and embarkation plan for each port for the D-day, D+3 and D+8 convoys is given in detail in the appendices and these show graphically the complications which had to be and were solved.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> See pages 267 fn. 4 and 269.

<sup>2</sup> See Map 2, facing page 63.

<sup>3</sup> It was hoped to start air supply from D+12. Some aircraft were to be used to spray D.D.T. on areas known to be infested with mosquitoes of the malarial type.

<sup>4</sup> See Appendices 6 and 7.

# CHAPTER IX

## POLITICAL FACTORS AFFECT THE PLAN FOR THE INVASION OF MALAYA (June—August 1945)

*See Map 16*

WITHIN a week of having reluctantly postponed D-day for 'Zipper' until the 9th September,<sup>1</sup> Mountbatten was told on the 6th June by the Secretary of State for War (Sir James Grigg) that there was to be a debate in the House of Commons on the 8th on welfare, leave and 'Python'. Grigg said that in his speech he proposed to say that orders had been given to reduce the qualifying period for 'Python' in the Far East to three years four months,<sup>2</sup> and that men in this range of service would be sent home as shipping and other means of transportation offered without awaiting their replacements. It might, however, be necessary in some individual cases, particularly of officers and specialists, to retain men till their replacements arrived but he hoped that these cases would not be very frequent. He added that his speech was not yet in its final form, but he was sure he could not get away with less even if he wanted to. He offered his apologies for the short notice but the debate had been hurriedly arranged 'no doubt for electioneering purposes.'<sup>3</sup> He said that he realized that the proposed reduction in the qualifying period for 'Python' would cause some inconvenience but he hoped that it would be no more than inconvenience.

Mountbatten replied next day that, far from causing 'some inconvenience,' the Secretary of State's proposals made it probable that D-day for 'Zipper' and 'Mailist' might have to be postponed yet again, unless India Command and S.E.A.C. were authorised to handle the new reduction gradually to fit operational necessity. The same day Auchinleck told Grigg that, because of the lack of internal transportation facilities, he could not possibly despatch the

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<sup>1</sup> See page 65.

<sup>2</sup> The current qualifying period for 'Python' was three years eight months.

<sup>3</sup> On the break-up of the Coalition Government which had been in power since 1942, the Prime Minister, Mr. Churchill, had formed a Conservative Caretaker Government pending a general election. This was to be held on the 26th July.

increased number of men involved and concurrently meet the operational plans of S.E.A.C. He reminded the Secretary of State that he had already told the War Office on the 23rd May that the maximum capacity for moving men out of India was 15,000 for August and 15,000 for September. He could just manage to despatch the 3,800 men already eligible for repatriation in July but the reduction in the qualifying period would involve an additional 33,000. Excluding the unavoidable commitments such as releases and compassionate cases which had to be given priority over 'Python' and which were estimated at 20,000 men over July, August and September, he would now have to move some 63,000 men (excluding the R.A.F.) over these three months to meet the requirements of the adjusted 'Python'. This total of 83,000 men was far beyond the capabilities of the transportation capacity available. He gave these facts, he said, so that the Secretary of State could on the one hand present the absolute truth in the House and on the other hand avoid endless complaints. For his part Leese told the Secretary of State that, owing to the impossibility of withdrawing and replacing large numbers of men within a few months after 'Zipper' had begun and at the same time keeping up the morale and efficiency of units, all men eligible for repatriation up to the 31st December on the current qualification period of three years eight months were already being withdrawn from formations and units taking part in the operation. He estimated that the reduction of the qualifying period by four months would involve another 60,000 men between June 1945 and January 1946 over and above the 23,500 already due for release in the same period. He warned Grigg of the effect the reduction of four months would have on the availability of officers, specialists and particularly Royal Signals, and said that, unless wholesale use were made of the operational necessity clause, the postponement of current operations for some months would be inevitable.

On the 9th June the Air Commander-in-Chief asked the Air Ministry if proportional reductions were to be made in the R.A.F. overseas commands and pointed out that the R.A.F. contribution to 'Zipper' and 'Mailist' would be seriously affected if they were. By the 1st August he would be short of 14,000 men (including many technicians) and this deficiency was going to increase with the cuts already announced in personnel shipping for the rest of the year. The Air Ministry, on the point of agreeing to a reduction in their overseas commands, decided to make no change until S.E.A.C. found it to be practicable.

Despite all the representations which had been made to him, the Secretary of State made no alteration to his speech in the House on the 8th and that evening his announcement on 'Python' was broadcast in S.E.A.C. Since morale was bound to be a delicate problem



now that the war in Europe was over, Mountbatten told the Chiefs of Staff next day that it would be disastrous to make any extensive use of the operational clause or if the promise made by the Secretary of State were to be qualified in any way. He pointed out that S.E.A.C. had so far carried on without any substantial military reinforcements, and had been prepared to carry out 'Zipper' and 'Mailist' without any additional reinforcements. He continued, 'I regret that it is beyond our power to exploit our recent victories if, so far from receiving reinforcements now that the war in Europe is finished, we are instructed to return without relief what will now bring the total to be returned on 'Python' alone before the 1st October to no less than one-third of the British officers and other ranks of this Command and India Command, including the most experienced of these, before 'Zipper' has started. The repercussions on Indian transport, on shipping and on the reorganization of the Army out here are so great that I cannot at present give you even a rough estimate of the further delay which must result in my operations, though I fear it may prove to be very considerable.' On the 14th the Chiefs of Staff replied that they had been advised by the War Office that the new qualifying period for 'Python' should not have the serious effect on 'Zipper' which Mountbatten feared and ought not to lead to its postponement.

On the 15th June, at a meeting with his Commanders-in-Chief, Mountbatten read out a telegram he had received from the Secretary of State asserting that it should be possible to carry out 'Zipper' in spite of 'Python', and that the operational clause should be sufficient to enable any man to be retained. Mountbatten said that the qualifications in Grigg's announcement in the House had not been sufficiently strong to prevent men from expecting that they would be repatriated when they had served three years and four months; if the clause were to be applied (and it would have to be applied on a serious scale) the odium would fall on the commanders in the theatre and they, in consequence, would lose the confidence of their men. It was, therefore, most important that the responsibility for taking any such step should remain with Whitehall. The problem was mainly an administrative and shipping problem for Auchinleck, who had already made it quite clear that it would not be possible to carry out both 'Zipper' and a fully-honoured repatriation.

The effect of the reduction of the qualifying period on the fighting efficiency of 12th and 14th Armies was then examined. It was stated by A.L.F.S.E.A. that six British battalions in 14th Army would have to be replaced by three other British and three Gurkha battalions,<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> For example 7th York and Lancaster Regiment of 123rd Indian Brigade (5th Division) had to be reorganized as a headquarters company, an administrative company and one rifle company, and withdrawn from its brigade and put on garrison duty in Rangoon.

and that 36th Division, which had already been removed from XXXIV Corps and earmarked for the build-up period, would now cease to be an efficient fighting formation and would therefore have to be withdrawn from the order of battle, thus reducing the formations available for 'Zipper' from seven to six divisions. It would be necessary to 'milk' both fighting formations and administrative units in Burma so heavily that operations there would be affected and the build-up of the Rangoon base ('Stanza') slowed down. The commanders of divisions allotted to 'Zipper' would have little time to assimilate the large replacements resulting from 'Python' and would have to go into battle with untried and largely unknown troops. The XXXIV Corps would have its medium artillery support reduced from four to two regiments and 14th Army would be without medium artillery other than that with XXXIV Corps. There would be a shortage of engineers in 14th Army which would result in considerable delay both in exploitation northwards and in the advance to, and development of, Singapore. The Signal Corps would be about a third below strength; to meet the minimum requirements for 'Zipper' all British other ranks would have to be withdrawn from 17th and 19th Divisional signal companies in Burma as well as some from IV Corps signals, and the balance made up from 2nd and 36th British Divisions now left out of the order of battle. Even then the L. of C. signals for 'Zipper' would have to be reduced from three to two units. The supply and transport organization would be weakened and there would be a deficiency of some three D.U.K.W. companies, R.A.S.C. for the assault and one tank transporter company.

The Chief of the General Staff, India (Lieut.-General Sir John Swayne) pointed out that, after allowing for the internal movement entailed in positioning and mounting the forces for 'Zipper' and 'Mailist', the maximum flow of personnel in and out of India with which the transportation system could cope during the period of mounting these operations would be 15,000 each way. This number was more than fully taken up by leave, releases and repatriations under the old 'Python' period; there was thus no prospect of moving the additional officers and other ranks who would be withdrawn from their formations before 'Zipper', and these would have to remain in India for several months before they could be sent home. During this period they would be without parent units and proper administrative staffs, and there would be small parties of men of all arms and services scattered all over India and Burma who could not be moved because of the dearth of transport and accommodation in transit camps. The morale of men remaining in such a position for an indefinite period, and nursing a sense of grievance that promises made to them about a reduced term of service had been broken, would be adversely affected, and this might create a highly dangerous

and possibly an unmanageable state of affairs. India Command would be hit even harder than A.L.F.S.E.A. by the further reduction in 'Python', since it had a higher proportion of older and unfit men who were naturally in higher release groups and thus due for early repatriation. This would mean a reduction in staffs and supervisory personnel and a consequent adverse effect on the efficiency of India as a base. Furthermore, he added, in addition to having a great number of disappointed and unemployed men on its hands, India Command might quite possibly be faced with internal security difficulties arising from the unsettled political state of India.

Summing up, Mountbatten said that the issue was clear cut: 'Zipper'/'Mailfist' and repatriation under the new 'Python' could not be carried out simultaneously. Either the operational clause could be applied wholesale and 'Zipper' go on as planned, but this course was agreed to be highly inadvisable from the point of view of morale of the forces taking part, or men due for repatriation before the end of 1945 could be taken out of 'Zipper'/'Mailfist' and remain in India and Burma until such time as internal transport and shipping became available to move them, a course which had disadvantages, for it would have serious effects both on the efficiency of the troops taking part in 'Zipper' and on India Command. The only other alternative was to postpone 'Zipper' indefinitely and carry out repatriation as promised by the Secretary of State. It was a matter for the Chiefs of Staff to decide.

The next day (16th) Mountbatten told the Chiefs of Staff that any delay in launching 'Zipper' would give the Japanese the opportunity of increasing their build-up and of improving their local defences, particularly at Singapore. Since it had never entered the minds of the troops that it might not be possible to implement in 1945 what they regarded as a firm promise by the Secretary of State, it was absolutely essential, if 'Zipper' were to be carried out, that the position should be made clear by a public announcement from London. On the advice of Leese who considered that, since a golden opportunity of capturing Singapore would be lost by its postponement, the operation should be carried out despite the loss of efficiency entailed by the new 'Python', Mountbatten gave orders that same day that the Joint Force Commanders were to continue their planning on the assumption that 'Zipper' would be launched on the 9th September. On the 23rd June, two days before the Force Commanders submitted their plan,<sup>1</sup> he held a conference at Delhi for a final discussion on the effects of 'Python'. He said that he proposed to carry out 'Zipper' on the 9th September, but would first withdraw from units taking part all men due for repatriation

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<sup>1</sup> See Chapter VII.

before the end of the year. He would, however, have to ask Auchinleck to accept responsibility for holding 'Python' personnel removed from operational formations indefinitely unless ways and means could be found of moving them on. Auchinleck agreed to accept the responsibility subject to an announcement being made in the United Kingdom.

The next day Mountbatten again told the Chiefs of Staff of the alternatives which lay before S.E.A.C. with regard to 'Zipper', and said that neither he nor Auchinleck was prepared to assume the responsibility of invoking the operational clause on a large scale. If 'Zipper' were to be launched in 1945 the only course was to withdraw all men due for repatriation by the end of the year and launch the operation despite the considerable reduction in the fighting efficiency of formations and the loss of at least one division. If this alternative were adopted a statement would have to be made in London as soon as possible explaining that, because of operational implications, there were insufficient transport facilities in India to allow any man with less than about three years eight months of service to be repatriated before November or December, although every effort would be made to improve on this.

The Chiefs of Staff replied on the 2nd July that the Secretary of State was prepared to make a suitable statement provided that it could be shown that no man would be excessively delayed. Since information in London indicated that it should be possible to avoid excessive delay, measures to this end would be discussed between the War Office and Auchinleck and the announcement made in about ten days. Mountbatten should therefore carry out 'Zipper' on the 9th September, first removing all men who would have more than three years four months service before the end of the year. The operational position was now clear: 'Zipper' was to be launched with a weakened force of six divisions on the agreed date, regardless of the risk of failure should the opposition prove greater than estimated.

This decision did not, however, end the wrangle for the Secretary of State could not agree to make any announcement until he was satisfied that men would not be held back for more than one month beyond their 'Python' date and that the backlog would be cleared by the end of the year, for he considered any delay beyond this excessive. Mountbatten and Auchinleck, with all the facts and figures regarding transportation facilities at their disposal, realized that the Secretary of State's conditions were physically impossible to meet. Mountbatten therefore proposed that he and Auchinleck should make their own announcement if the Secretary of State were still unwilling to do so.

On the 21st July the War Office told Auchinleck that, on the facts he had sent them, he would probably be able to clear all the men

covered by the new 'Python' period by the end of the year, especially if he were able to make full use of the additional airlift which they now offered him. Since the most serious difficulty lay in India's inability to clear the deficit arising in July, August and September from limited transportation facilities during these months, they considered that leave should be reduced during August and September and the repatriation of 81st (W.A.) Division cancelled till the 'Python' deficit had been cleared.

Realizing that the War Office had failed to grasp some of the many problems involved, Auchinleck replied direct to the C.I.G.S. He pointed out that the early return of 'Python' personnel was only one of several urgent issues involved in the problem of maintaining efficiency and morale in India. One such issue was leave for and repatriation of Indian troops serving in the Mediterranean and Middle East, whose position compared most unfavourably with that of British troops in India. Apart from the adverse effect on Indian public opinion, which was highly sensitive in this matter, he could not in equity agree to expedite the turnover of British troops to the complete exclusion of the Indian soldier. He had therefore to press for a fair share of the transportation capacity to meet the needs of Indian troops. The 81st (W.A.) Division had been unemployed for four months and knew it was not needed for further operations. Even under existing plans 23,000 Africans would still be in India at the end of the year, and he was concerned not only at the burden on India's strained economy of feeding these 'useless mouths' well into 1946, but also at the possibility of indiscipline and clashes with the civil population which would become doubly serious in the event of unrest arising from the uncertain political situation in the country. In such circumstances African troops would most certainly be a serious embarrassment, since they could not be used in aid of civil power or on the North West Frontier. From every aspect therefore their repatriation should be accelerated, not retarded. 'I must ask', he continued, 'that no further pressure be put on me to reduce the leave quota for British personnel to U.K. Many of these involved are volunteers for further service in the East after twenty-eight days' leave. [The] same applies to arbitrary restrictions on movement of leave personnel, British and Indian, in this country itself. Such movement [has already been] reduced to essential minimum necessary in my opinion to sustain morale and efficiency.'

He went on to emphasize that Mountbatten and he had done all they could to meet the C.I.G.S.'s wishes and to honour the Secretary of State's promises and, in doing so, had accepted consequences and risks which they would not ordinarily have accepted. Their main trouble was not the provision of ships or air accommodation but the lack of capacity for rail movement in India over immense distances

and the collection of men at suitable places for onward despatch by sea and air. For the next few months the internal movement capacity would be stretched to the utmost and,<sup>1</sup> in fact, it already exceeded the theoretical maximum. The C.I.G.S. could rest assured that everything would be done to improve 'Python' as opportunity offered but he (Auchinleck) must be left to carry out his instructions so that all conflicting factors were balanced as fairly as possible. It was vital that nothing was done which would jeopardize the internal stability of India and thus its value as a base, or to lessen the existing high morale of the Indian armed forces. The C.I.G.S. replied that he fully understood and appreciated the efforts made by Auchinleck and recognised that he must now be left to implement 'Python' at his discretion. There was always the possibility, however, that increased pressure to hasten releases might complicate the problem.

The Secretary of State refused to make an announcement on 'Python', but agreed to one being made jointly by Mountbatten and Auchinleck provided it contained nothing which he might, under pressure, be forced publicly to contradict or qualify. On the 8th August an Order of the Day was issued to all British troops in S.E.A.C. It read:

'The Secretary of State for War made a statement in Parliament on 8th June saying that orders were being given to reduce the period for repatriation from 3 years 8 months to 3 years 4 months in the Far East. He qualified this statement by stating that men in this range of service would be sent home as shipping and other means of transportation afforded without waiting for their replacements even in those areas where forces were being built up rather than reduced. He also made it clear that it might be necessary in some individual cases, particularly of officers and specialists, to keep men back until their replacements arrived but he hoped these cases would not be very frequent.

In order to implement the announcement by the S. of S. for War in the House of Commons on the 8th June and in order that every advantage can be taken of the transport that may become available I have decided to withdraw from formations which are to undertake certain operations this year all of you who would complete 3 years 4 months by the end of 1945 with the exception of some of you in those categories of officers and specialists and key men referred to by S. of S. This has already been started and those of you thus released will wait transportation home.

I have consulted with the C. in C. India, General Auchinleck, and it is obvious to us both that, unless we are to abandon our future operations, the railway and port capacity available in India will not allow us to send home more than a limited number of men with less than 3 years 8 months service until November or December of this year, after which however the situation should steadily improve.

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<sup>1</sup> See pages 79-81.

We both regret that circumstances outside our control will delay the return of men with less than 3 years 8 months service before the end of the year. I feel I must warn you of the delay which may prevent your early return rather than allow you to entertain false hopes. I wish to emphasize that the issue before us is clear and that there are no alternatives. Either we can continue aggressive operations that will hasten the end of the war against Japan or we can devote the whole of our transportation facilities to sending you home immediately your 3 years 4 months service is completed. Unfortunately it is not possible to do both. I am confident that those of you who are due for the reduced repatriation will be patient a little longer now that the circumstances have been explained to you.

I do not expect that there will be delay in sending home the large number of officers and men as they become due for release under the Release Scheme'.

The long-drawn out arguments over 'Python' did not delay preparations for 'Zipper', and by the 10th August all the formations of XXXIV Corps which were to be mounted from Bombay, Cochin, Madras and Vizagapatam had arrived in their concentration areas.<sup>1</sup> In addition to the four divisions allotted to XXXIV Corps (5th, 23rd, 25th and 26th), only two divisions and a tank brigade from Burma (7th and 20th Divisions and 255th Brigade) were now earmarked for the build-up and were to embark from Rangoon in October.

Planning for 'Zipper' had been based on a total of seven divisions, giving a superiority of more than the 3 to 1 which experience had shown was necessary when attacking fresh, efficient and full-strength Japanese formations. By the beginning of August the superiority no longer applied for not only had the Allied forces been reduced by the new 'Python' qualifying period to six divisions of lowered fighting value, but reports also indicated that Japanese forces in Malaya (excluding *I.N.A.*) had increased from the earlier estimate of some 52,000 men to about 86,000 and that they intended to hold on to Singapore. On the 7th August therefore Christison (officiating Commander-in-Chief *A.L.F.S.E.A.*) advocated that two more divisions should be added to the 'Zipper' build-up in late November and December, since he thought it would be wise to plan for the worst case. He also pointed out that Malaya, unlike central Burma, was not very suitable for the employment of armour so that 14th Army's preponderance in that direction was not as great as appeared on paper.

On the 9th India Command was asked if 44th Indian and 6th British Airborne Divisions or perhaps 8th Indian Division (which

<sup>1</sup> See Map 16, facing page 600 and Appendix 6.

had arrived from Italy in July) could be got ready in time. It was evident that none of them could be, for 44th Indian Airborne Division's date of readiness was the 20th February 1946, 6th British Airborne Division was not due to be complete in India until December 1945 and the men of 8th Indian Division had had to be given leave. Auchinleck therefore suggested that the best method of finding a division quickly would be to relieve either 17th or 19th Division in Burma by 11th (E.A.) Division from India. There the matter rested until the Japanese surrender three days later solved the problem.

On the 8th August Mountbatten, who was in London,<sup>1</sup> told the Defence Committee that the situation in S.E.A.C. had deteriorated since 'Zipper' had been planned, for the Japanese had built up their forces in Malaya while the Allies had suffered from the increased withdrawal of troops because of the shortening of the qualifying period for 'Python'. The 'Zipper' forces were therefore likely to have a superiority of only 8 to 5 over the enemy, and there was a likelihood that, after the establishment of the bridgehead, the advance would be held up until the build-up was completed. He also expressed his apprehension that the Japanese might use *Kamikaze* aircraft against the 'Zipper' assault force shipping,<sup>2</sup> which would have to depend on carrier-based air support. He therefore once again asked to be reinforced with some light fleet carriers from the British Pacific Fleet, but this final effort on his part to get the light fleet carriers was no more successful than his previous one,<sup>3</sup> the Admiralty refusing once again on the grounds that there would not be time to get them to S.E.A.C. to support the 'Zipper' landings and sail them back again to take part in the invasion of Kyushu.

On the 12th August Roberts (XXXIV Corps) reported that, despite the withdrawals as a result of 'Python', his force would be able to sail sufficiently complete to undertake its task, although its training was considerably below the standard accepted for troops undertaking operations of the type envisaged, particularly where junior officers were concerned and in the training of the different arms in co-operation. There was, however, the advantage that a high proportion of the troops had had battle experience. There would be some deficiencies both in officers and men, particularly in signal units, and in equipment and vehicles. The effect of this would be to slow up operations and to decrease the efficiency of the force as a complete fighting entity.

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<sup>1</sup> See Chapter XXI.

<sup>2</sup> *Kamikaze* aircraft had made their first appearance in S.E.A.C. in July; see page 60.

<sup>3</sup> See page 8.



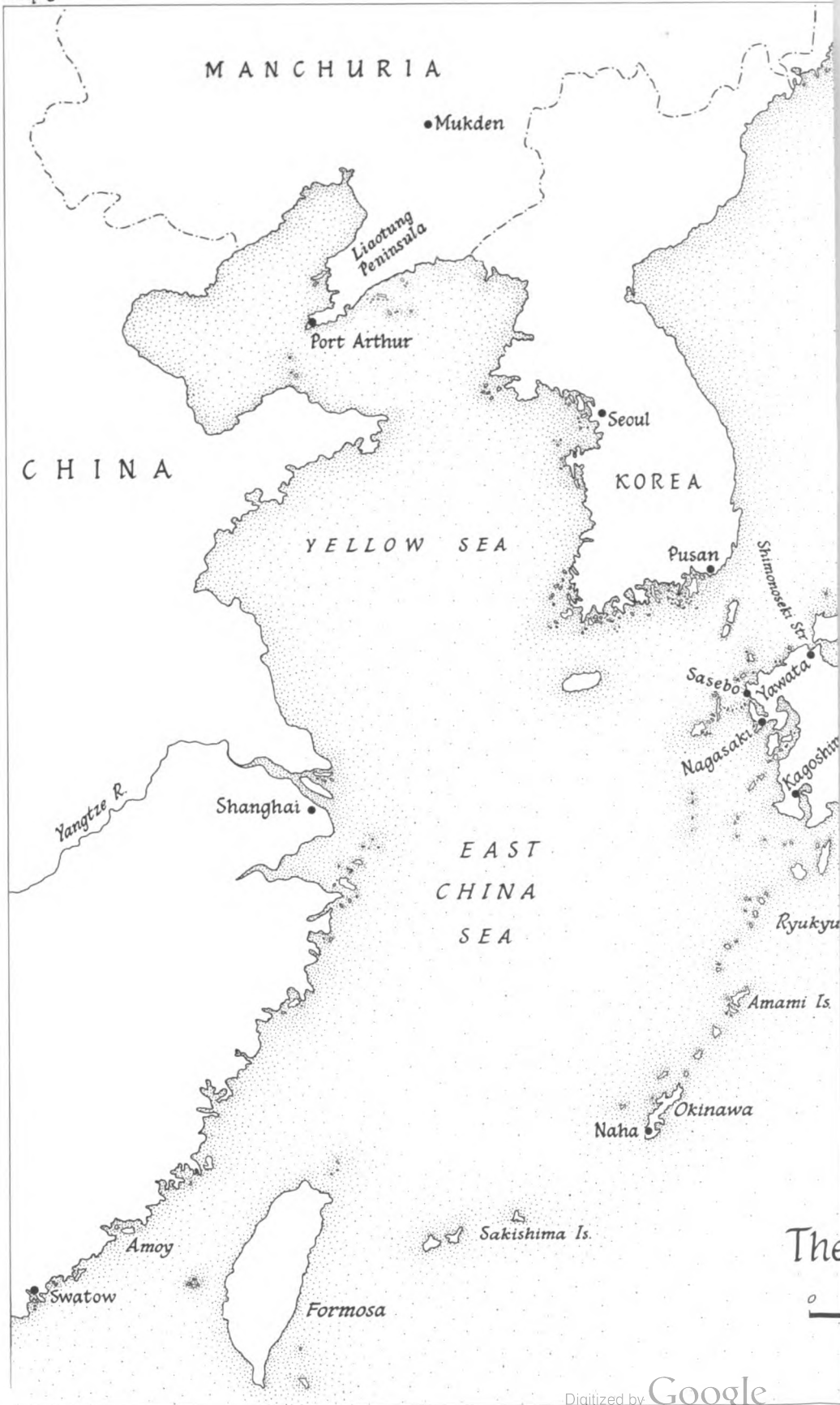
## **PART 2**

### **The Pacific Theatre (March—August 1945) and the Conclusion of Hostilities**





Map 3



## CHAPTER X

# JAPAN'S MILITARY AND ECONOMIC SITUATION

(March 1945)

*See Map 3 and Sketch 11*

WITH the Americans in virtual control of the Philippines, Japanese merchant shipping and naval losses reaching huge proportions and the Southern Region practically cut off, *Imperial General Headquarters* had been forced in January 1945 to reconsider their strategy. They came to the conclusion that the Americans, anxious to bring the war to an early end, would continue their Pacific offensive either by way of China to the Ryukyu Islands or by way of Formosa to the Bonin and the Ryukyu Islands,<sup>1</sup> which would give them forward bases for an invasion of Japan with the least loss of time. They therefore decided to prepare Japan to withstand a very heavy scale of air attack followed by invasion, and to hold to the last the vital outposts of Formosa, Iwojima and Okinawa as well as the Sakishima group of islands in the Ryukyus. At the same time they ordered *Southern Army*, now virtually cut off from Japan, to make itself self-sufficient as far as possible and to hold the strategic areas in the Southern Region comprising Malaya, Siam, Indo-China and the Netherlands East Indies, and also ordered *China Expeditionary Force* to ensure that American forces could not gain a footing on the China coast and thereby obtain advanced bases from which they could attack Japan.

In pursuance of this policy *Imperial General Headquarters* re-organized the defences of Japan early in February. The *Kwantung Army* in Manchuria was ordered to send one division (71st) to Formosa and to raise eight new divisions (121st-128th), thus bringing its strength up to eighteen divisions (seventeen infantry and one armoured). The *Korea Army* was redesignated 17th Area Army and ordered to raise two new divisions (79th and 96th). To co-ordinate the defences of the Ryukyu Islands and Formosa 10th Area Army, which had been formed in September 1944, was to take command of 32nd Army (24th, 28th and 62nd Divisions) in the Ryukyus, and the newly-formed 40th Army in Formosa (12th, 50th and 66th Divisions

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<sup>1</sup> See Map 3, facing page 95.

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reinforced by *9th Division* from Okinawa and *71st Division* from Manchuria). In Japan itself six new area armies were formed: the *5th* responsible for Hokkaido, Sakhalin and the Kurile Islands, the *11th*, *12th*, *13th* and *15th* for Honshu and the *16th* for Kyushu.<sup>1</sup> Forty-two new divisions (eighteen in February and March, eight in May and sixteen in June) as well as twenty independent mixed brigades and the necessary ancillary units were to be raised to augment those already in Japan.<sup>2</sup>

*Imperial General Headquarters* also decided to reorganize and strengthen the air defences of Japan and of the approaches and to co-ordinate more closely the efforts of army and naval air units. They had entrusted the air defence of Japan to *10th*, *11th* and *12th Air Divisions* of *1st Air Army* (which, for operations, were placed under the command of *12th*, *15th* and *16th Area Armies* respectively), and to the *Naval Home Defence Force*.<sup>3</sup> To meet and repulse the expected Allied advance in the East China Sea they began preparations (to be completed by the end of March) for an air operation ('Ten-Go') designed to destroy approaching enemy convoys and escorting task forces. The forces allotted to 'Ten-Go' were to be *6th Air Army* and *3rd*, *5th* and *10th Air Fleets* operating from Japan, *8th Air Division* and *1st Air Fleet* operating from Formosa, and *3rd Air Army* operating from Indo-China. The Army and Navy agreed that by the end of March there should be 605 aircraft for home defence and 4,641 aircraft for defence of the approaches; by the end of April a further 1,300 would be available which, with 350 allotted to escort duties, would make a total of 6,896.<sup>4</sup> In view of the dearth of trained pilots and the difficulty of training others in the time available as well as the shortage of aircraft with a performance sufficient to enable them to meet Allied aircraft on equal terms, it was decided to rely largely on mass *Kamikaze* tactics, including the whole of *10th Air Fleet* which was to be used in no other way. About two-thirds of the aircraft allotted to the defence of the approaches, which involved attacks on shipping, were therefore to be *Kamikaze* aircraft. The Japanese hoped that, by employing this type of attack, sufficient damage could be done to the Allied armadas to force them to turn back. The main targets for the naval air units allotted to the defence of the approaches were to be Allied task forces and those for the army air units were to be transport vessels, but the two Services were to co-operate and assist each other.

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<sup>1</sup> See Sketch 11, facing page 180.

<sup>2</sup> See Volume IV, Chapter XX. The number of divisions to be raised in June was later increased to nineteen.

<sup>3</sup> See Volume IV, page 232.

<sup>4</sup> For the strength of the aircraft to be available at the end of March 1945 see Appendix 8 and for the actual strength of *10th*, *11th* and *12th Air Divisions* on the 31st March see Appendix 9.

## JAPAN REORGANIZES TO RESIST INVASION 97

In March when the loss of Iwojima increased the danger of invasion,<sup>1</sup> *Imperial General Headquarters*, whose serious consideration of home defence had begun in December 1944, took further measures to prepare for the defence of Japan (operation 'Ketsu-Go'). On the 15th they decided to recall from Manchuria the four remaining first-line divisions of *Kwantung Army* and three of the best-trained of its newly-formed divisions. Orders were issued for *25th* and *1st Armoured Divisions* to be sent to Japan immediately, to be followed at the end of March by *11th* and *57th Divisions* (the remainder of the first-line divisions). The *111th*, *120th* and *121st Divisions* were at the same time to move to Korea, but *79th Division* was to move from Korea to Manchuria; these moves left *Kwantung Army* with twelve divisions,<sup>2</sup> of which only four had been in existence for any time, for the defence of Manchuria. Without any armour, it could not therefore be expected to offer much resistance should Soviet Russia decide to attack Manchuria. In Korea three more new divisions (*150th*, *160th* and *320th*) were raised, bringing the strength of *17th Area Army* to seven divisions.<sup>3</sup>

*Imperial General Headquarters* then undertook the reorganization of the higher command structure in Japan, since it was evident that one headquarters could not undertake the task of defending the whole country. *Headquarters General Defence Command* was abolished and the country was divided into two defence areas under the overall command of the Army Section of *Imperial General Headquarters*: *First (East) General Army* (Field-Marshal G. Sugiyama) with headquarters at Tokyo, responsible for *11th*, *12th* and *13th Area Armies*, and *Second (West) General Army* (Field-Marshal S. Hata) with headquarters at Hiroshima, responsible for *15th* and *16th Area Armies*.<sup>4</sup> At the same time a new *Air General Army* was formed under General M. Kawabe (who had been in command of *Burma Area Army* from March 1943 to August 1944)<sup>5</sup> to take *1st* and *6th Air Armies* in Japan and *2nd Air Army* in Manchuria under command.<sup>6</sup> This new organization was to take effect from the 15th April.

Japanese industry had reached its peak output of aircraft, ships, and munitions of war about mid-1944, but this had been achieved by using the stockpiles of raw materials and fuel oil amassed between 1937 and 1941. Shipping losses, which had steadily risen throughout

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<sup>1</sup> See Volume IV, Chapter XX.

<sup>2</sup> The *79th*, *107th*, *108th*, *112th*, *119th* and *122nd-128th*.

<sup>3</sup> The *96th*, *111th*, *120th*, *121st*, *150th*, *160th* and *320th*.

<sup>4</sup> See Sketch 11, facing page 180.

<sup>5</sup> See Volumes II, III and IV.

<sup>6</sup> For the dispositions of Japanese formations in mid-June after these reorganizations had been completed and the new divisions formed see Appendix 10.

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1943 and 1944 and could not be made good by new construction, had so drastically reduced the flow of imports of such vital items as oil, iron and other metal ores, coking coal and bauxite that by March 1945 Japan's industrial output had fallen far below the minimum necessary to maintain the national economy as well as the armed forces, and her ability to wage war had been seriously diminished. Output of steel, which was 7.8 million tons in 1944, had fallen to an average of about 1 million tons a year. The production of aircraft had fallen by a third and that of aircraft engines by nearly two-thirds from the peaks reached in 1944. Imports of oil had ceased altogether at the end of 1944 and stocks, which had been about 43 million barrels in December 1941, had fallen to under 4 million barrels by mid-March 1945. It was estimated that on the 1st April there was only sufficient motor fuel to last until the end of June and that aircraft fuel, even if used with care, would be exhausted by September. Since the motor industry had been starved of steel and fuel, the number of lorries, cars and buses operating in Japan had been reduced by March 1945 to about a quarter of the pre-war figures, and output of new vehicles had fallen to 18 per cent of the 1941 peak production.<sup>1</sup>

The prospect of maintaining the supply of essential foodstuffs was also extremely gloomy. It was estimated that the rice crop in 1945 would be considerably smaller than in 1944 and, as there was now no longer any possibility of importing rice, that the deficit would have to be made up by importing grain from Manchuria. The food shortage in the homeland was intensified by the rapid increase in military requirements, the annual estimate of rice or grain for the armed forces in 1945 being 25 as against 15 million bushels in 1944. The supply of another essential commodity – salt – was expected to be some 350,000 tons less in 1945 than in the previous year.

By 1944 some 87 per cent of the adult male population of Japan not already in the armed forces had been drafted into the food and munition industries. Nearly half of these were reservists whom the army now proposed to call up in order to form the new divisions and technical units required for home defence, in spite of the effect such action would have on the output of essential war industries. A very large proportion of the already inadequate civil transport had to be requisitioned for the new formations,<sup>2</sup> and the very serious effect this had on the civilian economy was made worse by the need to move

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<sup>1</sup> For fuller details of Japan's economic plight see Appendix 11.

<sup>2</sup> The line of communication units required to maintain the new formations alone required some 12,000 motor vehicles, 470,000 horses and 70,000 carts. Since new motor vehicles could not be obtained, the 12,000 had to be requisitioned from the remaining civilian-owned vehicles (most of which had been converted from petrol to charcoal burners), of which there were only some 30,000–40,000 left. The horses had also to be found by requisitioning a seventh of the total number in the country. The carts were found partly by new manufacture, but two-sevenths of the number had to be requisitioned.



factories away from the urban areas, which were made unusable by heavy air attacks, and therefore away from the railways, thus enhancing the demand for road transport for distribution. The situation therefore became a vicious circle for, if Japan were to be defended against invasion, new military and air formations were essential, but the more that were raised the more quickly would industry collapse and civilian morale be lowered until a point would be reached when the Services would become less well equipped and less mobile, and the will on the part of the Japanese people to fight on would be diminished.

As the strategic situation deteriorated the traditional rivalry between the Japanese Army and Navy tended to grow more, rather than less, intense. Both Services had an equal share in the defence budget, and each continued to buy up dwindling civilian supplies in competition, regardless of the price paid. This pressure of demand on inadequate supplies led to inflation, which made the imposition of price controls and rationing necessary and this, in turn, led to the growth of a black market. Officers and men of both Services, who swarmed in the towns and villages as the mobilization of new formations proceeded, were ruthless in their behaviour towards the civilian population, maintaining they had the right to demand priority in the allocation of consumer goods. This led to friction between civilians and the armed forces which, coupled with the worsening military situation, increasing air raids and the general shortage of food, clothing and housing, began to produce a distrust of the armed forces and a feeling of war weariness. So serious had the internal situation become that in February 1945 Prince Konoye (an ex-Premier and Elder Statesman) informed the Emperor that the situation in Japan was in every way favourable for a Communist revolution, and advised that Japan should try to end the war as soon as possible.



# CHAPTER XI

## THE STRATEGIC BOMBING OF JAPAN PRELIMINARY TO THE OKINAWA CAMPAIGN (March 1945)

*See Maps 3, 15 and 16*

THE pattern of the closing stages of the war in the Pacific theatre had been determined by the directive issued by the American Chiefs of Staff on the 3rd October 1944, whereby General D. MacArthur, having secured Leyte, was to invade Luzon in the Philippines, and thereafter support operations undertaken by Admiral C. W. Nimitz in the Ryukyu Islands, while the strategic bombing of Japan by the long-range B.29 (Superfortress) bombers operating from the Marianas was to be stepped up. Nimitz was to seize an island in the Bonins and one in the Ryukyus early in 1945, the former to provide emergency landing facilities for the B.29 bombers and a base for fighters to escort the bombers attacking Japan, and the latter to provide an advanced naval and air base for the forces required for the invasion of Japan which was contemplated for the autumn of 1945.<sup>1</sup>

MacArthur invaded Luzon in January 1945 and by early March had completed the occupation of Manila.<sup>2</sup> Nimitz invaded Iwojima in the Bonin Islands in the middle of February and all resistance ceased before the end of March.<sup>3</sup> As his next objective he planned to invade Okinawa in the Ryukyus on the 1st April.

In June 1944 the American 20th Bomber Command, which was based on India, had begun to attack industrial targets in Manchuria and Japan from its forward airfields in the vicinity of Chengtu in China,<sup>4</sup> but the difficulties involved in lifting stocks of aviation petrol,

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<sup>1</sup> See Volume IV, pages 68–69 and Map 16, facing page 600.

<sup>2</sup> See Volume IV, Chapter VIII.

<sup>3</sup> See Map 3, facing page 95 and Volume IV, Chapter XXI.

<sup>4</sup> See Volume III, page 393 and Volume IV, pages 131–2. For Chengtu see Map 15, facing page 546.

bombs and ammunition from India to China resulted in its attacks being infrequent. Furthermore the B.29s at the limit of their range could only reach Kyushu, the southernmost island of Japan. It was apparent that some of the islands in the Pacific would provide more suitable bases for long-range bombers, in particular the Mariana Islands which were only some 1,200 miles from Tokyo and from where all important industrial areas throughout Japan would be within range. As soon as these islands were captured in June 1944 work therefore began on developing them as a large air base.<sup>1</sup> Advanced Headquarters 21st Bomber Command moved from the United States to Saipan in August. As airfields became available 73rd Wing flew into Saipan in October, followed by 313th Wing to Tinian in December 1944 and 314th Wing to Guam in January 1945.<sup>2</sup>

On the 10th October 1944 General H. H. Arnold (Commanding General U.S.A.A.F.) directed 21st Bomber Command to concentrate on the destruction of the Japanese aircraft industry by daylight high altitude bombing with 500-lb. high explosive bombs. Aircraft factories in the Tokyo-Yokohama area and around Nagoya, Kobe and Osaka were selected as the main targets. On the 24th November a force of some 110 B.29s made the first attack on Tokyo since the Doolittle carrier-borne raid of April 1942.<sup>3</sup> The target area was partly obscured by cloud layers and the bombing was not accurate. Attacks were made against each of the specified areas in gradually increasing strength at intervals during December 1944 but by the end of the year it had become obvious that the attempt to destroy the Japanese aircraft industry by high altitude bombing was unsuccessful since, of the nine most important factories attacked, only one near Kobe had been put out of action.<sup>4</sup>

Major-General C. E. LeMay, who had assumed command of 21st Bomber Command on the 19th January 1945,<sup>5</sup> was strongly in favour of taking advantage of the fact that wooden buildings in congested industrial areas were particularly vulnerable to attack by incendiary bombs. A trial raid was made on the 4th February when some 70 B.29s dropped 160 tons of incendiaries on the centre of Kobe. Air photographs taken next day showed that a tenth of a square mile of the target area, which included several factories, was burnt out. This was encouraging, but a more conclusive raid was made against Tokyo on the 25th when 172 B.29s dropped nearly

<sup>1</sup> See Volume III, page 438.

<sup>2</sup> See Volume IV, page 89. Each wing was equipped with 112 first-line B.29 aircraft. This number was to be increased as aircraft became available to 192 aircraft.

<sup>3</sup> See Volume II, page 225.

<sup>4</sup> See Volume IV, pages 90-91.

<sup>5</sup> LeMay had previously been in command of 20th Bomber Command in S.E.A.C.

450 tons of incendiary bombs in daylight and about a square mile of the target area was devastated.<sup>1</sup> The American Chiefs of Staff considered the results warranted a change of bombing policy and decided that, while priority was still to be given to attacks on aircraft engine factories, incendiary raids on the largest scale possible were to be made on selected urban industrial areas throughout Japan.

Before this change of policy could be put into effect Nimitz asked 21st Bomber Command on the 7th March to take part in the pre-Okinawa campaign by launching strikes against Honshu, the main island of Japan, at the maximum possible strength from the 9th to the 21st. Since the experimental incendiary bomb raids in February had proved so successful, LeMay decided to continue with this new type of attack. He realized that, if the necessary accuracy with incendiary bombs were to be obtained, the B.29s would have to drop their loads at heights between 5,000 and 10,000 feet. To have attacked at this altitude by day would have been highly dangerous, but at night there would be many advantages: the weather was often better and cloud cover usually less, the Japanese were known to have few night fighters, the low altitude would enable the bomb loads carried to be increased and the change in tactics would introduce an element of surprise. Moreover, on the return flight damaged aircraft would meet the dawn near Iwojima which would make it easier for them to land or ditch. The lower altitude would, however, give the defending anti-aircraft guns, aided by searchlights, the chance of obtaining more hits but, as Japanese anti-aircraft fire had proved in general to be inaccurate, this risk was acceptable. Since formation flying by night was not practicable, pathfinder aircraft with selected crews had to be sent on ahead to indicate targets with marker bombs followed by single aircraft in a steady stream at intervals of a few minutes.

The target selected for the first raid was a densely populated area of Tokyo of some twelve square miles, which included several factories and bordered the most important industrial section of the city. All three wings were used and a total of 334 B.29s took off on the night of the 9th/10th March and, coming in between 5,000 and 9,000 feet, dropped some 1,700 tons of oil incendiaries in three hours.<sup>2</sup> Fanned by a stiffening breeze, fires quickly spread into a vast conflagration. Fourteen B.29s were lost and forty-two damaged, all by anti-aircraft fire, since the few defending fighters which engaged proved completely ineffective. Aerial photographs taken next day showed that some sixteen square miles (including about a tenth of

<sup>1</sup> Post-war investigations showed that in the first of these two raids about 1,000 and in the second about 28,000 buildings had been destroyed.

<sup>2</sup> To save weight the B.29s flew without ammunition for their defensive armament.

the industrial area) had been burned out.<sup>1</sup> Japanese morale was profoundly affected and an official Japanese report written on the raid said:—'People were unable to escape. They were found later piled upon the bridges, roads and in the canals. 80,000 dead . . . We were instructed to report on actual conditions. Most of us were unable to do this because of horrifying conditions beyond imagination.'

The second attack was launched on the night of the 11th/12th by 313 aircraft against Nagoya, the centre of the Japanese aircraft industry. Of these, 285 reached their target and dropped some 1,800 tons of incendiaries. The results were not so striking as at Tokyo for aircraft of two of the three wings used dropped their loads short of the target and, as there was little wind to fan the fires, there was no general conflagration. Aerial photographs showed only some two square miles destroyed made up of many areas throughout the city. One aircraft was lost accidentally on taking off, twenty-seven failed to find the target and of those that did twenty were damaged (eighteen by anti-aircraft fire and two by defending fighters).

The third attack was made on the night of the 13th/14th by 274 B.29s against Osaka. Despite almost complete cloud cover, they dropped 1,644 tons of bombs on the commercial and industrial parts of the city, which included many large factories. Flames spread rapidly and eight square miles of the city were completely burned out.<sup>2</sup> Two B.29s were lost (one on take-off) and thirteen were damaged, all by anti-aircraft fire.

The fourth attack, the heaviest and most concentrated yet, was made on the night of the 16th/17th against Kobe. Since stocks of the oil incendiary bombs used in the previous three raids were now low, 307 B.29s attacked the business and industrial areas, including ship-building yards, dropping 2,355 tons of mixed oil and thermite bombs in two hours. Three aircraft were lost. Although only one-fifth of the city (about three square miles) was burned out, the area included the eastern half of the business quarter and the industrial area in the south-east as well as shipyards engaged in building large submarines.<sup>3</sup>

The fifth and last raid of the pre-Okinawa series was made on the night of the 19th/20th against Nagoya. It followed the same pattern as the previous attack, with the exception that each third aircraft of the 290 used carried two 500-lb. high explosive bombs with the object

<sup>1</sup> Post-war investigations showed that some 267,000 buildings (about a quarter of the city) were destroyed and one million persons rendered homeless. Of the 124,711 casualties about 84,000 were killed.

<sup>2</sup> Japanese post-war records showed that 135,000 houses were destroyed and that there were 13,000 casualties. 119 factories were completely destroyed.

<sup>3</sup> Japanese post-war records showed that in this attack 242,000 persons were rendered homeless, 2,669 killed and 11,289 injured, while 65,951 houses and 500 industrial buildings were destroyed.

of disrupting the fire-fighting and civil defence organizations. A further three square miles of the city were burned out and many important individual targets damaged, such as the freight yards, an aircraft engine factory and the arsenal.

The 21st Bomber Command had in eleven days flown 1,595 sorties and dropped over 9,000 tons of incendiary bombs. Thirty-two square miles in four of the key cities in Japan had been laid waste and many important industrial targets destroyed. Although the bombers with few exceptions were without ammunition for their defensive armament, their losses amounted to only twenty aircraft destroyed (1.25 per cent), seventy-five damaged (4.75 per cent) and some 1 per cent of the air crews.<sup>1</sup> The Japanese night fighters had proved to be entirely ineffective and, despite the low altitude of the attacks, the anti-aircraft defences of little value. The fears expressed by *Imperial General Headquarters* that there was no defence against attack by B.29s had been proved to be justified.<sup>2</sup> Japan now lay helpless with its major cities exposed to almost complete destruction.

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<sup>1</sup> Of the twenty aircraft lost sixteen were brought down by anti-aircraft fire and two by enemy fighters; the remaining two were lost accidentally on take-off.

<sup>2</sup> See Volume IV, page 232.









## CHAPTER XII

# THE BATTLE FOR OKINAWA

(March—June 1945)

*See Maps 3, 4, 5, 9 and 16 and Sketch 4*

THE Ryukyus lie in an arc some 600 miles long from the southern tip of Kyushu in Japan to the north-eastern coast of Formosa and form the eastern boundary of the East China Sea.<sup>1</sup> Okinawa, the largest island, lies only 340 miles from both Kyushu and Formosa; and 900 miles from Leyte and 1,200 miles from Ulithi and Guam, which early in 1945 were the three nearest Allied bases.<sup>2</sup> About sixty miles long and on average five miles in breadth, it is divided into two by a narrow isthmus;<sup>3</sup> the larger and north-eastern portion is mountainous and thickly wooded, but immediately south of the isthmus the country is undulating and lightly wooded with flat areas and the south-western end is rugged and hilly. In 1945 the area south of the isthmus, in which lies the capital Naha, contained three airfields (Naha, Yontan and Kadena) and two airstrips (Yonabaru and Machinato). Kimmu and Nakagusuku, the two bays on the eastern side of Okinawa, were considered suitable for development into an advanced naval base, since both were protected from the sea by clusters of small islands and barrier reefs. The island had a population of 435,000, most of whom lived in the southern part of the island. Across the straits some eleven miles west of Naha lies a group of ten small islands known as the Kerama Retto and, off the point of the Motobu peninsula in the northern part of Okinawa, is the island of Ie-shima, on which there was also an airfield. About 150 miles to the north-east of Okinawa lies the island of Amami on which there was in 1945 an airfield, and to the south-west 230 miles away is the Sakishima group of islands which contained a number of airfields.

The assault on Okinawa was to be made on the 1st April by 10th U.S. Army (Lieut.-General S. B. Buckner) consisting of III Amphibious Corps (1st, 2nd and 6th Marine Divisions) and XXIV Corps (7th, 27th, 77th and 96th Divisions), with one division in reserve, all highly experienced formations which had taken part in similar

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<sup>1</sup> See Map 3, facing page 95.

<sup>2</sup> See Map 16, facing page 600.

<sup>3</sup> See Map 4, facing page 107.

operations in the Pacific. In view of the distance of the island from the nearest Allied airfields and the fact that it was surrounded by enemy-held airfields within a 350-mile radius, Buckner planned to make the initial landing on the west of the island on the Hagushi beaches, so that the airfields at Yontan and Kadena could be speedily secured. As soon as they had been captured and the central part of the island cleared, the amphibious corps was to turn north, occupy the island up to and including the Motobu peninsula and capture Ie-shima with its airfield, while XXIV Corps turned south to clear the southern end of the island and occupy the small islands on the east coast at the entrance of the bays required for use as an advanced naval base. About a week before the main landing, the Kerama Retto group of islands, which provided a large and easily protected anchorage, was to be seized for use as an advanced fuelling and repair base and as a refuge for ships damaged during the operations.

The organization of the naval forces for the assault was in general similar to that employed for the invasion of Iwojima.<sup>1</sup> Under Admiral R. A. Spruance (5th Fleet), who was in charge of the whole operation, were Vice-Admiral M. A. Mitscher's fast carrier force;<sup>2</sup> the British Pacific Fleet (Vice-Admiral Sir Bernard Rawlings);<sup>3</sup> and the Joint Expeditionary Force (Vice-Admiral R. K. Turner) which consisted of the Gun-Fire and Covering Force (Rear-Admiral M. L. Deyo), the Amphibious Support Force (Rear-Admiral W. H. P. Blandy) made up of the Support Carrier Group (22 escort carriers) organized into three support groups and a special escort group, the Western Islands Attack Group carrying 77th Division for the assault on the Kerama Retto, the Northern Attack Force carrying 1st and 6th Marine Divisions, and the Southern Attack Force carrying 7th and 96th Divisions.<sup>4</sup> In addition there were the 5th Fleet Logistic Support Group, containing escort carriers, ammunition ships, store ships, hospital ships, survey ships, tankers, repair ships, six floating dry docks and a number of tugs, and the British Fleet Train. This vast armada numbered some 1,440 naval and merchant ships of many different types, carrying some 182,000 assault troops and all their stores and supplies. To assist him in the

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<sup>1</sup> See Volume IV, Chapter XXI.

<sup>2</sup> Now consisting of eleven fleet carriers, six light carriers, seven battleships, fifteen cruisers and sixty-four destroyers organized into four groups.

<sup>3</sup> The battleships *King George V* and *Howe*, the fleet carriers *Indomitable*, *Victorious*, *Indefatigable* and *Illustrious*, the cruisers *Swiftsure*, *Gambia*, *Black Prince*, *Argonaut* and *Euryalus*, and eleven destroyers.

<sup>4</sup> The Gun-Fire and Covering Force consisted of ten battleships, ten cruisers and thirty-two destroyers. The Western Islands Attack Group had a destroyer screen, a minesweeping flotilla, an underwater demolition flotilla and support flotillas. The Northern and Southern Attack Forces both had destroyer screens. The Joint Expeditionary Force also included two small groups, one to set up a seaplane base at the Kerama Retto and the other carrying part of 2nd Marine Division which was to make a deception landing on the east coast opposite Yonabaru airfield.

formidable task of protecting it against attack by *Kamikazes* operating from airfields in Kyushu, Formosa and the Sakishima Islands, Nimitz was authorized to call on 21st Bomber Command whenever he thought it necessary.

In the preliminary 'softening up' period the fast carrier force was to attack airfields in Kyushu and shipping in the Inland Sea on the 18th and 19th March, and Okinawa on the 23rd to 25th; B.29 bombers of 21st Bomber Command in the Marianas, temporarily diverted from their normal task of attacking industrial targets in Japan, were to attack selected targets and airfields in Kyushu from the 27th to 31st and mine the Shimonoseki Strait (through which the great bulk of Japan's remaining shipping then passed) as well as the approaches to Sasebo, Hiroshima and Kure;<sup>1</sup> and the British Pacific Fleet, moving up from its base at Manus in the Admiralty Islands by way of Ulithi, was to begin neutralizing the airfields in the Sakishima Islands on the 26th March.<sup>2</sup> The minesweepers and their escorts, the van of the Joint Expeditionary Force, were to begin to clear the approaches to Okinawa of mines on the 22nd,<sup>3</sup> and the Western Attack Group was to assault the Kerama Retto on the 26th. The Gun-Fire and Covering Force was to undertake the preliminary bombardment of Okinawa from the 26th to 31st March, with air support from the fast carrier force and the escort carriers. On D-day 1st and 6th Marine Divisions were to be landed immediately north and 7th and 96th Divisions immediately south of the Bisha River on the Hagushi beaches.

The Japanese had entrusted the defence of the Ryukyus to 32nd Army (Lieut.-General M. Ushijima), which had consisted of 9th, 24th, 28th and 62nd Divisions and 44th Independent Mixed Brigade, but 9th Division had been moved to Formosa in December 1944 and had not been replaced.<sup>4</sup> The 28th Division was located in the Sakishima Islands, which left only two divisions and an independent mixed brigade for the defence of Okinawa, supported by 5th Artillery Command, one divisional field regiment and 27th Tank Regiment (light tanks).<sup>5</sup> Ushijima also had seven sea raiding battalions manning suicide boats (*Shinyo*),<sup>6</sup> three of which were located in the Kerama Retto and the remainder in Okinawa. When he realized that 9th

<sup>1</sup> See Map 9, facing page 161. Between the 27th and 31st Oita and Omura as well as airfields on Kyushu were attacked and 187 mines were laid.

<sup>2</sup> See Map 3, facing page 95.

<sup>3</sup> Before D-day 2,500 square miles of ocean were swept, six enemy minefields located and 184 mines destroyed.

<sup>4</sup> See Chapter X, Appendix 10 and Volume IV, Chapter XX.

<sup>5</sup> The 5th Artillery Command consisted of thirty-six 150-mm. howitzers, eight 150-mm. and twenty-four 320-mm. guns, six 90-mm. and ninety-six 81-mm. mortars.

<sup>6</sup> For details of these craft see Appendix 11, section 4.

*Division* was not being replaced and that he was unlikely to receive any reinforcements, Ushijima formed two special infantry brigades (6,000 and 4,500 strong) and one special regiment (3,000 strong) out of air defence and administrative units, reduced the sea raiding battalions to one company each and formed the remainder into three infantry battalions, each 600 strong. He formed an *Okinawa Home Guard* (some 20,000 strong) to provide labour units. A naval contingent on the island of about 10,000 men, including some 6,000 administrative personnel, brought the total strength of the garrison (excluding civilians) up to about 80,000 men.

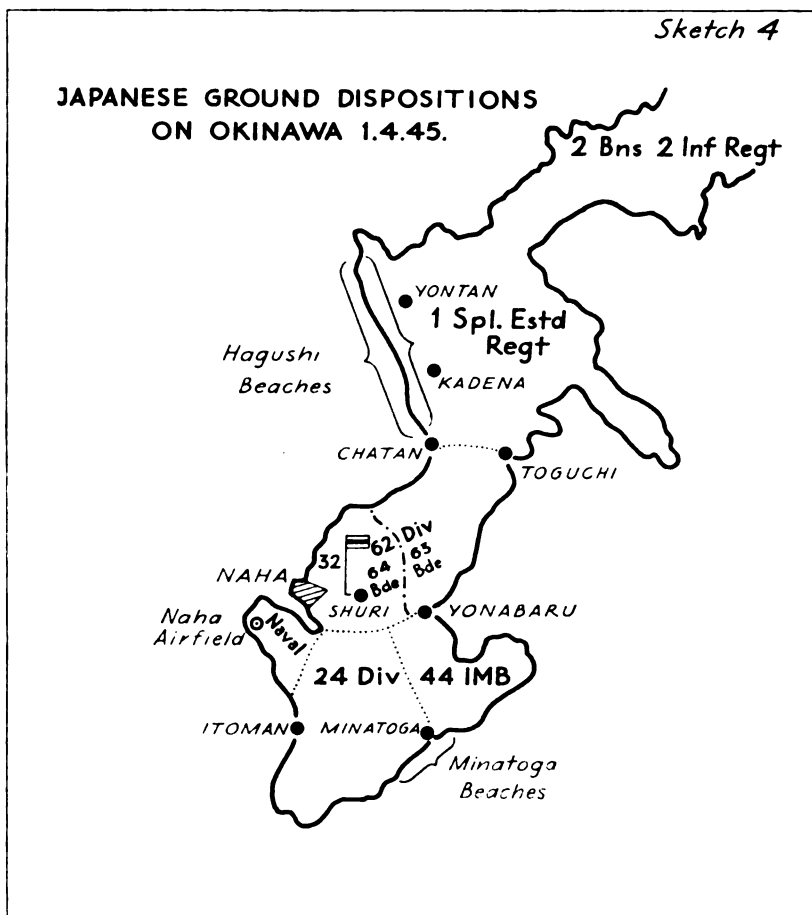
As has been said *Imperial General Headquarters* planned to employ the full strength of the army and navy air forces operating from Japan, Formosa and Indo-China to destroy invading convoys in the East China Sea area, mainly by *Kamikaze* attack.<sup>1</sup> Ushijima's task was to hold Okinawa to the last. Since experience had shown that the defence of beaches was too expensive and since the airfields on the island were likely to be too vulnerable for use, Ushijima decided to concentrate the bulk of his forces in the southern part of the island, which was ideal for prolonged defence and could be turned into a fortress with concrete and underground defences in great depth. He therefore allotted two of his extemporized battalions to defend the Motobu peninsula and Ie-shima, the special regiment to cause delay in the area of the Yontan and Kadena airfields, and concentrated his regular formations in the southern part of the island.<sup>2</sup> The withdrawal of *9th Division* made it impossible to hold the Kerama Retto in strength, so he left only a token garrison there and three companies to man the suicide boats on the islands.

On the 14th March Mitscher's fast carrier force left Ulithi and reached its flying-off position some 90 miles south-east of Kyushu at dawn on the 18th. During the day its aircraft attacked airfields and their installations on Kyushu without inflicting serious damage. The force had been spotted by Japanese reconnaissance aircraft as it left Ulithi and again at 11 p.m. on the 17th as it was approaching Kyushu. On receiving this information *Imperial General Headquarters* told the Commander-in-Chief, *Combined Fleet* (Admiral S. Toyoda) that air strength was to be conserved and offensive action taken only if an Allied task force was accompanied by landing convoys. Vice-Admiral M. Ugaki, commanding *5th Air Fleet*, however, wished to attack at once, maintaining that it would be difficult to make certain whether a landing force was accompanying the task force and

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<sup>1</sup> See page 96.

<sup>2</sup> See Sketch 4, page 111.



inactivity might result in considerable loss of aircraft on airfields. Both the naval section of *Imperial General Headquarters* and Toyoda eventually agreed and left Ugaki to decide what action should be taken. As a result all the available aircraft of *5th Air Fleet*, including 50 torpedo-bombers, took off early on the 18th to attack Mitscher's force. In the ensuing action two fleet carriers – the *Enterprise* and *Yorktown* – were hit by bombs but neither suffered serious damage and *5th Air Fleet* not only lost many aircraft but became considerably disorganized, since its surviving aircraft landed on airfields all over Kyushu and Shikoku and some even in Honshu.

On the 19th March the fast carrier force struck at Japanese shipping in the Inland Sea and at Kure and Kobe, severely damaging a cruiser but otherwise inflicting only minor damage. The Japanese counter-attack was more successful for two American carriers (the *Wasp* and the *Franklin*) were hit by bombs and so badly

10—T. W. A. J.



damaged that they had to be withdrawn for repair. The fast carrier force then retired slowly southward covering the withdrawal of the crippled *Franklin*.<sup>1</sup> On the 21st the Japanese sent out a force of eighteen bombers, each carrying an Oka bomb,<sup>2</sup> protected by thirty fighters but it was intercepted some sixty miles north of the carriers by American fighters which shot down all the bombers and some of the fighters without loss. Altogether between the 18th and 21st the Japanese lost 161 aircraft in combat and an unknown number destroyed on the ground.

The British Pacific Fleet attacked airfields in the Sakishima Islands on the 26th and 27th and again from the 30th March to the 2nd April, its place in the interval being taken by escort carriers from the Western Islands Attack Group. During the periods the fleet was in action it was attacked by *Kamikaze* aircraft; although H.M.S. *Indefatigable* was hit, her armoured decks prevented serious damage, but the destroyer *Ulster* was sufficiently damaged to necessitate her being towed back to Ulithi for repairs.

The landing on the Kerama Retto on the 26th March met with minor opposition and two days later the whole group had been occupied. A seaplane base was then established and anti-submarine patrols were begun, nets covering the entrances to the roadstead were laid and anti-aircraft and radar defences installed. The seizure of these islands and the establishment there of an advanced base by the 31st March with supply, refuelling and repair facilities was to prove of inestimable value throughout the long struggle for Okinawa. During the whole operation the Japanese made only two air attacks, which slightly damaged a destroyer, but a minesweeping destroyer was sunk by a mine. The Japanese losses were some 500 men killed, 121 taken prisoner and 250 suicide boats found concealed among the islands.

The preliminary bombardment of Okinawa began on the 26th March and continued till the 31st, but evoked no reply from the island's defenders. During this period, however, a small number of *Kamikaze* aircraft from airfields in the Sakishima Islands attacked the shipping off Okinawa; a battleship, a cruiser and two destroyers being slightly damaged, and one cruiser (*Indianapolis*) and an L.S.M. severely damaged.<sup>3</sup> During the same period a Japanese submarine was sunk and a midget submarine base destroyed.

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<sup>1</sup> The *Franklin* suffered 1,000 casualties and was narrowly saved from foundering.

<sup>2</sup> The glider with its pilot and a 4,700 lb. Oka bomb with a warhead of 2,645 lbs. of explosive was carried to its target area slung beneath a bomber. It was detached when near the target to glide and finally dive on it under rocket power.

<sup>3</sup> One minesweeper was sunk by a mine.



Under cover of a heavy bombardment from naval vessels and carrier-borne aircraft, an unopposed landing was made on the Hagushi beaches on the 1st April. There was only slight opposition inland, and by evening both Yontan and Kadena airfields and the hills commanding them had been secured. By the 6th April 10th Army held the centre of the island: XXIV Corps had driven in most of the enemy outposts and was within a mile of the Japanese main defences stretching across the island from Machinato to Ouki, the Marines had reached Nago at the base of the Motobu peninsula, all the islands on the east coast opposite Kimmu Bay had been occupied,<sup>1</sup> and both airfields were in use. In the first three days of the invasion some eighty aircraft of *8th Air Division* (half of which were *Kamikaze*) attacked shipping off Okinawa and sank a destroyer, an escort carrier, two L.S.T.s and an L.C.T., badly damaged two transports and slightly damaged six other vessels.

It will have been noted that from the 21st March, when the counter-attack by *5th Air Fleet* on the fast carrier force ended, until the landings on the Kerama Retto and Okinawa had been successfully accomplished the planned mass air attacks on the Allied armada had not materialized, the only opposition coming from *8th Air Division* in Formosa. As had happened once before in the Pacific at the time of the Battle of Leyte Gulf,<sup>2</sup> the speed of the Allied advance had been too great for the Japanese, with the result that the measures they had planned in January and put into force in February and March in preparation for attacking American convoys off Japan (operation 'Ten-Go') and defending the homeland (operation 'Ketsu-Go') had not been completed.<sup>3</sup> On the 21st March *6th Air Army* (Lieut.-General M. Sugawara) had been placed under command of the Commander-in-Chief, *Combined Fleet* (Toyoda) and ordered to deploy its units in Kyushu and prepare for action. No sooner, however, had this order been issued than it was found that the communications between the army and navy were inadequate for effective co-operation. Since there was now no time to remedy this, Sugawara had to a large extent to act on his own initiative. Toyoda ordered 'Ten-Go' to begin on the 26th March and placed *3rd* and *10th Air Fleets* under the orders of *5th Air Fleet*. On this date, while Sugawara, whose formations were under strength, poorly trained and equipped with aircraft of doubtful quality, was in process of moving to Kyushu and so could not take part in any operations, both *3rd* and *10th Air Fleets* had to move forward to Kyushu and deploy for action, and *5th Air Fleet* was recovering from the effects of its earlier attacks on the fast carrier force.

<sup>1</sup> The islands off Nakagusuku Bay were secured on the 7th and 11th April.

<sup>2</sup> See Volume IV, Chapter VII.

<sup>3</sup> See Chapter X.

During the first week in April the deployment of the Japanese air forces on Kyushu was completed and Toyoda ordered the first mass air attack on Allied shipping to be launched on the 6th and 7th April with naval and army aircraft. He also ordered a naval force, consisting of the battleship *Yamato* (Vice-Admiral S. Ito), the light cruiser *Yahagi* and eight destroyers, the only ships in home waters for which fuel could be found, to sail from the Inland Sea on the evening of the 5th and attack Allied shipping off Okinawa at dawn on the 8th.

This sortie by the *Imperial Navy* without any air cover was a despairing effort, since it had no possible chance of survival in face of the powerful American squadrons awaiting it. No sooner had the force passed through the Bungo Channel and entered the open sea than it was spotted by an American submarine and the hunt was on. Mitscher immediately ordered all his fast carrier groups to suitable flying-off positions north-east of Okinawa, and sent out reconnaissance aircraft which located the enemy force at 8.22 a.m. on the 7th April some eighty-five miles due west of the southern point of Kyushu and some 250 miles from the fast carrier force. A covering group of sixteen fighters was flown off at 9.16 a.m. and a striking force of 280 aircraft, which included ninety-eight torpedo-bombers, followed it at 10 a.m. Mitscher had in the meantime warned Turner to station a strong force of battleships, cruisers and destroyers between Ito's force and Okinawa in case the fast carrier force failed to destroy it.

Having received a warning from Amami Island that some 250 aircraft were flying towards him, Ito increased speed to twenty-six knots and turned south. Shortly after 12.30 p.m. Mitscher's striking force attacked, and, despite heavy squalls and intense anti-aircraft fire, scored hits. At 2 p.m. the *Yahagi* sank and at 2.25 p.m. the *Yamato*, hit by five bombs and ten torpedoes, rolled over and also sank, taking with her her commander and almost all her crew. Four destroyers were sunk, but the other four, all badly damaged, managed to make the Inland Sea. Ten American aircraft were lost in the action. Thus ended the power of the *Imperial Navy*, which had for so long prided itself on commanding the western Pacific.

On the 6th April 660 Japanese aircraft (406 from 5th Air Fleet (which now included 3rd and 10th Air Fleets), 209 from 6th Air Army and 45 from 8th Air Division) began the first mass attack on the Allied shipping. The ships of the fast carrier force were attacked while engaged in operating against Ito's squadron and the fleet carrier *Hancock* was hit, but the greater part of the enemy air effort was directed at the Allied ships around Okinawa, including those in the anchorage in the Kerama Retto. These were protected by a deep screen of radar pickets placed in groups each of two destroyers with

four L.C.S.s in support, by overhead cover from aircraft from the escort carriers, reinforced when possible by those from the fast carriers and land-based aircraft from Okinawa, and by the anti-aircraft fire of the ships themselves. In spite of this between dawn on the 6th and dusk on the 8th April twenty-five ships were hit, of which eight were sunk and ten put out of action for the rest of the war. The Japanese accounts give no accurate figure for their losses, but it is known that 335 *Kamikazes* were expended and a large percentage of other aircraft lost.

Alarmed at the ease with which the Allies had been able to land on Okinawa, *Imperial General Headquarters* suggested to *32nd Army* that it should take the offensive without delay and, to synchronize with the offensive, orders were issued for a second mass air attack to be launched on the 12th April by some 500 army and navy aircraft. The operation began on the afternoon of the 11th when the fast carrier force was attacked by a swarm of *Kamikazes* which slightly damaged the aircraft carriers *Enterprise* and *Essex*, the battleship *Missouri* and two destroyers. On the morning of the 12th the enemy aircraft concentrated on the picket screen around Okinawa and later on shipping closer to the island. That day eleven ships were hit: a destroyer and an L.C.S. were sunk, two destroyers and an L.S.M. severely damaged, and the battleship *Tennessee*, four destroyers and an L.C.S. slightly damaged. The 13th passed quietly but on the 14th some fifteen aircraft attacked the picket destroyers protecting the fast carrier force and put one out of action.

The heavy losses between the 6th and 8th April caused Nimitz to call on 21st Bomber Command to bomb the Kanoya group of airfields in Kyushu. On the 8th fifty-three B.29s set out but, as the airfields were covered by cloud, they attacked the town of Kagoshima instead.<sup>1</sup> The additional losses incurred between the 11th and 14th caused Nimitz once again to send the fast carrier force north on the 15th to attack the airfields in Kyushu from which most of the Japanese aircraft were operating. This stung the Japanese into action and, on the 16th, 220 army and navy aircraft attacked the shipping around Okinawa and 110 naval aircraft attacked the fast carrier force. The picket destroyers as usual bore the brunt, one destroyer being sunk, three destroyers and two minesweepers badly damaged and one L.C.S. slightly damaged. In the attack on the fast carriers the Japanese severely damaged the aircraft carrier *Intrepid*.

Mass *Kamikaze* attacks were so often concentrated on the picket destroyers rather than on the crowded shipping around Okinawa that it is worth describing an attack of this type. The radar operator of one such destroyer spotted fifty aircraft closing in on her from the

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<sup>1</sup> See Map 3, facing page 95.

north at 8.27 a.m. on the 16th. Although covering aircraft accounted for or drove off a number of these before they were within range of the ship's guns, she was, within the space of eighty minutes, attacked from all sides by twenty-two aircraft. Although all but one of the attackers were destroyed, she was hit by four bombs and six *Kamikazes* crashed on her decks abaft the funnels. Despite this she remained afloat, and was towed back to the Kerama Retto where temporary repairs were made; six days later she was able to sail to Guam under her own steam, but was out of action for the rest of the war. The expenditure of at the very least twenty-one aircraft to damage one destroyer was scarcely an economic use of the dwindling Japanese resources in aircraft and pilots.

There followed a respite for some days, for the Japanese had suffered such severe losses that they had temporarily to suspend their air attacks. Their records show that between the 23rd March and the 16th April some 2,000 naval aircraft had been engaged, of which some 600 had been lost; there are, however, no comparable army figures. On the other hand, between the 19th March and the 16th April the Allies had lost from air attacks alone forty-one ships (including six destroyers, two landing craft and two ammunition ships sunk) and thirty-one (three fleet carriers, a battleship, a cruiser, an escort carrier, sixteen destroyers, two minesweepers, five landing craft and two transports) put out of action for long periods.<sup>1</sup> Twenty-nine other ships had also been hit but remained in action.

On the 9th April the British Pacific Fleet was ordered to shift its attacks from the Sakishima Islands to airfields in the north-east corner of Formosa which were not, as had been hoped, being kept neutralized by aircraft from the South-West Pacific Area. Since this resulted in a revival of activity in the Sakishimas the fleet again attacked their airfields on the 16th, 17th and 20th. Having been at sea for thirty-two days, the fleet was relieved by an American group of nine escort carriers on the 20th and returned to Leyte.

By the 8th April 6th Marine Division had sealed off the northern end of Okinawa and had begun its drive into the Motobu peninsula. The Japanese were in position on the 1,500-foot high Yae Take hills in the centre of the peninsula, where on the 14th they were attacked from east, south and west. The Marines drove the Japanese from their positions and by the 19th had occupied most of the peninsula, but were engaged in mopping up in the north of the island until they were moved to the southern front in May.

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<sup>1</sup> In addition four ships were sunk by mines and one by a submarine.

As a prelude to its capture the island of Ie-shima was subjected to naval bombardment and air attack from the 1st to the 15th April, when Minna-shima, some four miles to the south, was occupied and three artillery battalions established to support the main landing.<sup>1</sup> After a heavy naval and air bombardment from dawn on the 16th, 77th Division (less one regiment) landed on the south and south-west coasts of Ie-shima without difficulty and by evening its airfield had been occupied. The Japanese garrison, consisting of an infantry and an airfield battalion as well as a large number of armed civilians, had destroyed the runways and installations and retired to elaborately prepared defences, many of which were underground on the high ground east of the airfield and north of Ie town, and it was the 26th before the last of the defenders had been accounted for. The division suffered 1,120 casualties of whom 172 were killed, but 4,716 Japanese (including many armed civilians who had taken part in the defence) were killed and 149 taken prisoner.

On the southern front of Okinawa XXIV Corps had by the 8th April driven in the Japanese outposts, but was then held up by a defensive position covering Shuri and Naha, which extended from Machinato by way of Nishibaru to Ouki,<sup>2</sup> and had made no progress. Ushijima (32nd Army) then decided to counter-attack on the night of the 12th/13th, as suggested by *Imperial General Headquarters*, but the four battalions employed were quickly driven back and a second attack on the next night fared no better. On the 19th April XXIV Corps brought up 27th Division (which had landed on the 9th) and renewed its attack but, despite tremendous bombardments by twenty-seven battalions of artillery as well as by warships and aircraft, the only gains in four days were the villages of Machinato and Ouki. Fearing that their weakened line would break, the Japanese withdrew on the night of the 23rd/24th to a second and even stronger one covering Shuri, which extended from the south-western end of Machinato airstrip through Maeda and Kochi to Gaja.

Both sides now regrouped. On the 30th April the Americans relieved 27th Division on the right by 1st Marine Division and 96th Division in the centre by 77th Division. The Japanese brought 24th Division into action for the first time and it took over the right half of the line from the battle-weary 62nd Division. Though there was bitter fighting from the 26th April onwards in the Maeda and Kochi areas, it was not till the 3rd May that XXIV Corps was everywhere in close contact with the new Japanese defences. At dawn on the 4th May Ushijima delivered a second counter-attack in the centre of the line with the fresh 24th Division, supported by 27th Tank Regiment.

<sup>1</sup> An American artillery battalion usually consisted of three batteries each of six guns.

<sup>2</sup> See Map 5, facing page 124.

At the same time engineer units were landed on the east and west coasts behind the American forward divisions to disrupt communications, and aircraft from Japan and Formosa launched a mass attack on shipping around Okinawa<sup>1</sup>. Both engineer raids failed completely, the raiders being wiped out, and 24th Division's attack, launched at dawn under a heavy bombardment, soon broke down. Another attempt during the night of the 4th/5th was equally unsuccessful. The offensive cost the Japanese some 5,000 men and many guns, for these had been brought out of their emplacements and caves into the open. Its failure was a serious blow to Japanese morale, and its launching was adjudged by *Imperial General Headquarters* to have been a serious error since it greatly diminished the length of time that 32nd Army could hold out. After it, units had to be amalgamated, men from administrative units posted to fighting units and the expenditure of ammunition rationed.

The series of mass air attacks between the 23rd March and the 16th April had begun to cause the Americans some alarm for, despite all precautions, losses in ships had been very heavy,<sup>2</sup> and there seemed to be no real answer to *Kamikaze* tactics. Nimitz therefore once again called upon 21st Bomber Command to make repeated attacks on the airfields in Kyushu, Shikoku and Honshu, in co-operation with 7th Fighter Command from Iwojima. From the 17th April to the 11th May three-quarters of 21st Bomber Command's effort was therefore diverted from bombing industrial targets and Japanese cities to supporting the Okinawa campaign. It flew 2,104 sorties against seventeen airfields, during which twenty-four B.29s were lost and 233 were damaged, but the command claimed to have destroyed 134 enemy fighters. In addition to finding escorts for aircraft bombing Japan, 7th Fighter Command carried out four sweeps over airfields in Kyushu and Honshu between the 16th and 26th April. These efforts diminished but did not stop the mass attacks on shipping around Okinawa. On the 11th May, as there were by then sufficient aircraft operating from airfields on Okinawa and Ie-shima, Nimitz released 21st Bomber Command from taking any further part in the Okinawa operations.

At this period a difference of opinion arose between the Services in Japan: the Navy, looking on the Okinawa operations as the decisive battle, wanted to devote their entire resources to it, while the Army, realizing that Okinawa could not be held, wanted to keep as many aircraft as possible for repelling the inevitable attack on the

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<sup>1</sup> See page 119.

<sup>2</sup> See page 116.

mainland of Japan. As the result of pressure from the Army Toyoda withdrew *10th Air Fleet* on the 17th April from the command of *5th Air Fleet*, leaving *5th* and *3rd Air Fleets* with some 600 aircraft (of which only 370 were operational) to continue the battle for Okinawa. Attacks by a few *Kamikazes* on the 22nd April sank a minesweeper and an L.C.S. and put a destroyer out of action. In a fourth mass attack made by some 218 aircraft from the 27th to 30th an ammunition ship was sunk, three destroyers were severely damaged and a destroyer, a hospital ship and a minesweeper were slightly damaged.<sup>1</sup> There was a lull until the 3rd and 4th May when, in support of *32nd Army's* counter-attack,<sup>2</sup> 280 aircraft made a fifth mass attack. As before, most of the effort was expended on the outer picket line; three destroyers and three landing ships were sunk, one escort carrier (the *Sangamon*) and three destroyers put out of action and the cruiser *Birmingham* and a destroyer slightly damaged. For the next few days there were only a few isolated attacks but these put two more destroyers out of action and slightly damaged two others. About 240 aircraft made a sixth mass attack from the 11th to the 13th May on the fast carrier force and the shipping around Okinawa. Two carriers, *Bunker Hill* (Mitscher's flagship) and *Enterprise*, to which Mitscher had transferred his flag, were seriously damaged; near Okinawa, four destroyers and an L.C.S. were put out of action and the *New Mexico*, the battleship in which Spruance flew his flag, was hit.

At this time Mitscher suggested that, as there was now sufficient air strength operating from Okinawa, his force could be released from its duties of protecting the island. Spruance was not, however, satisfied that the *Kamikaze* menace was over and decided to retain the fast carrier force in action for the time being, a fortunate decision since, after a lull caused by bad weather when there were only isolated attacks (which nevertheless cost a destroyer and an L.S.T. sunk, severe damage to three destroyers and slight damage to another), the Japanese launched their seventh mass attack from the 23rd to the 25th May. Two destroyers and a landing ship were sunk, four destroyers and a minesweeper put out of action and a number of other ships slightly damaged. This attack included a new feature: a number of twin-engined bombers, each with fourteen Japanese aboard, were detailed to land on one of the Yontan runways with orders to do as much damage as possible to grounded aircraft and installations. Four of these were brought down by gunfire before reaching the airfield, but a fifth made a belly-landing and, before its crew was disposed of, seven aircraft had been destroyed

<sup>1</sup> In the same period a destroyer and an L.C.S. were put out of action by enemy submarines.

<sup>2</sup> See pages 117-18.

and twenty-six damaged, and two dumps containing 70,000 gallons of aviation petrol had been set on fire.

At the end of the month there was an eighth but smaller mass attack, in which a destroyer was sunk and three destroyers, a landing craft and a transport were put out of action. The loss of ships up to the end of May from air attacks had been very serious and there was still no adequate protection from the *Kamikaze* although the number of enemy aircraft employed was growing smaller with each raid. The installation of radar stations on outlying islands had, however, reduced the number of destroyers and landing craft on picket duty and thus the *Kamikazes*' favourite targets.

In May the British Pacific Fleet resumed its operation against airfields on the Sakishima Islands. The force now included the aircraft carrier *Formidable*, which had replaced the *Illustrious*, and the Canadian cruiser *Uganda* in place of the *Argonaut*. On the 4th, while the battleships and cruisers were bombarding three of the airfields on one of the islands, *Kamikazes* succeeded in hitting the carriers *Formidable* and *Indomitable*, but did little damage since the aircraft crumpled up on hitting their armoured decks and failed to penetrate into the vital parts of the ships.<sup>1</sup> Fourteen out of the twenty attackers were accounted for. On the 5th air attacks on the airfields were resumed and for the first time met with no anti-aircraft fire, a sure sign that the previous day's bombardment had been a success. On the 9th both the *Victorious* and *Formidable* were hit by *Kamikazes*, the former twice, but again the ships were only slightly damaged although a number of their aircraft were destroyed. Attacks on the Sakishima airfields were continued until the 25th May; the fleet was then relieved by American carriers and returned to Manus on its way to the main base at Sydney.<sup>2</sup> During its periods of action it lost ninety-eight aircraft in operations and a further sixty-five from other causes and, although the number of enemy aircraft it destroyed is not known, it is clear that it played an effective part in reducing attacks from *8th Air Division*.

The Americans had one fleet in the Central Pacific but two teams of Admirals and their staffs: while one team was in charge of the operations, the other rested and planned the next operation, the fleet becoming the 3rd or 5th Fleet according to which Admiral was in command. The 5th Fleet under Spruance had taken over in January 1945 for the capture of Iwojima and Okinawa,<sup>3</sup> and, in preparation for the invasion of Japan, the command once again changed on the 27th May when Admiral W. F. Halsey (3rd Fleet)

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<sup>1</sup> See photograph No. 11, following page 214.

<sup>2</sup> While in action the fleet flew 5,335 sorties, dropped 958 tons of bombs and fired 200 tons of projectiles on the target airfields.

<sup>3</sup> See Volume IV, pages 96 and 236.



took over from Spruance, and Vice-Admiral J. S. McCain took over the fast carriers (by this time reduced to three groups) from Mitscher. At the same time Vice-Admiral H. W. Hill relieved Turner in command of the Joint Expeditionary Force.

On the 2nd and 3rd June, while one of the fast carrier groups protected Okinawa, another launched a fighter sweep against the Kyushu airfields. Both groups then withdrew to a refuelling rendezvous, while the third group took over the task of protecting Okinawa. Once again, as in December 1944,<sup>1</sup> the elements were to play havoc with the 3rd Fleet, for on the evening of the 4th, just after refuelling had been completed, a typhoon was reported to be approaching. One carrier group and the refuelling group passed through the eye of the storm early on the 5th and both suffered considerable damage, the cruiser *Pittsburgh* losing some 100 feet of her bow and her sister ship *Baltimore* being badly twisted.<sup>2</sup> In all, thirty-six ships sustained structural damage, including four fleet carriers and an escort carrier; seventy-six aircraft were lost, but only six men. Nevertheless both groups were back in action by the 6th June and one of them bombed the Kanoya airfields in Kyushu. Since 5th U.S.A.A.F., assisted by the escort carrier groups, was now in a position to protect Okinawa from airfields on the island, the fast carriers were released from their task of supporting the Okinawa campaign and returned to Leyte, where they arrived on the 13th June after being at sea on active operations for almost three months. The Pacific submarine fleet operating in the East China Sea had meanwhile, between the 2nd April and the 11th June, sunk nine cargo ships, three destroyers and a submarine.

As the battle for Okinawa was drawing to its close in June, the Japanese launched their last two mass attacks, but with comparatively few aircraft. These and some attacks by single aircraft accounted for three ships sunk and five put out of action between the 1st and 22nd June.<sup>3</sup>

On Okinawa on the 7th May Buckner (10th Army) assumed personal control of the operations and reinforced the southern front by bringing in III Amphibious Corps (6th and 1st Marine Divisions) to take over the right sector from XXIV Corps (77th and 96th Divisions), which then took over the left. On the 11th he resumed the offensive to destroy Ushijima's forces holding the Maeda-Kochi-Gaja line covering Shuri. Progress was very slow and made slower by torrential rain which turned the country, except for the rocky outcrops, into a

<sup>1</sup> See Volume IV, page 93.

<sup>2</sup> The bow section of the *Pittsburgh* remained afloat and was towed to Guam, to which base the cruiser herself sailed under her own steam.

<sup>3</sup> One destroyer was sunk and one severely damaged off Okinawa in July.

sea of mud. Tanks became bogged, wheeled transport could not move and even amphibious tractors were often useless, which meant that troops had to carry up all supplies and bring back the wounded. On the 21st 10th Army reached the outskirts of Shuri. Although the line of defences covering the town still held, American pressure was so great that Ushijima, doubting whether his two divisions and the independent mixed brigade, now reduced to a third of their strength by casualties, could hold on much longer, decided on the 22nd to withdraw to the Yaeju Dake-Yuza Dake ridge which, with its caves, dug-outs and tunnels, gave his force a better chance of prolonged resistance. His rearguards withdrew on the 30th,<sup>1</sup> and 10th Army entered the shattered town of Shuri on the 31st May. The 32nd Army was now in sore straits; its strength was down to some 30,000 men, of whom only a third were fighting troops, most of its artillery had been lost, there were insufficient small arms and there was a critical shortage of food. The end could not be long delayed.

There was fierce fighting from the 9th to 11th June with little change in the situation, but on the 12th the Americans gained control of the ridge and threw back a counter-attack by Ushijima's last reserve. The Japanese still fought on, but as their account of the battle says,

'By the 17th organized resistance was no longer possible and nothing remained but to fight it out around the caves, rocky crags and broken ground at the southern tip of the island. Individual fighting of a desperate nature continued for a while with rifles, grenades and swords but, against enemy superiority, particularly in flame-throwing tanks, human beings were helpless'.

Realizing that resistance was no longer possible, Ushijima ordered the remnant of his army to disperse and individuals to make their way as best they could under cover of darkness to the north of the island and there organize guerrilla bands. He and his Chief of Staff committed suicide in the early morning of the 21st June at the mouth of a cave facing the sea near Mabuni. So ended the struggle for Okinawa. Buckner did not live to see the victory for which he had striven. On the 18th June the forward observation post from which he was watching operations came under fire from one of the few remaining Japanese guns and he was killed. He was replaced five days later by General J. W. Stilwell, who for so long had been a controversial figure in China and S.E.A.C.<sup>2</sup>

Throughout their desperate defence, which had lasted nearly three months, the morale of the Japanese 32nd Army had remained

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<sup>1</sup> The naval contingent withdrew to its base in the Oruku peninsula where it held out until the 11th/12th June, by which time it had been completely wiped out, and its commander, Rear-Admiral M. Ota, had committed suicide.

<sup>2</sup> See Volumes II, III and IV.

extremely high, although all ranks were subjected to unceasing American propaganda and must have known that there was no escape other than death.<sup>1</sup> It began to break only after the loss of the final line of defences. During the first seventy days of the campaign prisoners captured averaged fewer than four a day. Between the 12th and 18th June this figure increased to fifty a day and, on the 20th, 977 were taken. When all fighting had ceased prisoners taken numbered 10,740, of whom 3,339 were civilians. Excluding these, the garrison of some 80,000 men, as well as 30,000 enrolled civilians, died in the struggle.

Except in those areas overrun in the first days of the campaign, the plight of the civilians in Okinawa was deplorable. All the towns and villages from Machinato and Ouki to the southern extremity of the island, including Shuri and the capital Naha, were utterly destroyed. As the tide of battle passed beyond them some 80,000 civilians, mostly old men, women and children, half starved and many of them wounded, emerged from the caves where they had been hiding during the battle. Many were buried in caves blown in during the fighting, and thousands of dead were found scattered in the fields or in the ruins of the towns and villages. The numbers of those who lost their lives is not known.

American battle casualties amounted to 49,151 of which 12,520 were killed,<sup>2</sup> and non-battle casualties were 26,211, making a total of 75,362. Owing to the dour defence put up by 32nd Army, the Allied navies, which had not only to support 10th Army by gunfire and air attacks and by shouldering the burden of air defence till land-based aircraft could take over, but had also to protect the ships carrying the continual flow of reinforcements and supplies to Okinawa, were forced to remain off the island for some three months, exposed to attack by sea and land-based aircraft at comparatively short range. Their losses were therefore high. Between the 19th March and the end of July 402 ships and craft were hit and damaged; of these, thirty-four were sunk (twenty-eight by air, four by mines, one by submarine and one by artillery) and seventy (sixty-six by air and four by submarine) so seriously damaged that they took no further part in the war;<sup>3</sup> the remainder were out of action for varying periods. It would appear that some eighty per cent of the total damage to shipping was caused by *Kamikaze* attacks. In the

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<sup>1</sup> Some eight million leaflets aimed at winning the confidence of both soldiers and civilians and at spreading defection were dropped in the area held by the Japanese between the 25th March and the 22nd June.

<sup>2</sup> Army and Marine casualties: 7,613 killed and missing and 31,807 wounded; naval casualties: 4,907 killed and missing and 4,824 wounded.

<sup>3</sup> Seventeen destroyers, five minesweepers, nine landing craft and three ammunition ships sunk; five fleet carriers, two escort carriers, one battleship, one cruiser, thirty-seven destroyers, eleven landing craft, four minesweepers, four transports and five miscellaneous vessels seriously damaged.

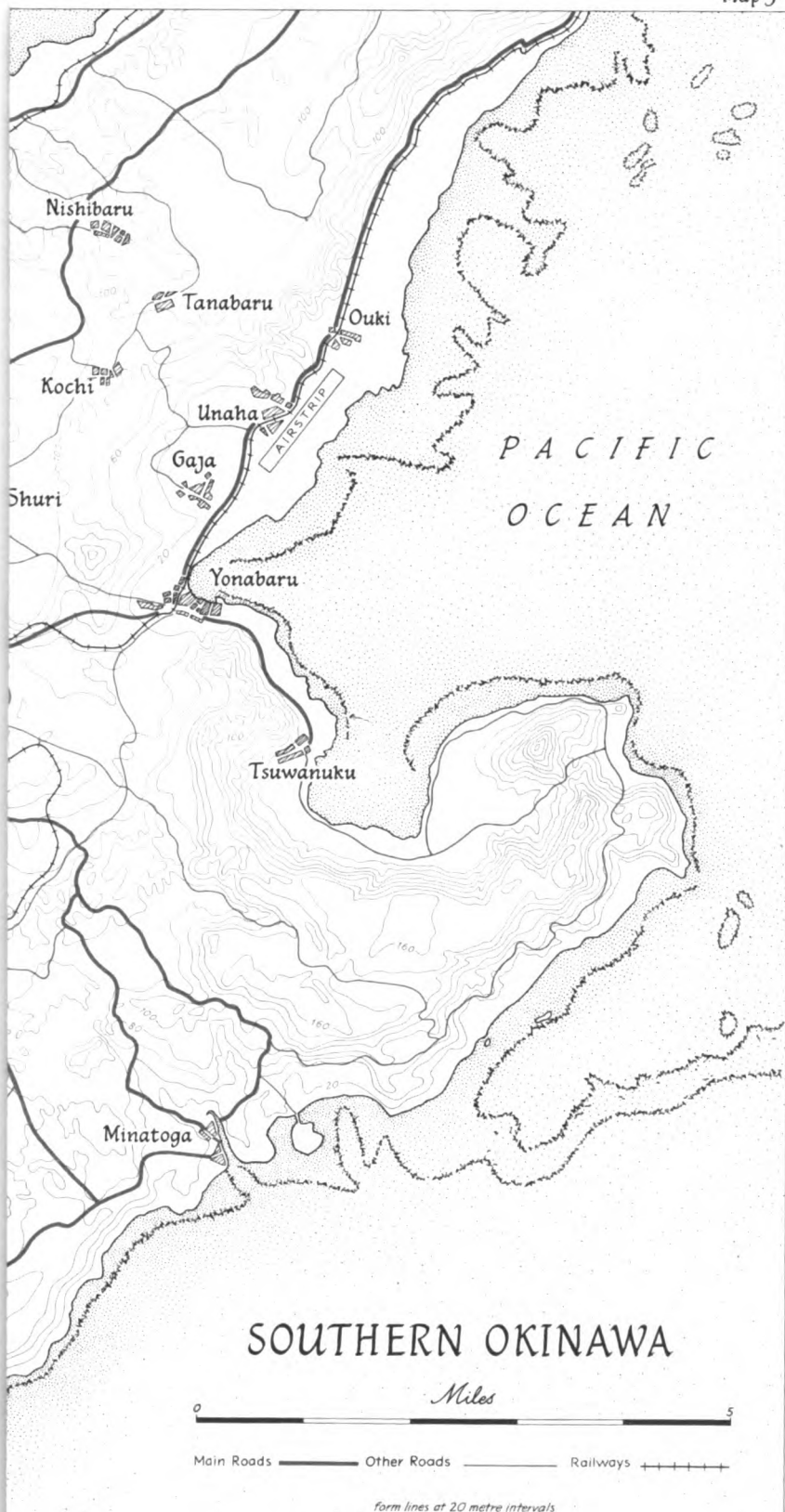
same period the Allies lost 763 aircraft. There are no accurate figures for Japanese air losses in the fierce air versus ship battle. American sources give the total Japanese air losses as some 7,800 including at least 2,000 *Kamikaze* aircraft with their pilots.

The Japanese hoped that a prolonged defence of Okinawa would force the vast Allied armada to remain exposed to sea and air attack long enough for it to be destroyed or forced by heavy losses to call off the operation. The *32nd Army* played its part by holding out for nearly three months, a period which might have been considerably extended had *Imperial General Headquarters* replaced *9th Division* as originally intended.

The outcome of the battle depended almost entirely on whether the Allies, in the face of concentrated attacks by land-based aircraft and submarines, could maintain command of the air and sea over and around Okinawa. Despite the use of *Kamikaze* tactics, the Japanese air force proved to be no match for the Allied aircraft from fifteen fleet carriers (including four British), six light carriers and twenty-seven escort carriers (operating in the vicinity of the Ryukyu Islands) assisted at first by the land-based *21st Bomber* and *7th Fighter Commands* (operating from the Marianas and Iwojima respectively) and later by aircraft established on Okinawa and Ieshima. It inflicted severe losses but, in spite of the prolonged defence of the island by *32nd Army*, it was never able to cripple the Allied naval and air forces supporting *10th Army* on Okinawa.

The Japanese were desperately short of oil fuel and little could be spared for the remnant of their naval forces. Had the fuel allotted to the hopeless sortie by the battleship *Yamato* and her escorting vessels been allotted instead to the remaining submarines they might have inflicted some damage to the huge armada concentrated around Okinawa for so long. But the submarine fleet remained inactive and thus a golden opportunity was missed.

It is evident that the Japanese counter-measures lacked cohesion, and they themselves attribute this as much to inter-Service disagreement and lack of efficient inter-communication as to the fact that the Allied attack on Okinawa followed so closely after the attack on Iwojima that they were unprepared. Nevertheless in the early stages of the battle, when all the *Kamikaze* pilots were volunteers and morale was high, the *Kamikaze* attacks did sufficient damage to cause the Allied command considerable concern. The losses sustained at Okinawa and the desperate measures adopted by the Japanese provided a grim portent of what might be expected when, in an assault on the Japanese home islands, an even greater armada would have to be exposed to *Kamikaze* attacks at very short range.







144°

PACIFIC OCEAN



METRES  
2000 and over  
1000  
200  
SEA LEVEL

144°



# CHAPTER XIII

## OPERATIONS IN THE PHILIPPINES, AUSTRALIAN MANDATED TERRITORIES AND BORNEO (December 1944—August 1945)

*See Maps 6 and 16 and Sketches 5, 6, 7, 8 and 9*

**B**Y July 1944 General MacArthur's advance in the South-West Pacific up through the Solomons and New Guinea had brought him to the point where he could invade the Philippine Islands, but a large part of his forces were tied down defending their bases against an estimated 75,000 by-passed Japanese in the Australian Mandated Territories (the Solomons, New Britain and the eastern half of New Guinea).<sup>1</sup> In these circumstances MacArthur decided to ask the Australians to take over responsibility for their Mandated Territories, which would release four and one-third American divisions for operations in the Philippines, and in July 1944 began negotiations with the Australian Commander-in-Chief to that end.

The Australian Army had just completed reorganization after the arduous Papuan and New Guinea campaigns,<sup>2</sup> and had been reduced to six infantry divisions (3rd, 5th, 6th, 7th, 9th and 11th) and two armoured brigades, the bulk of which were in Australia with a minimum garrison in Australian New Guinea based on Lae and Madang. The Commander-in-Chief, General Sir Thomas Blamey, was not prepared to commit all Australian forces to a static role and proposed to keep I Australian Corps (Lieut.-General Sir Leslie Morshead) as a mobile force under his own command but available to MacArthur when required for operations in the forward areas. He suggested that seven brigades from II Australian Corps (Lieut.-General S. G. Savage) should take over American commitments in the Mandated Territories but MacArthur insisted that not fewer than twelve were necessary to contain the by-passed Japanese. Blamey decided that in that case one of the divisions of I Corps (6th, 7th or 9th) would have to be kept in reserve and used in Australian New Guinea until other arrangements could be made.

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<sup>1</sup> See Map 6, facing page 125. This number proved to be half the real total.

<sup>2</sup> See Volume III, Chapters VII, VIII and XXX.

In September 1944 MacArthur, who had just established his headquarters at Hollandia in Dutch New Guinea, was given a second (8th) army headquarters (Lieut.-General R. L. Eichelberger) so that Lieut.-General W. Krueger (6th Army) could give his full attention to the invasion of Leyte in the Philippines which was to be carried out in October.<sup>1</sup> Eichelberger took control of American forces in Dutch New Guinea and its northern off-shore islands. At the same time 1st Australian Army (Lieut.-General V. A. H. Sturdee) began to take over in the Mandated Territories, and I Corps (Morshead) in Australia began training for its future role, which at that time included taking part in the liberation of the Philippines before recapturing British North Borneo. From time to time between September 1944 and February 1945 various modifications of this role were mooted or discussed, including that of invading the Netherlands East Indies or Malaya, but its eventual task became the recapture of selected areas in Borneo. Of the American formations relieved in the Mandated Territories some went to 8th U.S. Army in New Guinea and took part in the mopping-up of the southern Philippines.

While Nimitz's Central Pacific forces were bombing Japan from the Marianas and preparing to launch an attack on Iwojima, the next step in acquiring advanced bases for the invasion of Japan, 6th Army completed the occupation of Leyte in December 1944. It was then replaced by Eichelberger's 8th Army and went on to capture Mindoro, where air bases were established for the invasion of Luzon. The 6th Army invaded Luzon on the 9th January 1945.<sup>2</sup>

Up till this time the policy in the South-West Pacific had been to contain by-passed Japanese forces in the hope that they would be impotent owing to lack of munitions and would waste away. It was clear that the American Chiefs of Staff intended that this policy should continue since in their directives they had authorized MacArthur to capture only Leyte and Luzon in the Philippines,<sup>3</sup> and on the 1st February at the Argonaut Conference General G.C. Marshall (Chief of Staff, U.S. Army) told the British Chiefs of Staff that it was not proposed to employ major American forces to mop up the Philippines, a task he assumed that Filipino guerrillas and the re-formed Philippine Army would undertake.

MacArthur had other ideas about the Philippines, and Blamey, having been forced by MacArthur to deploy a much larger force in the Mandated Territories than he had considered necessary, was not prepared to continue the purely defensive role of the American

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<sup>1</sup> See Volume IV, Chapter VII.

<sup>2</sup> See Volume IV, Chapter VIII.

<sup>3</sup> See Volume IV, pages 63 and 68.

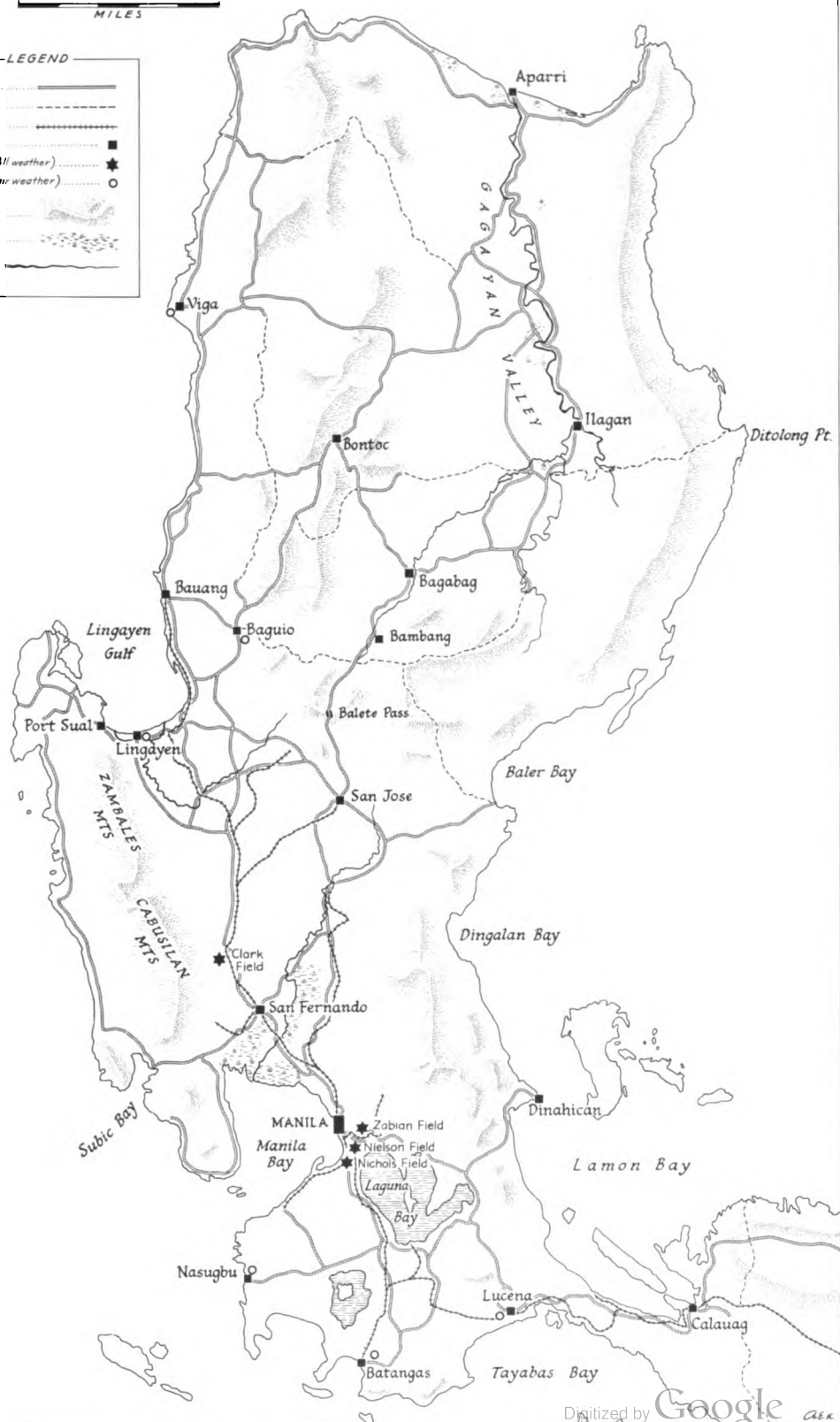


## NORTHERN LUZON

0 30  
MILES

## LEGEND

Roads	—
Tracks	- - -
Railways	+
Town site	■
Airfield (All weather)	★
(Fair weather)	○
Hills	⬤
Swamp	⬤
Rivers	—



forces he relieved and gave orders that Australian forces were to destroy enemy resistance as opportunity offered.

As early as the 26th September MacArthur had envisaged that, after the capture of Leyte by 6th Army, Eichelberger's 8th Army would move there and then clear the central and southern islands of the Philippines. On the 3rd February 1945 he told Marshall that it was important to recover the oilfields of Borneo to provide readily accessible oil for the advance on Japan and that he planned to use I Australian Corps for this purpose. He also proposed that after taking Borneo the Australian corps should go on to take Java in April. On the 6th February he went beyond his directives and ordered Eichelberger to begin operations for the clearance of the central and southern Philippines, supported by the amphibious force of the U.S. 7th Fleet (Vice-Admiral T. C. Kinkaid). The American Chiefs of Staff eventually accepted the *fait accompli* and on the 3rd April directed MacArthur to complete the liberation of the Philippines.

Before dealing with the clearance of the Philippine archipelago, it is necessary to follow up the story of the fighting on Luzon. By the 4th March Manila was captured and 6th U.S. Army had driven the Japanese defenders in three separate groups into the mountains: the *Shobu Group* of some 120,000 men under the direct command of Lieut.-General T. Yamashita in the north, the *Shimbu Group* of some 40,000 men in the mountains along the coast east of Manila, and the *Kembu Group* of some 10,000 men in the Cabusilan mountains on the west coast.<sup>1</sup> In order to shorten the distance from the base in Leyte Gulf to Manila, 6th and 8th Armies, on MacArthur's orders, sent detachments shortly after the capture of Manila to clear the Bicol Peninsula at the southern tip of Luzon and Samar Island respectively, thus opening the San Bernardino Strait.<sup>2</sup>

It was estimated that the *Shimbu* and *Kembu Groups*, which were harried by guerrillas and suffering from malnutrition, had by June been reduced to some 24,000 and 5,000 men respectively, and, since they offered no menace, they were left to their own devices. The main strength of the Japanese, the *Shobu Group*, held the general line Bauang-Baguio-Balete Pass-Baler Bay covering the 200-mile long Gagayan Valley which provided the only source of food in northern Luzon. Although Yamashita stripped the valley of food supplies, his forces were on starvation diet by the end of March and were riddled with fever and beri-beri. They nevertheless fought on

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<sup>1</sup> See Sketch 5, facing page 127, and Volume IV, Chapter VIII.

<sup>2</sup> See Sketch 7, facing page 130.

and, although 6th Army deployed five divisions and kept up continual pressure, it was not till the 13th May that the key positions at Baguio and on the Balet Pass were captured and Yamashita was forced to withdraw into mountains on the western side of the island. MacArthur had meanwhile decided to occupy the Gagayan Valley from the north but it was not until the 21st June that, in co-operation with a parachute attack south of the town, an amphibious force occupied Aparri. By the 26th Yamashita was completely surrounded in desolate mountainous country and, apart from patrol action, fighting died down. On the 30th June, 8th Army took over from 6th Army, which was required for the invasion of Japan. The 6th Army's casualties from the 9th January, when the first landing was made, to the end of June were 8,297 killed and 29,557 wounded.

Despite severe privations all three Japanese groups held out till the end of hostilities in August. When they surrendered, the *Shobu Group* had been reduced to about 50,000, the *Shimbu Group* to about 6,300 and the *Kembu Group* to only 1,500 men.

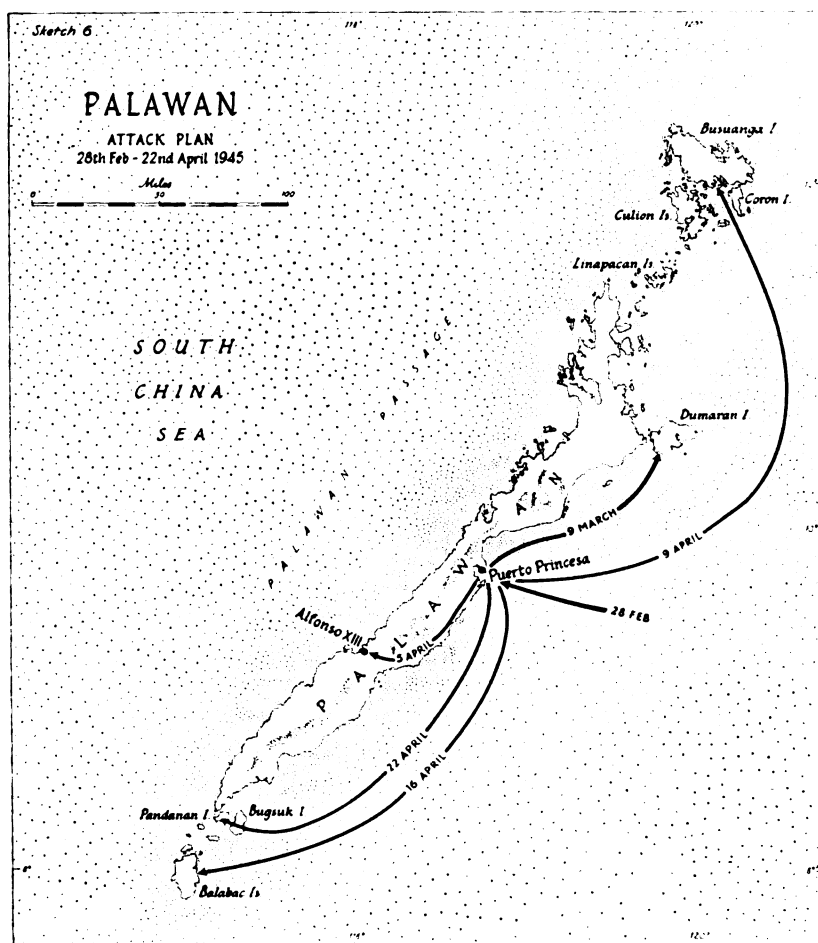
To fulfil his instructions to clear the Philippine archipelago Eichelberger (8th Army) decided to carry out a series of overlapping operations: the first to seize Palawan, the extreme western tip of Mindanao and Basilan and Jolo Islands in the Sulu archipelago with the direct object of establishing airfields to support operations in Borneo and securing the southern entrances to the Sulu Sea; the second to seize the Visayan Islands (Panay, Cebu, Negros and Bohol) which, except for the immediate vicinity of Manila, were the richest part of the archipelago; and the third to clear Mindanao.

Palawan, which was garrisoned by about 2,900 Japanese in various parts of the main and off-shore islands, was invaded on the 28th February when part of 41st U.S. Division, supported by 6th Amphibious Group, landed at Puerto Princesa.<sup>1</sup> Apart from some scattered small-arms fire there was no resistance until the retreating Japanese reached the foothills to the west. Even there it was short lived, and by the 2nd March all Japanese had disappeared into the mountains. The all-weather airstrip near Puerto Princesa was in operation on the 20th and came into use to support operations in the southern Philippines and Borneo, and for strikes against the Asiatic mainland by heavy bombers in April and May. By the 22nd April Palawan and the off-shore islands to its north and south had been cleared at the expense of a few small actions and negligible casualties.

On the 10th March the rest of 41st Division, supported by 6th Amphibious Group, landed on the north-western extremity of

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<sup>1</sup> See Sketch 6, page 129.



Mindanao and quickly occupied Zamboanga and its airfield, the Japanese garrison of an independent mixed brigade withdrawing into the mountainous interior of the Zamboanga Peninsula where it lingered isolated until the end of the war.<sup>1</sup> Basilan Island was also occupied on the 10th March, thus securing the use of the Basilan Strait.<sup>2</sup> Detachments were also sent to occupy key points in the Sulu archipelago. The Tawi-Tawi Islands, only some thirty miles from the Borneo coast, were occupied on the 2nd April and the island of Jolo on the 9th April, though here the Japanese held out in the interior till the end of June.

<sup>1</sup> See Sketch 7, facing page 130.

<sup>2</sup> See Sketch 9, facing page 138.

The clearance of the Visayan Islands began on the 18th March when 40th Division, supported by 9th Amphibious Group, landed on Panay at a point twelve miles from the capital, Iloilo, to be welcomed by Filipino guerrillas.<sup>1</sup> Most of the Japanese garrison of 2,750 men were in position covering Iloilo but abandoned it on the 19th, leaving much of it in flames. Harassed by guerrillas, they escaped to the hills where they remained until the end of the war. The next island to be attacked was Negros where there were about 13,000 Japanese. The landing by 40th Division on the 29th March on beaches half-way down the western coast was unopposed and only slight opposition was met on the outskirts of Bacolod and its airfield, both of which were occupied on the 5th April. The Japanese withdrew to prepared positions in the foothills where they held out until the 4th June before being driven deep into the mountains of the interior and left to waste away.

Cebu Island, to which Lieut.-General S. Suzuki, his staff and some of the remnants of 35th Army had withdrawn at the end of the Leyte campaign, was garrisoned by some 14,500 men.<sup>2</sup> On the 26th March the Americal Division landed on the beaches to the west of Cebu city, which were found to be heavily mined.<sup>3</sup> The city, the second largest industrial centre in the Philippines, was occupied on the 27th March, the Japanese having withdrawn to prepared positions to its north, but it was not till the 18th April that they were forced to retire into the mountains in the interior of the island. On the 10th April Suzuki and his staff attempted to make their way to Mindanao in five small craft which were spotted on the 19th and bombed. Suzuki was killed but most of his staff survived and reached Cagayan on the 20th. The reserve regiment of the Americal Division landed on Bohol on the 11th April and had cleared it by the 20th. It then moved across to the south-east coast of Negros on the 26th April and all resistance in the island ceased on the 12th June. The occupation of the Visayan group cost the Americans 835 killed and 2,300 wounded. Approximately 500 Japanese were taken prisoner and it was estimated that about 10,000 were killed. Many more were killed by guerrillas or died of starvation and the number which surrendered at the end of the war was only some 17,500.

The only island of any importance left in Japanese hands was now the largest, Mindanao. On the completion of his New Guinea campaign MacArthur had intended to land in the south of Mindanao and use it as a stepping-stone to the capture of Luzon, but on the 8th September 1944 the American Chiefs of Staff had ordered him to

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<sup>1</sup> See Sketch 7, facing page 130.

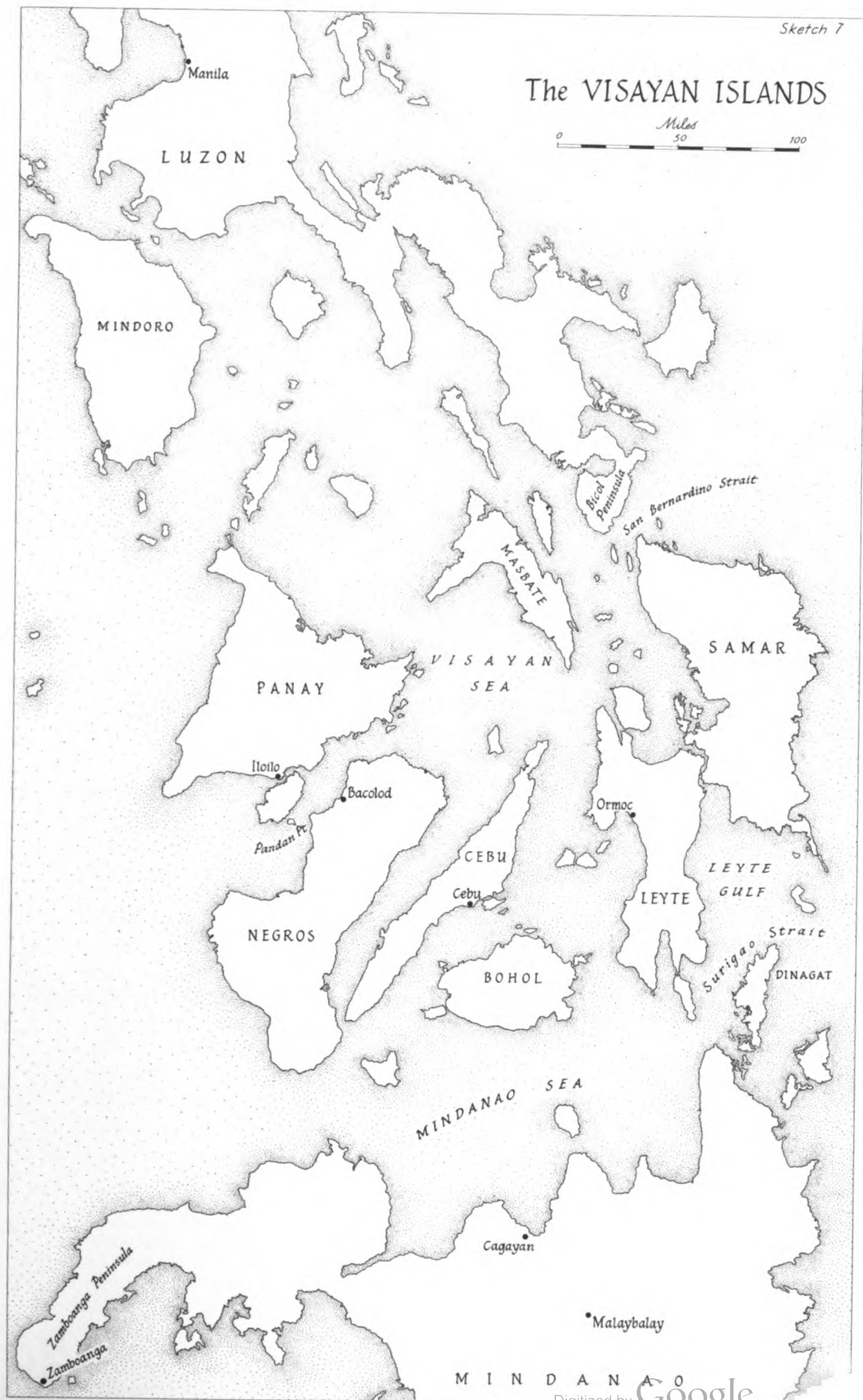
<sup>2</sup> See Volume IV, Chapter VII.

<sup>3</sup> The Americal Division was so named when it was sent to New Caledonia in January 1942; see Volume II, pages 221-2.



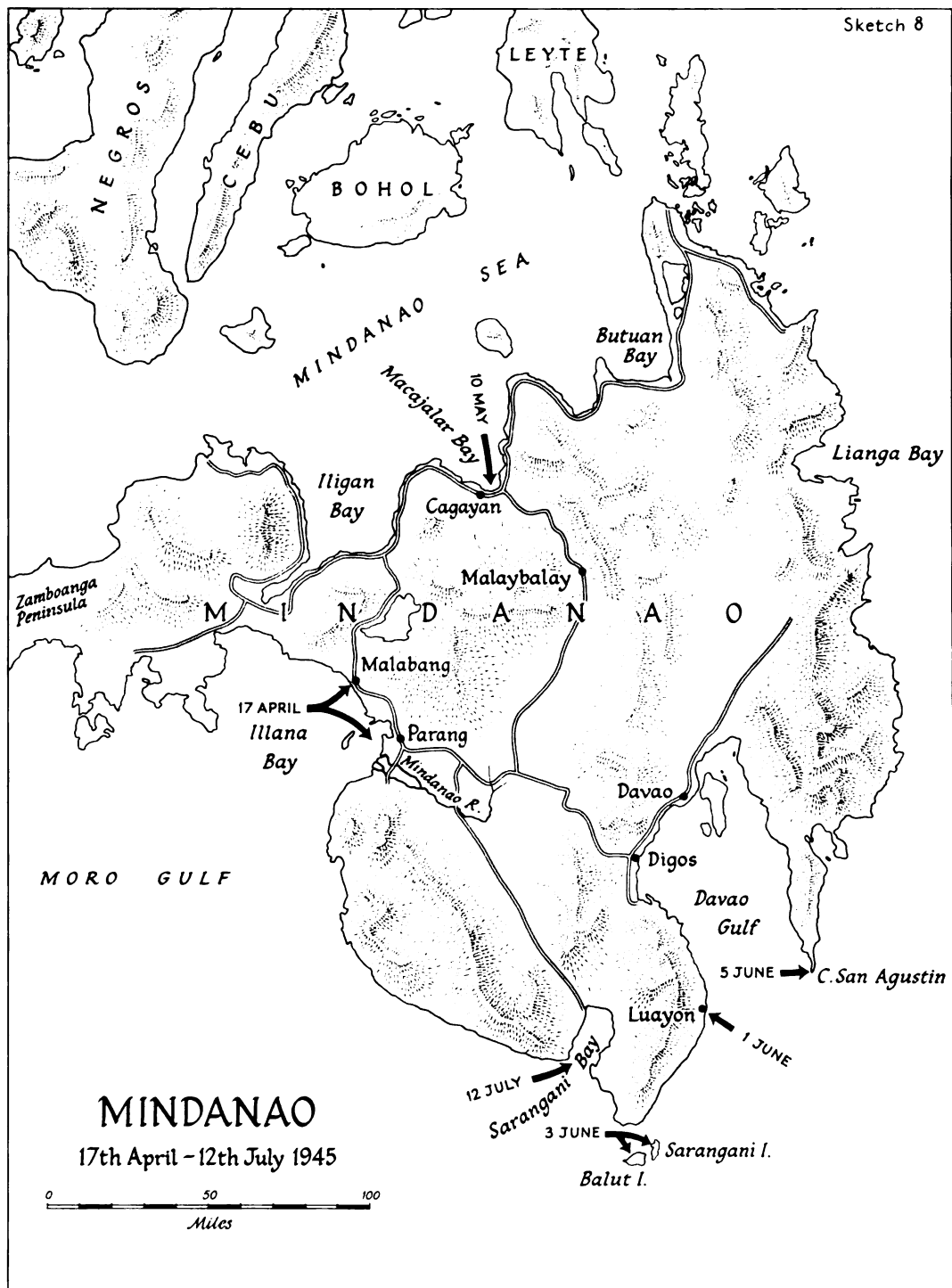
# The VISAYAN ISLANDS

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by-pass it and assault Leyte.<sup>1</sup> The island which at one time was to be the first of the Philippines to be attacked thus turned out to be the last. The Japanese had prepared their defences in Mindanao on the assumption that any attack would come from the south and be directed on Davao.<sup>2</sup> The garrison of over 43,000 men, under command of Lieut.-General G. Morozumi, consisted of *100th Division* and *32nd Naval Base Force* located at Davao, *74th Infantry Regiment* at Malaybalay in the centre of the island and *30th Division* (which was about half its normal strength since two regiments had been sent to help in the defence of Leyte)<sup>3</sup> located at Cagayan on the north coast.<sup>4</sup> The *54th Independent Mixed Brigade* was already isolated by guerrillas in the Zamboanga area. Although these formations appeared to be of considerable strength, they were confined to the main towns and main roads by some 25,000 Filipino guerrillas who occupied about nine-tenths of the island.

Supported by 8th Amphibious Group, X Corps, consisting of 24th Division from Mindoro and 31st Division from Morotai, landed unopposed on the 17th April at Parang and Malabang in the Illana Bay area on the west coast. Assisted by a naval force moving up the navigable portion of the Mindanao River, 24th Division reached Digos and Davao Gulf on the 27th April; it then turned north and entered Davao on the 3rd May, the Japanese having withdrawn to prepared positions astride the Malaybalay road to the north of the town. As soon as a base had been established at Davao the division began to move into the interior, but it was not till the 10th June that the Japanese were forced to withdraw towards Malaybalay. The 31st Division, which had moved north-east on Cagayan, was held up short of its objective by the 5th May and a regimental combat team from 40th Division was therefore landed in the Macajalar Bay area on the 10th. On the 23rd it joined hands with 31st Division, thus forcing *30th Division* back towards Malaybalay. Once the Japanese had been driven into the interior additional landings were made at Luayon and at Cape San Agustin on the 1st and 5th June, on the islands off the southern tip of Mindanao on the 3rd June and in Sarangani Bay on the 12th July, the point at which MacArthur had intended to make the first landing in 1944. As was usual in this island fighting, the Japanese continued to hold out in the mountains and there they were left to the care of the guerrillas until the end of hostilities. When they surrendered in August their numbers had been reduced to about 22,500.

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<sup>1</sup> See Volume IV, page 63.

<sup>2</sup> See Sketch 8, facing page 131.

<sup>3</sup> See Volume IV, page 83 and fn. 3.

<sup>4</sup> There were also nearly 13,000 Japanese civilians on the island.

The relief of the American forces in New Guinea, New Britain and Bougainville by 1st Australian Army (Sturdee) was completed by the end of December 1944.<sup>1</sup> Sturdee set up his headquarters at Lae in New Guinea,<sup>2</sup> and disposed 6th Australian Division (Major-General J. E. S. Stevens) at Aitape, a hundred miles east of the border with Dutch New Guinea, and 8th Australian Brigade at Madang, 250 miles along the coast to the east. Between them was the Japanese *18th Army* (now consisting of *20th*, *41st* and *51st Divisions*) which had been cut off in the Wewak area by mid-1944.<sup>3</sup> From New Guinea, where it had been containing the Japanese in Wewak from its base at Madang, 5th Australian Division (Major-General A. H. Ramsay) moved to New Britain and came into patrol contact with troops of *8th Area Army* (*17th* and *38th Divisions* and *39th* and *65th Brigades*) which were holding the isolated Japanese base for the South-West Pacific at Rabaul, on the north end of the island.<sup>4</sup> On Bougainville, the northernmost island in the Solomons, II Australian Corps (Savage) was disposed with 3rd Australian Division and 11th Brigade at Torokina and, to provide a guard for airfields against the remote contingency of a Japanese attack, Headquarters 23rd Brigade and one of its battalions were sent to Green Island, seventy-five miles north of Bougainville, one battalion to Emerau Island, north of New Ireland, and one to Treasury Island to the south of Bougainville. The headquarters of the Japanese *17th Army* (*6th Division* and *38th Brigade*) was at Buin at the south-eastern end of Bougainville.

General Blamey decided that 1st Army should take the offensive and issued instructions that in Bougainville II Corps was to destroy the Japanese forces in the south of the island, that in New Britain 5th Division was to prevent the Japanese in the Rabaul area extending their perimeter and carry out offensive patrolling and minor raids, and that in New Guinea 6th Division was to contain *18th Army* in the Wewak area and take every opportunity to destroy it. In carrying out these operations, however, the Australians were not to become involved in a major offensive. Blamey had three main reasons for taking his decision: the isolated Japanese garrisons were tying down Australian forces which could be used elsewhere, and would continue to do so until rendered impotent; his troops would deteriorate if they remained on the defensive; and it was politically desirable to regain control over the areas of which Australia was the

<sup>1</sup> The formations relieved were 32nd, 37th, 40th and Americal Divisions plus one regiment.

<sup>2</sup> See Map 6, facing page 125. Sturdee took over from Headquarters New Guinea Force at Lae which had previously commanded the Australians in New Guinea. The troops in New Guinea and New Britain came under his direct command.

<sup>3</sup> See Volume III, Chapter XXX.

<sup>4</sup> Ramsay exchanged commands with Major-General H. C. H. Robertson of 11th Australian Division in April. Robertson later went to command 6th Australian Division.

guardian. It must be remembered also that in some areas Japanese were farming good land for their own use to the detriment of the local inhabitants. There can be little doubt that MacArthur was influenced by the same considerations when he decided to mop up the southern Philippines.

Despite the fact that they were numerically inferior in each area the Australians began to take offensive action in December 1944, and by the end of February 1945 had reversed the situation in these areas. On Bougainville II Corps had gained control of the greater part of the centre of the island; in New Britain 5th Division was in touch with Japanese outposts covering the Rabaul defences; and in New Guinea 6th Division had thrust eastwards from the Aitape area and was in touch with the Japanese *18th Army* halfway between Aitape and Wewak. The offensives in all these areas were continued in varying degrees till the Japanese surrender in August 1945.

On Bougainville Island the main enemy force, now greatly reduced in strength by sickness and battle casualties, was by June hemmed into a small area around Buin, while smaller groups were confined around Bonis and in the Kieta area. This was approximately the position when the war ended. The Australian campaign on Bougainville cost 2,088 casualties (516 killed), but it was estimated that 8,500 Japanese had been killed and 9,800 died of illness or malnutrition during the campaign. The number of Japanese (including civilians) that surrendered was 23,571.

On New Britain 5th Division made no attempt to attack the main Japanese defences covering Rabaul, for to defend them *8th Area Army* had some five experienced and comparatively well-fed, though under-strength, divisions on the peninsula, which is joined to the main part of New Britain by a twenty-one mile wide isthmus. The Australians decided to secure the isthmus as a base from which to keep patrol watch on the main defences and to prevent the Japanese forces infiltrating into the main part of the island. By late February, after a series of small amphibious landings, troops of 5th Division were within striking distance of the isthmus on both the north and south coasts, and in three weeks of fighting in very difficult country in March had driven the Japanese from their positions covering it. By the 28th March 5th Division was firmly established on the isthmus, and thereafter confined its operations to patrolling to watch the main Japanese positions to give warning of any threatened offensive. The campaign in New Britain cost the Australians 214 casualties (of which forty-two were killed and 122 wounded in the isthmus fighting) and at the end of the war some 90,000 Japanese surrendered.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Over 11,000 Japanese surrendered in New Ireland to which no American or Australian troops had been sent. The number who surrendered in the two islands included nineteen Generals, eleven Admirals and 4,700 other officers.

In New Guinea 6th Australian Division launched an offensive in March to drive *18th Army* away from the north coast. Although the Japanese were in very poor shape, being short of food, equipment and ammunition, they fought stubbornly to defend their base at Wewak and the areas they had cultivated around Maprik on which they depended for the greater part of their food supplies. By the end of April the airfield at Maprik in the mountains and the airfields around Dagua on the coast had been occupied. Wewak was captured at the end of May and the remnants of *18th Army* forced to take refuge in the mountainous areas in the interior, hemmed in by 6th Division holding the Maprik and Wewak areas and by 8th Australian Brigade (based on Madang) operating in the Hansa Bay–Ramu River area. The 6th Division incurred 1,533 casualties (422 killed) during the campaign, but had over 16,000 men admitted to hospital suffering from malaria, skin diseases, typhus and other tropical ailments. The Australians took 269 prisoners and estimated they had killed some 9,000 Japanese. This estimate cannot have been far out for when *18th Army* surrendered its strength (including civilians) was only about 13,000 men.<sup>1</sup>

Although Blamey's reasons for offensive operations in the Mandated Territories seem sound and reasonable it was inevitable in the circumstances that there should have been severe criticism, particularly in regard to the offensives in Bougainville and New Guinea where casualties were considerable. A regimental historian wrote of Bougainville that 'every life lost was begrudged'.<sup>2</sup> A negative defensive policy would have saved many lives, but its moral effect on both the islanders and the troops would have been hard to assess. What can be said is that, whatever their feelings, the Australian forces carried out the duties given them without demur, and it is to their everlasting credit that they did so. It is perhaps noteworthy that the American Chiefs of Staff made no protest when MacArthur adopted a similar policy in the Philippines.

The 1st Australian Corps (Morshead) began to concentrate on Morotai for its operations against Borneo on the 22nd February 1945. While it was assembling, serious and sometimes acrimonious arguments had developed over the use of the British Pacific Fleet. The American Chiefs of Staff and especially Admiral E. J. King were in favour of its being used to support the Borneo operations and suggested that a base for it should be established at Brunei in British North Borneo. Nimitz on the other hand wanted it to be

<sup>1</sup> In 1942 the strength of *18th Army* in New Guinea was some 140,000 men.

<sup>2</sup> Long, *Australia in the War of 1939–1945, The Final Campaigns* (Canberra, 1963) page 238.



under his command for his forthcoming operations in the Ryukyus where he expected desperate fighting, and the British Chiefs of Staff were of like mind. On the 14th March Admiral Sir Bruce Fraser (Commander-in-Chief, British Pacific Fleet) was ordered to join Nimitz.<sup>1</sup> The operations in Borneo were therefore supported by American naval forces.

The Japanese force in Borneo consisted of *37th Army*, with headquarters at Jesselton in north Borneo, ten battalions in Brunei and north Borneo, a battalion and a half at Kuching and a similar force at Bandjermasin, a battalion and a naval force at Balikpapan, a battalion and a naval unit at Tarakan and a battalion at Miri.<sup>2</sup> It will be noted that, except for the big concentration in the Brunei and north Borneo areas, the detachments were spread round the coast. The I Australian Corps consisted of 7th Division (Major-General E. J. Milford) and 9th Division (Major-General G. F. Wootten). The first place in Borneo to be captured was Tarakan island off the east coast. The island, some sixteen miles long and eleven miles wide at its broadest point, was garrisoned by *455th Battalion* and *2nd Naval Garrison Unit* with a total strength of 1,700 men. There were in addition some 400 Japanese civilians. Since the approaches had been liberally mined by the Allies to prevent tankers from loading at the port, minesweeping began on the 27th April, and on the 30th, covered by fire from ships of the U.S. 7th Fleet, engineers cleared gaps in the four rows of underwater obstacles which protected the beaches. On the 1st May, under cover of bombardment by three cruisers and six destroyers,<sup>3</sup> 26th Australian Brigade Group was put ashore by 6th U.S. Amphibious Group at about 9 a.m.<sup>4</sup> There was little opposition to the landing itself but the Japanese put up a determined resistance in the town and on the hills overlooking the beaches. These were secured on the 4th and the town and airfield were occupied on the 5th. The enemy, however, still held strong points on the high ground commanding the airfield and the town and continued to fight for every hill. Despite constant support by aircraft of 1st Tactical Air Force R.A.A.F. and 13th U.S.A.A.F. it took about seven weeks to secure the whole island and organized resistance did not cease until the 24th June. The capture of the island cost the Australians 225 killed and 669 wounded. A total of 1,540 Japanese dead were counted and 252 surrendered; the

<sup>1</sup> For details of the argument over the role of the British Pacific Fleet see Ehrman, *Grand Strategy, Volume VI* (H.M.S.O., 1956), pages 220-6.

<sup>2</sup> See Sketch 9, facing page 138.

<sup>3</sup> These included the Australian cruiser *Hobart* and destroyer *Warramunga*.

<sup>4</sup> The 26th Australian Brigade Group consisted of three infantry battalions, a field regiment, a composite anti-aircraft regiment, three field companies, two pioneer battalions, a commando and an armoured car squadron and a machine-gun company, together with medical units; total strength 11,800 men.

rest of the garrison held out till the end of the war, when some 300 men gave themselves up.

The 9th Australian Division (less 26th Brigade) was given the task of assaulting Brunei Bay. The Japanese garrison of the area consisted of four battalions of 56th I.M.B.: the 371st on Labuan Island, the 366th and 367th at Brunei and the 368th at Beaufort. Extensive minesweeping began on the 7th June, during which one American minesweeper was sunk, and air attacks on targets on Labuan Island and Brooketon at the entrance to the bay were made between the 5th and 9th. On the 10th, under cover of a bombardment by four cruisers and seven destroyers, the amphibious group landed 24th Brigade on Labuan Island and 20th Brigade near Brooketon. The landings met with no opposition. The Labuan airstrip was occupied on the 10th, although an enemy detachment held out on the high ground to its west till the 21st. By the 15th, 20th Brigade had occupied Brunei town and two battalions from 24th Brigade had crossed to the east side of the bay where, by an encircling movement, they occupied Beaufort on the 28th. Meanwhile the minesweepers had moved to the Miri-Lutong area on the 12th where they swept 338 mines. Moving along the coast 20th Brigade occupied the oil town of Seria by the 21st and then a battalion, moved by sea, landed at Lutong and seized the Miri area in Sarawak. By the 1st July the whole area had been secured for the loss of 114 Australians and 4 Americans killed and 221 wounded. The Japanese bodies counted and buried totalled 1,234 and 130 prisoners were taken.

The task of capturing Balikpapan with its two oilfields and two airstrips was allotted to 7th Australian Division.<sup>1</sup> The Japanese garrison consisted of 22nd *Special Naval Base Force* (two battalions plus static troops) and 454th *Battalion* with a strength of some 4,000 men. Since the hills overlooking the town were known to be defended and the approaches to the port had been heavily mined by both the Allies and the Japanese, extensive preliminary operations had to be undertaken. Covered by a bombardment of the coast defences by a small naval force, the minesweepers began their task on the 15th June. The preliminary bombardment of the Japanese positions on the hills east of the town commanding the landing beaches was begun on the 17th June by a force of four cruisers (of which one was Australian and one Dutch) and nine destroyers (of which one was Australian) as well as by aircraft which, since bad weather had delayed the completion of the Tarakan airfield, had to operate

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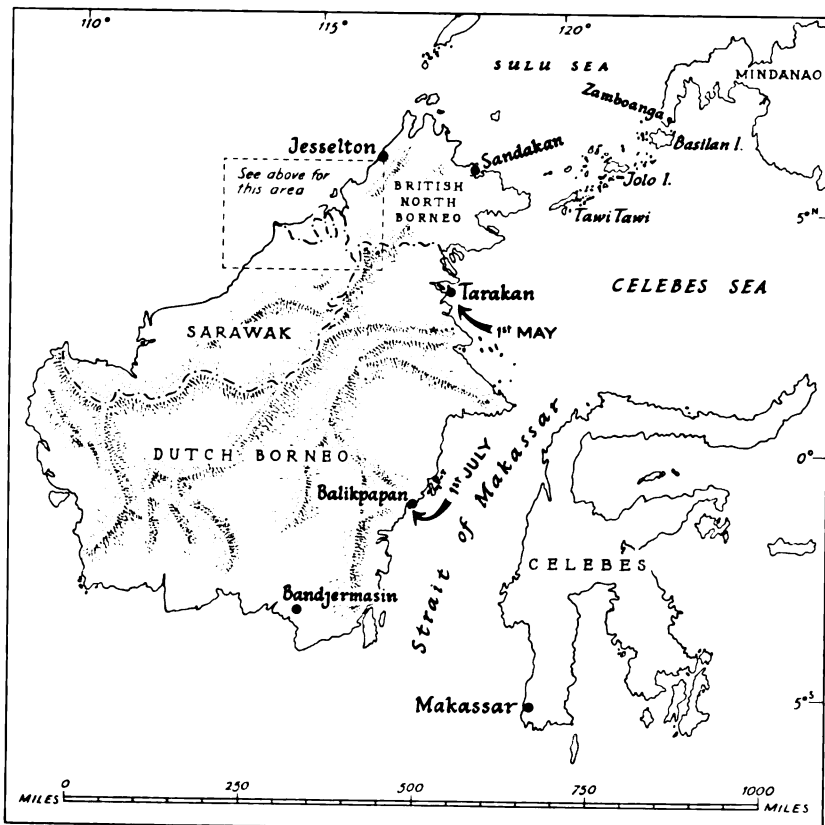
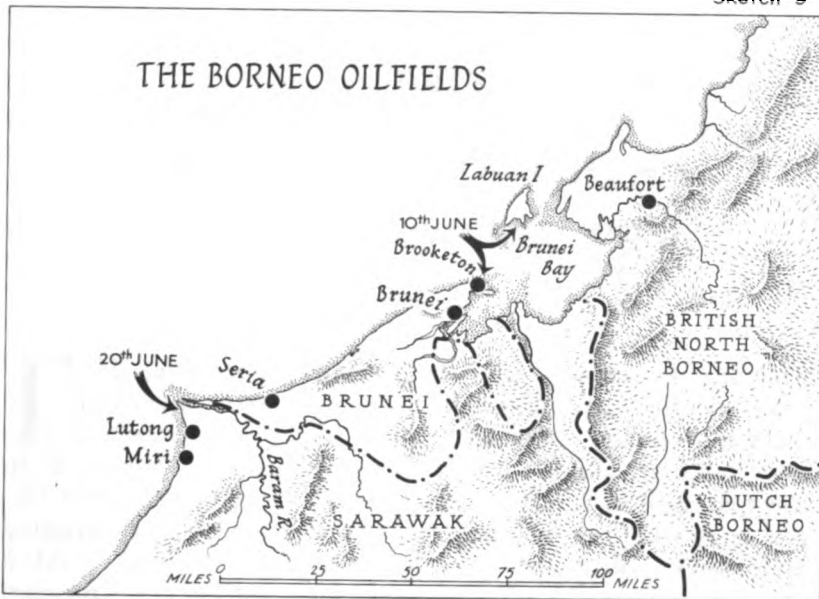
<sup>1</sup> The total strength of the Allied force, including 7th Australian Division, corps and base troops as well as R.A.A.F. and other Allied air units, was 33,500. The two oilfields were respectively twenty-five and fifty miles inland north-east of Balikpapan and oil was piped to a refinery near the port.

almost at the limit of their range from Tawi Tawi. Despite intensive aerial bombardment and covering fire from warships the mine-sweepers had a difficult time, but completed their task by the 1st July. Three of their number were sunk and five damaged. Between the 25th and 30th, American underwater demolition teams made breaches in the formidable obstacles which the Japanese had erected both offshore and on the beaches. During this period Japanese aircraft were active which caused Kinkaid to ask Nimitz for escort carriers, three of which, with their escorting destroyers, arrived on the 1st July.

Under cover of an intensive two-hour bombardment, the Australians were landed by 8th U.S. Amphibious Group on beaches south of the town at 9 a.m. on the 1st July with negligible losses. As soon as they fanned out from the beaches to gain a bridgehead they found the Japanese holding well-prepared defences on the high ground east of the town; resistance was, as usual, determined but, supported by naval gunfire, 7th Division made steady progress. The airfield five miles to the east was occupied on the 2nd and the town and port on the 3rd. By the 9th the second airfield was occupied and shortly afterwards, the coast opposite Balikpapan having been cleared, the port was brought into use. The Japanese were gradually driven north and the nearest oilfield was occupied on the 18th. By the end of July the Japanese had withdrawn into the interior and fighting came to an end. The operation cost the Australians 229 killed and 634 wounded; 1,783 Japanese were buried and 63 taken prisoner.

All three objectives in Borneo had now been captured.







## CHAPTER XIV

# OPERATIONS IN CHINA

(December 1944—August 1945)

*See Map 15*

THE Japanese offensive in east China (operation 'Ichi-Go') had come to an end early in December 1944 with the occupation of the whole of the Changsha-Liuchow-Tuhshan and Hengyang-Canton railways as well as Nanning and the road to the Indo-China border.<sup>1</sup> The consequent threat to Kunming and Chungking and the road connecting them through Kweiyang had led Lieut.-General A. C. Wedemeyer (Commanding General of American forces in China and Chief of Staff to Chiang Kai-shek)<sup>2</sup> to prepare a plan ('Alpha') for the concentration of thirty-four of the most reliable Chinese divisions in the Kweiyang-Tuhshan-Poseh-Mengtzu-Kunming area to cover the possible Japanese lines of approach to Kunming.<sup>3</sup> Since the Chinese armies were in poor shape and it would take a long time to reorganize and equip them, he had obtained permission from the Combined Chiefs of Staff to bring the 'Alpha' force up to a total of thirty-six divisions by transferring two of the American-trained Chinese divisions from Burma where they had been operating on the Northern front, and also to transfer the American formation, Mars Force, to provide American personnel to train and advise the Chinese divisions.<sup>4</sup>

The fact that the Japanese made no further efforts early in 1945 to advance into Kweichow province enabled Wedemeyer to consider a plan ('Beta') for an offensive by August/September 1945 to recapture Kweilin, Liuchow and a port on the China coast in the Canton-Hong Kong area. This plan was accepted in principle by the Generalissimo, who informed Mountbatten in March that he hoped to prepare thirteen armies each of three divisions for the purpose. Of these thirty-nine divisions, eleven were to be found from the Yunnan armies and five from S.E.A.C., including the remaining three American-trained Chinese divisions still operating in S.E.A.C. This meant that all Chinese assistance towards the recapture of

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<sup>1</sup> See Map 15, facing page 546 and Volume IV, pages 121-2.

<sup>2</sup> See Volume IV, page 123.

<sup>3</sup> See Volume IV, page 124.

<sup>4</sup> See Volume IV, Chapters XI, XXIV and XXVII.

Burma would quickly come to an end, a fact which Mountbatten and the Chiefs of Staff were able to accept by the end of March owing to the success of 14th Army's offensive in central Burma. It was therefore agreed that the remaining three Chinese divisions would be transferred to China during June 1945.

While Wedemeyer was preparing his plans to defend the Kweiyang-Kunming area and was considering an offensive later in the year, Japanese policy in China underwent a complete change. In December 1944 General Y. Okamura, who had been commander of *North China Area Army* and *6th Area Army*, was appointed Commander-in-Chief *China Expeditionary Force*. He submitted plans to *Imperial General Headquarters* for an offensive to be launched in March 1945 from Hengyang and Liuchow to capture Chihkiang (an American air base) and Kweiyang respectively, followed by an advance on Chungking (the seat of the Chinese National Government) and Chengtu (another American air base) in the hope that such an operation might end the war in China and bring about the fall of the Chiang Kai-shek régime.

*Imperial General Headquarters* were, however, doubtful whether, in view of the manpower and material available, a drive on Szechwan province would be successful, especially as it appeared that the course of the war in Europe was strengthening the will of Chiang Kai-shek's Nationalist régime to continue fighting. Furthermore, there was the risk that the operation envisaged by Okamura might hinder the build-up of the defences in the strategic areas around Japan now threatened by the American Pacific offensive. They were therefore not prepared to engage in major operations in the far hinterland of China.

In January 1945 they told him that the main mission of *China Expeditionary Force* was henceforth to concentrate the bulk of its strength in the coastal region of south and central China, particularly in the lower reaches of the Yangtze River, to repel a possible invasion by American forces. Every effort was to be made to neutralize the American air force in China by raids, and to bring about the destruction of Chiang Kai-shek's régime by political rather than by military means. By internal reorganization and by the despatch from Japan of some 230,000 men the strength of *China Expeditionary Force* was to be increased by a quarter, bringing its total strength to about a million men organized into thirty infantry divisions, a tank division, twenty independent mixed brigades, eleven independent infantry brigades, thirteen independent garrison units and a cavalry brigade.<sup>1</sup> Even so, the efficiency of the expeditionary force was not

<sup>1</sup> For the skeleton order of battle of *China Expeditionary Force* see Appendix 12.



high owing to its general standard of training and lack of equipment.

Okamura made *23rd Army* responsible for south-east China around Canton, *13th Army* for the lower reaches of the Yangtze River and *North China Area Army* for the coast in the vicinity of Tsingtao. The *6th Area Army* was to hold the existing occupied areas in central China and to endeavour to destroy the Chinese armies in that area. Since, after the loss of its airfields in eastern China in 1944, the American air force had begun to build large numbers of airfields in Yunnan, Kweichow, Hunan and Szechwan provinces, and had stepped up its attacks on river shipping, airfields and railways in north-east China, Okamura decided to destroy the air bases at Laohokow and Chihkiang. The former operation was to be carried out by *12th Army* (part of *North China Area Army*) and the latter by *20th Army* (part of *6th Area Army*).

The advance on Laohokow began on the 12th March and the airfields in the vicinity were occupied without difficulty by the 8th April. The attempt to occupy Chihkiang began on the 15th April but met with considerable resistance from the Chinese armies concentrated by Wedemeyer east of Kweiyang, reinforced by the two American-trained Chinese divisions from Burma which were hurriedly flown forward from Kunming. The offensive was halted in the mountainous area some fifty miles short of its objective and, with the Chinese armies launching enveloping attacks on both flanks, *20th Army* began on the 9th May to withdraw to its starting position west of Hengyang.

As a result of changing relations with Russia, *Imperial General Headquarters* found it necessary early in May to reinforce *Kwantung Army* in Manchuria and *17th Area Army* in Korea from *China Expeditionary Force*.<sup>1</sup> Okamura was therefore ordered to send an army headquarters and three divisions from *North China Area Army* and one division from *6th Area Army* to Korea and Manchuria in June, to evacuate the areas held along the Hankow-Canton and Hengyang-Tuhshan railways in Hunan, Kwangsi and Kiangsi provinces and to concentrate his forces around Canton, the Hankow-Wuchang area and in north China. On the 26th May Nanning was evacuated, thus giving up the land communications with Indo-China. In the next three months Liuchow, Kweilin and Hengyang were to be evacuated in that order, the formations which had been holding them moving north to increase the strength of *China Expeditionary Force* in north China. The *23rd Army*, reduced from six to three divisions, was to be left in south-east China to hold the Liuchow Peninsula, the Hong Kong-Canton area and Swatow. When the Japanese surrendered in the middle of August, Liuchow and Kweilin had been evacuated

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<sup>1</sup> See page 195.

and *6th Area Army* was rapidly withdrawing through Hengyang towards Hankow.

The first draft of Wedemeyer's 'Beta' plan was submitted to the Generalissimo on the 14th February 1945. It was based on the assumptions that the war in Europe would come to an end in May, that operations in the Pacific would continue as planned and force the Japanese armies in China to redeploy north and east to meet possible landings by American troops along the China coast, that the 4-inch oil pipeline from Myitkyina under construction alongside the Ledo Road would reach Kunming on the 15th July and that the Ledo Road and the air ferry route from India would together deliver 60,000 tons of goods a month. Its objects were to make use of the anticipated increase in the delivery of supplies to China to improve the military situation in China, to aid operations in the Pacific and to open a sea port on the China coast so that the China Theatre could take a more active role in the destruction of the Japanese forces in China. The plan was divided into four phases: the first, the capture of the Liuchow-Nanning area, the operation beginning about the 1st May; the second, the consolidation of the captured area; the third, the concentration of the forces needed for an advance to the Canton-Hong Kong area; and the fourth the offensive to capture that area. During the third phase Wedemeyer proposed to capture Fort Bayard at the northern end of the Liuchow Peninsula and to establish a coastal base at the port so that supplies for China could be brought in by ship to augment those brought overland from India. The 14th U.S.A.A.F. was to subordinate everything but the maintenance of local air superiority to the task of isolating the Japanese forces in southern China from their bases in north and central China.

The feasibility of this plan depended chiefly on two things: the ability of the air ferry and the Ledo Road to bring sufficient supplies from India to equip thirty-four Chinese divisions in time for them to be properly trained;<sup>1</sup> and on the transfer of the Chinese training establishments at Ramgarh in India and the three remaining American-trained divisions from India to China by way of the Ledo Road (thus bringing the number of Chinese divisions with American training to a total of thirty-nine).<sup>2</sup> The plan also depended on the presence of an adequate number of transport aircraft within China

<sup>1</sup> The two American-trained divisions previously transferred from Burma were already fully equipped and trained, thus bringing the total number of divisions to thirty-six.

<sup>2</sup> The move of these Chinese formations and units along the Ledo Road led to large-scale smuggling of goods from the bazaars in Assam to Kunming. The Indian Government therefore informed the Americans that the Ledo Road was to be used only for military operational purposes and asked them to tighten their control over it.

to move the Chinese forces eastwards to their concentration areas and to maintain them in the forward areas, since land communications in southern China were poor and the number of motor vehicles which could reach China by way of the Ledo Road could not possibly meet requirements. It was assumed that these extra transport aircraft would become available shortly after the defeat of Germany. The tonnage to be delivered to China from India would have to be increased from 43,000 tons in March to some 62,000 tons each month from May to August, of which some eighty-five per cent would be required for 'Beta'.<sup>1</sup>

In April Wedemeyer flew to Washington to explain his plan and its logistical requirements to the American Chiefs of Staff, who gave their approval to it on the 20th of the month. While there he was given a paper for his guidance on American policy towards China, a paper which was subject to revision in the light of later developments. It stated that the short-term objective in China was to unify all China's resources for war against Japan, while the long-term object was to help develop 'a united, democratically progressive and cooperative China'.<sup>2</sup>

The loss of Laohokow early in April had little effect on Wedemeyer's plan, although the enemy occupation of the airfields there rendered the task of 14th U.S.A.A.F. more difficult. To defeat the Japanese offensive against Chihkiang, which had to be held since its loss would interfere seriously with the first and second phases of the 'Beta' plan, Wedemeyer was forced to take aircraft off the air ferry route to move the two American-trained divisions already in China to the battle area and to supply the Chinese armies involved. As related, the operations were eventually successful but they severely upset the training programme of the Chinese divisions required for 'Beta'. Other factors too delayed the preparations for 'Beta': the number of motor vehicles arriving from India by way of the Ledo Road did not come up to expectations owing to the difficulty of finding reliable drivers, the poor condition of roads within China and the delays caused by bridges being put out of action by the monsoon; the non-arrival of the additional transport aircraft in the numbers expected; and the growth in the number of Americans in China (all of whom had to be fully maintained by the air ferry), which cut down the percentage of the monthly deliveries available for equipping the Chinese divisions from fifty-two per cent in January 1945 to twenty-five per cent in August.

The situation was improved as far as Wedemeyer was concerned

<sup>1</sup> For the actual tonnages delivered monthly by the air ferry and by road, and for the number of vehicles moved by road to China see Appendix 13.

<sup>2</sup> See Romanus and Sunderland, *United States Army in World War II: The China-Burma-India Theater, Time Runs Out in C.B.I.* (Washington, 1959), pages 336-7.

by the withdrawal of the Japanese forces from southern China, which began towards the end of May. The offensive to capture the Nanning-Liuchow area (the first phase of 'Beta') thus became unnecessary and all that the Chinese armies had to do was to follow up the retreating Japanese and bring such pressure to bear on them as possible. Wedemeyer therefore revised his plan in June. Having occupied the Nanning-Liuchow-Kweilin area without a fight he now prepared to use it as a base for the attack on the Canton-Hong Kong area in the last quarter of 1945. He proposed to use four Chinese divisions, supplied by air from the airfields at Liuchow and at Tanchu (when captured), to take Fort Bayard on the 1st August, and then on the 1st September to move to the east and occupy suitable concentration areas for the assault on Canton which was to begin on the 1st November. To supply the forces for the November offensive, the American Chiefs of Staff agreed that after the capture of Fort Bayard they would allocate five Liberty ships a month to transport packaged P.O.L. products, vehicles, ammunition, steel airstrip matting, food supplies and tentage there, and that an airlift would be organized to carry 15,000 tons of mixed supplies to the airfields at Tanchu, Liuchow and Kweilin. This would supplement an airlift of 15,000 tons a month forward from Kunming and give a total of 30,000 tons a month in the forward area, which would be sufficient to maintain the Chinese armies and enable them to take offensive action both north towards Hengyang and east towards Canton.

To support these offensives 10th U.S.A.A.F. was brought forward from India to Kunming in July 1945 and with 14th U.S.A.A.F. placed under command of Lieut.-General G. E. Stratemyer.<sup>1</sup> To increase the flow of supplies from India necessary to support the additional air strength, two new airfields were hurriedly built in India, one in Bengal and one in Assam, the airfields at Kharagpur (near Calcutta) originally built for the B.29s of 20th Bomber Command were handed to the American Air Transport Command and a new airfield was built at Bhamo in Burma to supplement the Myitkyina group of airfields.

Chinese troops had meanwhile occupied Ishan on the 10th June and Liuchow on the 1st July but did not capture Tanchu (with its airfield) until the 5th August. This delay held up the attack on Fort Bayard, although the Chinese troops advancing from Nanning were within twenty miles of the port by the 3rd. Since with the dropping of the atomic bombs and the entry of Russia into the war, it seemed likely that Japan would surrender, Wedemeyer was instructed by

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<sup>1</sup> Major-General C. L. Chennault, who had been in China for eight years and had commanded 14th U.S.A.A.F. since 1943, retired in July 1945.

Washington on the 12th to halt the advance and await developments.

The training of the thirty-nine divisions required by Wedemeyer to take Canton and follow up the retreating Japanese towards Hengyang was still in progress when the war ended. Only sixteen divisions (five from Burma and eleven from the Yunnan army) had had American training and were fully equipped; of the remaining twenty-three, none was fully equipped, eleven had done an American-sponsored thirteen weeks training cycle and twelve were undergoing it. No officers or N.C.O.s had yet passed through the training school opened by Wedemeyer in the summer of 1945, and the administrative arrangements for supplying the thirty-nine divisions were far from complete.<sup>1</sup> Most of the other 250 to 290 Chinese Nationalist divisions were under strength, untrained, undernourished and ill-equipped.<sup>2</sup> Apart from the sixteen divisions from Burma and Yunnan, the fighting value of Chiang Kai-shek's armies at the end of the war with Japan was thus negligible.

On the 30th July, when it appeared possible that the Japanese might surrender, the American Chiefs of Staff told Wedemeyer that it was not their desire to become involved in a campaign on the mainland of China other than by air, but it was desirable that ports on the China coast should be seized to facilitate the reoccupation of the country by Chiang Kai-shek's Nationalist Chinese forces.<sup>3</sup> In his reply Wedemeyer warned them that, since China was woefully unprepared for the coming of peace, Americans would inevitably be drawn in as advisers to Chinese officials (in a way similar to the advisory service then being given to the Chinese army) if a modicum of order was to be established in China.

At a meeting with the Generalissimo on the 31st July Wedemeyer pointed out that lend-lease to China would cease on the surrender of Japan and suggested that he should give serious attention to the problem of civil affairs in reoccupied territories. Wedemeyer said that he would do his best to assist in the movement of Chinese troops to occupy the ports of Shanghai, Pusan (in Korea), Taku, Canton and Tsingtao, in that order of priority, but gave warning that, unless Nationalist troops were disposed in such a way that they could control communications, ports, and financial and food centres, they

<sup>1</sup> The fighting strength of each of the five Chinese divisions transferred from Burma was about 10,000 men, but the strength of the remaining thirty-four divisions averaged only some 5,000 fighting men and some 4,000 non-combatants.

<sup>2</sup> Thirty-six of these divisions were located in the vicinity of Sian. A large number of them were watching Mao Tse-tung's Communist forces which held north-west China with headquarters at Yen-an.

<sup>3</sup> See Romanus and Sunderland, pages 389-90.

would be unable to undertake the disarmament, disposal and deportation of the Japanese forces on the Asiatic mainland. At this meeting the Generalissimo asked that American troops from the Pacific should be landed at Chinese ports to hold them until his forces could be flown in, but stipulated that any such forces should not be commanded by General Stilwell who had been Wedemeyer's predecessor in China.<sup>1</sup>

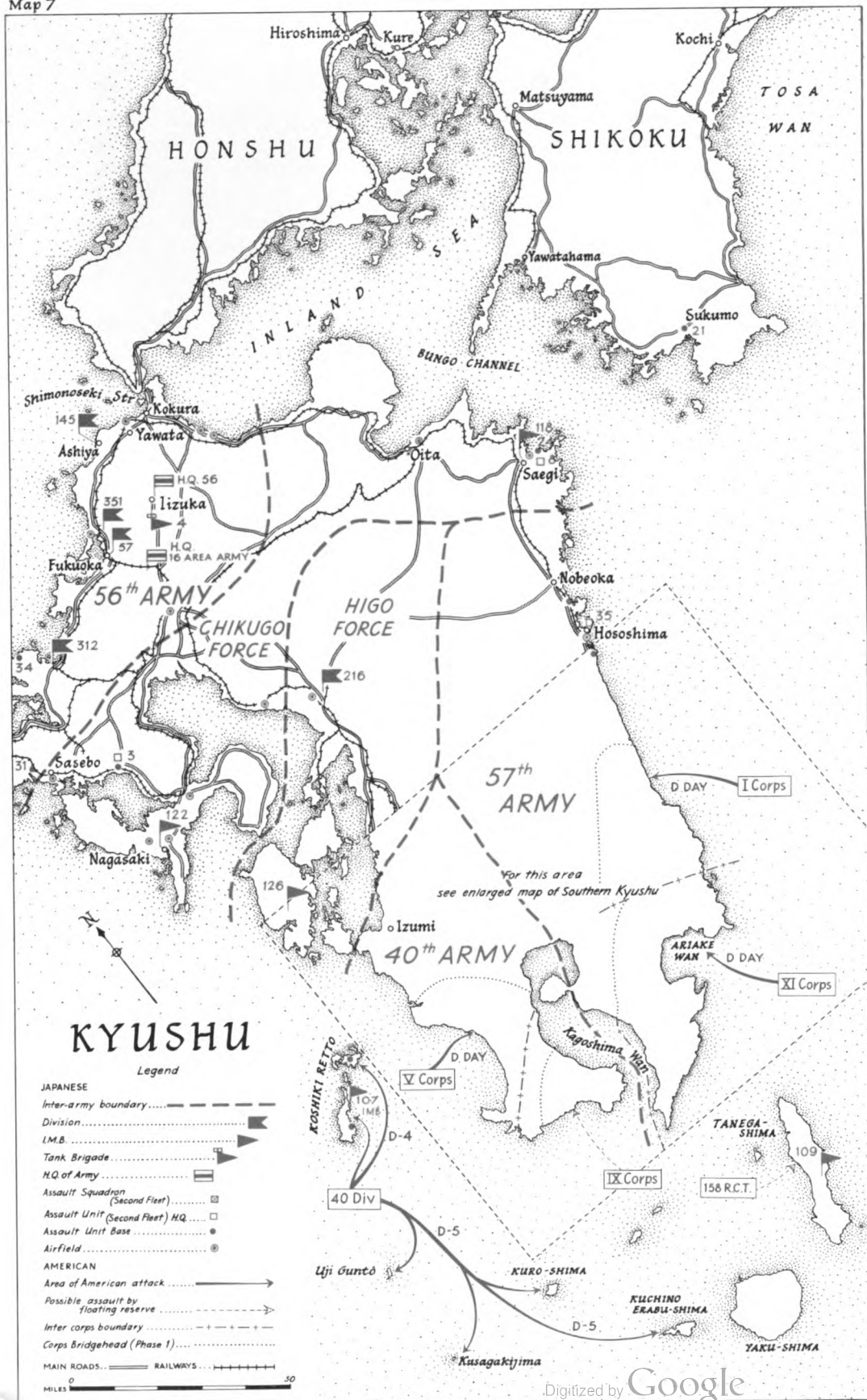
On the 10th August Wedemeyer received a new directive from the American Chiefs of Staff which, while leaving him with the tasks of advising and assisting the Generalissimo, made it clear that the United States Government would not support Chiang Kai-shek in any civil war in China. He was told that he would be given help by MacArthur and Nimitz to gain control of key ports and communications in China and that any troops sent for this purpose would come under his command, that the Generalissimo would have control over the surrender of Japanese troops in China (except those in Hong Kong), that any Japanese who surrendered to American troops were to be handed over to the Chinese and that he was to assist Chiang Kai-shek to move his forces to key areas within China.

Realizing the enormous problems facing China on the Japanese surrender and the possibility of the outbreak of a civil war, Wedemeyer told Washington that, since the American-sponsored Chinese divisions were not yet in a fit state to maintain order in China, Chiang Kai-shek's government could not be left without aid. He expressed his fear that the United States would lose the rewards of victory unless they took vigorous action in China, and urged that two American divisions should be sent to Shanghai, one to Taku and a regiment to Canton, that high priority should be given to the occupation of the remaining Chinese ports and that the Japanese should be forbidden to surrender to the Chinese Communists. He added that the Generalissimo, anxious to obtain American help in disarming and demobilizing Japanese forces, envisaged three occupation areas centred on Canton, Nanking and Peking with American officers as advisers to the Chinese area commanders. In reply he was told that he would get two American divisions and that these would arrive only piecemeal as shipping became available. On the 22nd August he received orders from Washington to suspend all training of Chinese troops, an order which meant breaking up not only the elaborate organization which he had built up for the training and operational control of the Chinese armies but also the system of securing liaison and giving advice to the Chinese at all levels.

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<sup>1</sup> See Volumes II, III and IV. Stilwell assumed command of 10th U.S. Army in Okinawa in June 1945: see page 122.







## CHAPTER XV

# PLANS FOR THE INVASION AND DEFENCE OF JAPAN

(April—August 1945)

*See Maps 3, 7, 8 and 9 and Sketch 11*

IN April 1945 *Imperial General Headquarters* came to the conclusion that Russia (who had denounced the Russo-Japanese Neutrality Pact on the 5th) might enter the war and attack both in Manchuria and Sakhalin, and that United States forces, already established in the Bonins and Ryukyus,<sup>1</sup> were likely to invade Kyushu with fifteen to twenty divisions in October 1945, followed by the invasion of Honshu in March 1946 with up to thirty divisions landing to the north and south of Choshi and in the Sagami Bay area directed on the Tokyo area.<sup>2</sup> They expected the Americans to intensify incendiary bombing attacks and the close blockade during the summer months and then concentrate on the destruction of the Japanese air forces and vital internal communications. Just before the invasion of Kyushu the American air force would turn to the tactical bombing of all military establishments and communications over a wide area around and beyond the selected landing beaches. These attacks, they feared, might well destroy all the air bases in Japan except those which were exceptionally well concealed, and so damage communications between the various islands that it would be advisable to decentralize control.

With these factors in mind *Imperial General Headquarters* drew up their plan for the defence of Japan ('Ketsu-Go')<sup>3</sup>. They divided the Japanese home territory and Korea into seven zones: *5th Area Army* in Hokkaido and Sakhalin under their direct command; *11th Area Army*, *12th Area Army* and *13th Area Army* in the northern part of Honshu under command of *First General Army*; *15th Area Army* in southern Honshu and *16th Area Army* in Kyushu under command of *Second General Army*; and *17th Area Army* in Korea under their direct command. The most likely invasion areas, Kyushu (*16th Area Army*) and the Tokyo area (*12th Area Army*), were allotted more than half

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<sup>1</sup> See Map 3, facing page 95.

<sup>2</sup> See Sketch 11, facing page 180.

<sup>3</sup> See page 97.

the available formations. These consisted of sixty-five infantry divisions, two armoured divisions, twenty-five independent mixed brigades, three guards brigades and seven tank brigades.<sup>1</sup> Although they expected that the various islands of Japan would be isolated from each other by the destruction of communications, including shipping, they made arrangements whereby one area should be prepared to reinforce another, all moves of formations being made where possible on foot; for example, if Kyushu were invaded, three divisions were to be moved into the island from *15th Area Army* and one from *13th Area Army*, bringing its garrison up to eighteen divisions and, if the initial invasion took place in the *12th Area Army* (Tokyo) area, it was to be reinforced by two divisions from Kyushu, three from *15th Area Army* and three from *11th Area Army*, bringing its garrison up to twenty-six divisions.

The *First* and *Second General Armies* were instructed to destroy the invaders on the beaches without the aid of air support. Continuous defences were therefore to be constructed covering possible landing beaches but beyond the effective range of naval bombardment, so that the Americans would find it difficult to extend their original beachheads, the greatest use being made of caves and tunnelled defence positions. Coastal defence divisions, which had little mobility but considerable artillery strength, were to contain the invaders in their beachheads for destruction by mobile assault divisions held in reserve at suitable points.<sup>2</sup> Once the invasion had been launched, divisions located in areas that were not threatened were to be brought into a central point or points to increase the reserve available for counter-attack.

All communications were to be unified under the control of the Transportation and Communications Ministry, whose primary aim would be to ensure that there was enough transport to concentrate and supply the troops as well as to supply the civilian population but, in the event of invasion, the army was to take over control of the railways.

*Imperial General Headquarters* emphasized the necessity for the Government, the people and the armed forces to be completely united and for the entire nation to be armed and ready to fight the invader. In those areas where only a small number of regular troops were disposed, guerrilla forces were to be organized and trained for espionage and sabotage. Although local inhabitants in the coastal areas would suffer great hardship and be an embarrassment to the armed forces in the event of invasion, it was decided not to evacuate

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<sup>1</sup> For the detailed allocation of the available formations to the seven area armies see Sketch 11, facing page 180.

<sup>2</sup> For *16th Area Army's* dispositions on Kyushu see Maps 7 and 8, facing pages 147 and 160.

them since not only would their departure bring industry to a standstill, but there was no possibility of building shelter for them or of storing food in the safer mountainous areas inland. Furthermore, once the invasion began they could not be evacuated without congesting the roads and using transport required to bring reserves into battle.

*Air General Army Headquarters* (Kawabe) was formed on the 8th April to command all the air defences of Japan and Korea. By the end of the month it had under command *1st, 2nd, 5th and 6th Air Armies, 1st, 51st and 52nd Air Divisions* and all reconnaissance and training units,<sup>1</sup> virtually the whole air force in Japan, Manchuria and China except for *10th, 11th and 12th Air Divisions* under command of *First and Second General Armies*. Kawabe not only had to maintain pressure on the American forces to hamper their preparations for invasion and counter the increasing air raids on Japan, Korea and the China coast, but at the same time had to build up his air strength to offset the heavy losses of pilots and aircraft already suffered. He knew that the replacement of aircraft would become progressively more difficult,<sup>2</sup> but in April he had no idea what would be left of *6th Air Army* by the end of the battle for Okinawa or how many aircraft could be salvaged from the Philippines. To increase the effectiveness of his air defence he formed a number of special *Kamikaze* units, for he felt that such units would inflict the maximum losses on the invasion forces, and dispersed them in reserve on carefully concealed, camouflaged airfields throughout Japan. He also converted training and obsolescent aircraft to make them suitable for *Kamikaze* units. He hoped, by these means, to have 2,000 *Kamikazes* by the end of June and another thousand by August. He ordered all preparations for the defence of the Kyushu and Tokyo areas to be completed by the end of July and of other areas by the end of August.

In order to conserve his strength for the invasion, Kawabe controlled all air activity very closely and made little attempt to engage raiding aircraft in aerial combat, considering it more economical to attack American air bases and shipping with *Kamikaze* aircraft. After the loss of Okinawa, however, the increased scale of air raids

<sup>1</sup> The *2nd Air Army* was located in Manchuria in support of *Kwantung Army*, but was to be prepared to move to Japan if necessary. The *5th Air Army* was in China in support of *China Expeditionary Force*; two-thirds of its aircraft were to be moved to Korea by June, the remaining third (some 60 aircraft) staying in China. The *6th Air Army* included *Headquarters 30th Fighter Group* brought back from the Philippines earlier in the year. The *1st Air Division* was in Hokkaido in support of *5th Area Army*. The other air armies and air divisions were located in Honshu and Kyushu.

<sup>2</sup> The output of aircraft, anti-aircraft guns and ammunition had already fallen off from its peak in 1944 (see Appendix 11) and, as a result of the air raids from March onwards, there was a further drastic fall in output.

so seriously affected the production of aircraft and other warlike equipment that on the 1st July *Imperial General Headquarters* ordered him to abandon the effort to conserve aircraft and placed 10th, 11th and 12th Air Divisions (up till then at the disposal of *First* and *Second General Armies*) under his direct control. Although he was to keep the main force of *Kamikaze* aircraft inactive and hidden as far as possible until the actual invasion took place, he was to take every opportunity, in co-operation with the navy, to intercept and shoot down Allied aircraft, even if the attacking aircraft consisted of a single or a few heavy bombers. To carry out this order a number of training divisions were converted into fighter groups but, owing to the lack of numbers and the poor warning system, interception operations were not successful, and the Japanese admit that for a period of twenty days in July Allied aircraft ranged over large areas of Japan unmolested.

By the beginning of August it was estimated that, to meet the invasion, *Air General Army* would have some 800 army fighter and bomber aircraft and about 3,000 *Kamikaze* aircraft with a stock of about thirteen million gallons of fuel.

The naval air forces, other than the flotillas allotted to home defence, were given the task of crushing any invasion attempt while the invading forces were still at sea. Since most of the units of the *Combined Fleet* either had been sunk or were immobilized at ports in the Inland Sea for lack of fuel, a *Naval General Command* was formed and on the 1st May, with Toyoda as its Commander-in-Chief, took over the tasks formerly carried out by the *Combined Fleet*. In the circumstances that ruled, the defence had to rely on the few surviving destroyers and submarines for which fuel could be found and on what became known as the secondary fleet, consisting of suicide boats (*Shinyo*), midget submarines (*Kairyu* and *Koryu*) and human torpedoes (*Kaiten*). The only naval units which could be employed to meet the invasion were nineteen destroyers (for each of which there were only 3,500 tons of fuel, insufficient for even two attacks in home waters) and thirty-eight submarines. The destroyers were to be kept in the Inland Sea and used for operations within 180 miles of Kyushu and Shikoku, and the submarine fleet was to use its largest craft to attack shipping around the American advanced naval bases at Ulithi, Leyte and Okinawa, its medium craft to attack convoys on supply routes to the north and its small craft to patrol home waters. The secondary fleet, which by the end of July consisted of 3,294 assorted vessels,<sup>1</sup> and was to be increased, was organized into eight

<sup>1</sup> 73 *Koryu*, 252 *Kairyu*, 119 *Kaiten* and 2,850 *Shinyo*. For details of these craft see Appendix 11, section 4.

squadrons, each squadron being made up of a number of assault units each of thirty-two or more assorted vessels, the types in each unit depending on the task in hand. In allotting these squadrons priority was given to the Kyushu coastal area (which was to have three squadrons by November),<sup>1</sup> then to the Shikoku coastal area and finally to the Tokyo coastal area. The *3rd* and *10th Air Fleets*, based on the Tokyo area, and *5th Air Fleet*, based on Oita in Kyushu, were to be used to attack the invasion fleets at sea or when off the beaches. The *71st*, *72nd* and *73rd Air Flotillas*, based on Yokosuka, Yamato and Oita respectively, were allotted to air defence and *12th* and *13th Air Flotillas* to attacks on enemy transports.<sup>2</sup> It was estimated that the strength of the naval air arm by the 1st August would be some 5,145 aircraft (including 2,500 training aircraft which were to be used as *Kamikazes*),<sup>3</sup> but that the stocks of fuel would be not more than two million gallons.

To settle the division of responsibility for operations during the impending invasion, especially where there were overlapping interests such as the control of the air forces of the two Services, the naval shore batteries, naval bases and certain vessels of the secondary fleet responsible for denying the enemy the use of bays and harbours, a new central agreement between the Army and Navy was drawn up in April 1945. A further series of agreements between *First* and *Second General Armies*, *Naval General Command* and *Air General Army* sought to settle the different views of the Services and define a co-ordinated command structure. It was agreed that the operations of air defence units, naval air flotillas and all *Kamikaze* air units were to be co-ordinated by local army and navy commanders, and that they would be used initially to attack enemy transports and escorting naval vessels, although they could later be used to support land operations. It was also agreed that naval shore batteries would be placed under the command of the area armies, but only when the operational position made it necessary; that the command of land-based naval units (including the naval suicide craft) would be vested in the army; that certain army and navy air bases were to be jointly used; that the army would build special bases for the naval *Kamikaze* units; and that information provided by the air raid intelligence network should be shared between the Services. Although these

<sup>1</sup> The *5th Squadron* (32, 33 and 35 Units) was given the responsibility for southern Kyushu, *3rd Squadron* (31, 34 and *Kawatana Units*) for northern and north-western Kyushu and *8th Squadron* (21 and 24 Units) for north-eastern Kyushu. The strength of *5th Squadron* was to be 84 *Kairyu* and *Koryu*, 84 *Kaiten* and 480 *Shinyo*.

<sup>2</sup> See Map 9, facing page 161.

<sup>3</sup> The *3rd Air Fleet* 490, *5th Air Fleet* 645, *10th Air Fleet* 1,100 (including 810 training aircraft), *12th Air Flotilla* 1,340 (of which 1,060 were training aircraft), *13th Air Flotilla* 910 (of which 630 were training aircraft), *71st Air Flotilla* 200, *72nd Air Flotilla* 410 and *73rd Air Flotilla* 50.

agreements made it essential that a combined Inter-Service Headquarters should be established at most levels, this step was never taken.

With the raising of the third and final batch of nineteen divisions, which exhausted all Japan's reserves of manpower, the number of divisions put at the disposal of *First* and *Second General Armies* had been greatly increased but many, especially those raised in the second and third batches, were poorly armed and had little training. There was, too, a severe shortage of officers with command and staff experience and most of the technical units were without experienced tradesmen. Although efforts had been made to build up reserve dumps of supplies in strategic areas, they were in general sufficient only for a short period. Both fighting formations and line of communication units were extremely short of transport and a large proportion of the transport they had was animal-drawn. Fuel was in such short supply that armoured units were to be used only as additional artillery and, since the supplies of steel and cement were inadequate, many of the fortifications were crude and primitive.

The execution of the Japanese plans depended very largely on the adequacy of land and signal communications, more especially in the absence of a combined service headquarters, but communications were likely to be seriously disrupted by very heavy Allied air attacks before the invasion was launched. There was therefore doubt not only whether the move of army formations to the threatened areas would be possible, but also whether *Air General Army* would be able to concentrate the concealed and widely dispersed *Kamikaze* aircraft in time for co-ordinated attacks on the invasion convoys at the decisive moment. There was also doubt whether co-ordination between the *Kamikaze* aircraft and the naval special attack (*Shinyo*) craft could be effected. It is evident from Japanese accounts that, even in the crisis facing Japan, the rivalry between the army and navy which had persisted throughout the war with detrimental effects had not been set aside.

The American Chiefs of Staff believed that a successful invasion of Japan was necessary to force her to accept unconditional surrender. Their intention therefore was, after the capture of Okinawa, to establish a close sea blockade of the country and undertake an intensive bombing offensive from bases in Okinawa, Iwojima and the Marianas to destroy Japanese industry and communications and the will to resist. After a period of tactical bombing to destroy communications, military installations and defences, southern Kyushu would be invaded in November 1945 and sea and air bases established for the main invasion, directed against the Tokyo plain

area in Honshu in March 1946. They also proposed to encourage Russia to enter the war against Japan, to provide her with such aid as might be possible, and to continue to aid the Chinese.

In preparation for the invasion the American Chiefs of Staff reorganized the command structure in the Pacific Theatre on the 5th April 1945, placing General MacArthur in command of all the army forces and resources and Admiral Nimitz in command of all the naval forces and resources in the theatre. General Arnold was to continue to command Headquarters 20th U.S.A.A.F. in Washington and control, through 21st Bomber Command in the Marianas, the strategic air offensive against Japan. This reorganization did not provide a Supreme Commander in the Pacific Theatre and therefore reliance had to be placed on the closest possible co-operation between MacArthur, Nimitz and LeMay (21st Bomber Command). The formation of the new command structure raised the problem of how best to co-ordinate the operations of aircraft under command of the army with those under naval command and with the B.29s of 21st Bomber Command controlled from Washington. It was not till July 1945 that a compromise solution was reached with the formation of a United States Army Strategic Air Force in the Pacific under command of General C. A. Spaatz (who had previously commanded the American Strategic Air Force in Europe). This new force was to consist of 20th U.S.A.A.F. (whose headquarters moved from Washington to the Marianas) with 21st Bomber Command already in the Marianas, 20th Bomber Command to be established in Okinawa and 7th Fighter Command on Iwojima under command.<sup>1</sup> The army aircraft supporting MacArthur were as heretofore to be controlled by the Far East Air Force, commanded by General G. C. Kenney with headquarters in Okinawa.<sup>2</sup> The naval aircraft consisted of those allotted to the fleet, light and escort carriers and the shore-based naval squadrons on Okinawa. The co-ordination of tasks for the invasion of Japan between the Far East Air Force, the naval aircraft of the Pacific Fleet and the Strategic Air Force was to be arranged between MacArthur, Nimitz and Spaatz.

The change in the command structure in the theatre resulted in the disappearance of the old geographical boundaries,<sup>3</sup> and raised the question of the position of the Australian and New Zealand forces which had hitherto been operating under MacArthur's command in the South-West Pacific Area. The American Chiefs of Staff, anxious that the invasion of Japan should be carried out as soon as possible, decided that all available resources in the Pacific

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<sup>1</sup> The 20th Bomber Command had been operating in India and China but in January 1945 returned to the United States.

<sup>2</sup> The Far East Air Force had 5th, 7th and 13th U.S.A.A.F. under command.

<sup>3</sup> See Volume II, Map 15, facing page 434.

should be allotted to it and that MacArthur should be put in a position to devote to it his full attention. They proposed, therefore, in the middle of April that the whole of the South-West Pacific Area (excluding the Philippines and Hainan) should be removed from his command and either be added to S.E.A.C. or formed into a separate command, whichever the British Chiefs of Staff thought best. After considerable discussion the British Chiefs of Staff came to the general conclusion that Borneo, Java and Celebes could be transferred to S.E.A.C., but that the area stretching east from Celebes to the Solomon Islands ought to be placed under Australian command.<sup>1</sup>

On the 25th May MacArthur and Nimitz were officially ordered to undertake the invasion of Kyushu on the 1st November 1945, and of Honshu on the 1st March 1946 (by which time formations re-deployed from Europe would be available).<sup>2</sup> Planning for the invasion of Kyushu, for which adequate resources were already available in the theatre, began on the 28th May and had reached an advanced stage by the date of the Japanese surrender in August 1945. MacArthur's general concept of the operations was that, in preparation for the invasion, the Strategic Air Force, based on the Marianas and Okinawa, would continue the destruction of Japanese industrial power and communications, that the fast carrier force, starting as early as possible, would make repeated attacks to destroy Japanese naval and air forces, interrupt sea and land communications and attack strategic targets in co-operation with the Strategic Air Force, and that the Far East Air Force, based on Okinawa and Ie-shima, would neutralize Japanese air forces both in Japan and on the Asiatic mainland, interrupt and destroy shipping plying between Asia and Japan, isolate southern Kyushu by the destruction of communications from the north to the south of the island and reduce defensive installations in the selected assault area. To make this programme possible Okinawa and Ie-shima were to be developed into a vast air base capable of operating by the 1st November some sixty air groups (240 squadrons), with a main air depot at Naha to serve both the Far East and Strategic Air Forces. For the assault on Kyushu MacArthur proposed to use 6th U.S. Army (Krueger) to occupy the southern part of the island as far north as the general line Tsuno-Sendai in order to secure the use of Kago-shima Wan as a port and naval base and to clear sufficient ground to establish air bases for the support of the invasion of Honshu in 1946. As soon as the objectives had been consolidated 6th Army was to be prepared to release four divisions for the invasion of Honshu.

The plan for the invasion developed by the date of the Japanese surrender envisaged the amphibious assault taking place in a

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<sup>1</sup> See Chapter XXI.

<sup>2</sup> See page 183.



preliminary phase and four main phases. In the preliminary phase the islands lying to the west and south of Kyushu were to be occupied so that air raid warning facilities, advanced naval anchorages and seaplane bases could be established in and around them before the main assault was launched.<sup>1</sup> The first phase was to be a simultaneous assault, two and a half hours after daylight on D-day, by three corps each of three divisions on the southern end of Kyushu to seize and consolidate beachheads. The I Corps was to land in the Miyazaki area, the XI Corps in the Ariake Wan area and V Amphibious Corps in the bay immediately to the south of Kushikino.<sup>2</sup> During this phase the floating reserve of two divisions was to carry out a diversionary threat off Shikoku, and air attacks were to be made to block the movement of Japanese reinforcements from the north of the island either by road or along its eastern and western coasts. Work was also to begin without delay on the construction of airfield and base establishments within the bridgeheads.

The second phase was to consist of co-ordinated attacks from the three corps bridgeheads to seize additional areas for airfields and to open up the Kagoshima Wan to Allied shipping. In order to ensure the completion of this latter task, the floating reserve (IX Corps) was to be prepared to land, if required, on the south coast of Kyushu between Ibusuki and Makurasaki on or after D+3 to establish a corps bridgehead, clear the south-western coast of Kagoshima Wan and join up with V Amphibious Corps.<sup>3</sup> The third phase was the consolidation of southern Kyushu up to the general line Tsuno-Sendai, and the fourth phase was to consist of any exploitation on Kyushu and/or amphibious operations in the Inland Sea if needed for the security of the airfields and bases. The 11th (Airborne) and 77th Divisions were to be held in 6th Army follow-up reserve in Luzon. It was not intended, however, to use 11th Division in an airborne role, except in extreme emergency when one regimental combat team could be so used. Should it be found that the fourteen divisions allotted to 6th U.S. Army were insufficient to capture and hold southern Kyushu, the army could be reinforced at the rate of three divisions a month from D+30 by formations earmarked for Honshu.

The tasks given to the naval forces in the Pacific under command of Admiral Nimitz were to assist in the seizure of bridgeheads in

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<sup>1</sup> See Map 7, facing page 147. The 40th U.S. Division and 158th Regimental Combat Team were allotted for this purpose: the former was to occupy Uji Gunto, Kusagakijima, Kuro-Shima and Kuchino Erabu-Shima on D-day and the Koshiki Retto and neighbouring islands on D-4, and the latter was (only if found necessary) to occupy Tanega-Shima on D-5. If not required for this purpose 158th Regimental Combat Team was to remain a floating reserve.

<sup>2</sup> The I Corps consisted of 25th, 33rd and 41st Divisions; XI Corps of 43rd, 1st Cavalry and Americal Divisions; V Corps of 3rd, 4th and 5th Marine Divisions.

<sup>3</sup> The IX Corps consisted of 81st and 98th Divisions.

southern Kyushu, to deliver reinforcements and supplies for 6th Army, to cover and support the land campaign in Kyushu, to establish an advanced naval base in Kyushu for the support of subsequent operations against Honshu, to effect the greatest possible attrition of Japanese air, land and naval forces and merchant shipping in the area of operations before, during and after the amphibious assault and to hold island positions necessary for the security of the lines of communication. In the advance across the central Pacific, as has been said, the American fleet had operated alternatively under Halsey and Spruance as 3rd and 5th Fleets respectively, according to who was in command,<sup>1</sup> but for the invasion of Kyushu Nimitz split the fleet into two: the 3rd Fleet under Halsey, consisting of a number of fast carrier groups with their supporting battleships, cruisers and destroyers, including units of the British Pacific Fleet known as the 2nd Fast Carrier Force, and the 5th Fleet under Spruance, comprising the 1st Fast Carrier Force and the Amphibious Force.

The 3rd Fleet was to operate against the Kuriles, Hokkaido and Honshu (excluding the area west of the railway from Kasumi to Himeji).<sup>2</sup> The 1st Fast Carrier Force of the 5th Fleet was to operate against the western end of Honshu, Kyushu and Shikoku. Admiral Turner was placed in command of the Amphibious Force of the 5th Fleet, consisting of a Gun-fire and Covering Force, an Escort Carrier Force, a Minesweeper Force, an Underwater Demolition Force, five Attack Forces and the Follow-up Force.<sup>3</sup> Each of the Attack Forces had a separate task and had a proportion of the supporting forces, including underwater demolition teams and minesweepers, allotted to it.

The Gun-fire and Covering Force comprised thirteen older battleships, twenty-four cruisers, thirty-eight destroyers and some 290 support landing craft of various kinds and, reinforced if necessary by three battleships, eight cruisers and twelve destroyers from the 1st Fast Carrier Force, was to provide cover against surface attack in the vicinity of the objective and provide fire support units for the neutralization of targets as indicated by the commands of the various attack forces. The naval bombardment of the assault areas was to begin on D-8 and continue until the assault was launched. The underwater demolition teams and the minesweepers were to begin work for the preliminary phase on D-6 and for the first phase on D-4.

<sup>1</sup> See pages 120-21.

<sup>2</sup> For Kasumi and Himeji see Map 9, facing page 161.

<sup>3</sup> The five attack forces were Western (with 40th Division), Southern (with 158th Regimental Group), Seventh (with I Corps), Third (with XI Corps) and Fifth (with V Amphibious Corps). The Reserve Force carried IX Corps and the Follow-up Force 77th Division and 11th (Airborne) Division.

The main protection against *Kamikaze* attacks had to be provided by the Allied air forces, but their effectiveness depended to a large extent on the provision of early warning of impending attacks. The Amphibious Force had therefore to dispose radar picket craft in an arc some fifteen miles outside of the anchorage area from a point opposite Nobeoka on the east to Izumi on the west coast of Kyushu. In addition radar stations were to be established ashore as far north as possible as the assault operations proceeded. To meet the menace of attack by units of the Japanese secondary fleet (midget submarines, human torpedoes and suicide craft),<sup>1</sup> special units composed of fast ships and smaller naval craft especially equipped with surface radar, searchlights and starshell, were to be formed. One such special unit was to be disposed across the exit of each suspected enemy base and others, at least four miles from the outer edge of the anchorage area, across the most probable lines of approach.

Air cover for the operation from D-8 to D-day and onwards was to be provided by fourteen fleet carriers (including those of the British Pacific Fleet), six light fleet carriers and thirty-six escort carriers, by Kenney's Far East Air Force which, including 1st Marine Wing, consisted of forty-eight groups each of four squadrons operating from Okinawa and Ie-shima,<sup>2</sup> and by Spaatz's air force with twenty B.29 groups operating from the Marianas, eight B.29 groups from Okinawa and three fighter groups from Iwojima. The 3rd Fleet's carrier aircraft were to co-operate in the assault by neutralizing airfields in the area of Japan allotted to it. The 5th Fleet's carrier aircraft and the Far East Air Force's aircraft were to be responsible for the destruction of airfield installations, aircraft, defences and communications in the assault area. The Strategic Air Force was to be responsible for the destruction of strategic targets, which included all forms of communication, throughout Japan.

Defence against air attack on the huge numbers of ships which would have to be anchored for a long period off south Kyushu was perhaps the most important task for the aircraft supporting the invasion, especially as it was estimated that the Japanese would have to begin with at least 8,000 army and navy *Kamikaze* aircraft at their disposal. Experience at Okinawa had shown that overhead fighter cover had shot down some sixty per cent of attacking *Kamikazes* and anti-aircraft fire had accounted for about another twenty per cent. The remaining twenty per cent had, however, done considerable damage. It was therefore decided that before preliminary

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<sup>1</sup> For a description of these craft see Appendix 11, section 4.

<sup>2</sup> The 48 groups of the Far East Air Force were to be made up of 15 fighter groups, 7 night fighter groups, 11 light and medium bomber groups, 9 heavy bomber groups, 3 troop carrier groups, 2 photographic reconnaissance groups and 1 tactical reconnaissance group. Each group had 4 squadrons, each of 16 aircraft. There were also 2 naval squadrons for anti-submarine reconnaissance operating from Okinawa.

operations began on D-8 the Strategic Air Force, the Far East Air Force and aircraft from the fast carriers were to seek out and attack the secret *Kamikaze* bases. From D-8 onwards, during the approach of the Amphibious Force and while in the anchorage area, it was proposed that:

- (a) All known airfields and airstrips within 500 miles of the assault area should be continuously bombed by day and harassed by night in the hope of reducing the total of *Kamikazes* by a fifth.
- (b) Patrols by B.24 and B.32 aircraft,<sup>1</sup> orbiting in a 25-mile radius over selected areas containing airfields within 500 miles of the assault area, should be organized so that early warning of attacks could be given and a proportion of all *Kamikaze* aircraft destroyed on taking off. These patrols should be at their greatest strength at dawn and dusk.
- (c) Barrier patrols some 75 miles ahead of the convoys or as far north of the anchorage area as possible should be in position throughout the hours of daylight to detect and, if possible, attack approaching *Kamikazes*.
- (d) A greater degree of overhead cover than at Okinawa should be provided on the perimeter of convoys on the anchorage area; to effect this each convoy should have two groups of day fighters and two squadrons of night fighters allotted to it and similar arrangements should be made to cover the anchorage area. It was thought that by this means about 85 per cent of *Kamikaze* aircraft would be detected and destroyed.
- (e) To give early warning of the approach of *Kamikazes* from Korea, the Tsushima Strait should be patrolled by submarines by day, and by aircraft at night.

It was considered that by these means and by the anti-aircraft fire of the ships themselves the percentage of crashes on ships in each attack could be reduced from the Okinawa average of a fifth to about a twentieth. In any case, as *Kamikazes* were a wasting asset, the intensity of such attacks would rapidly diminish as the operation continued.

On the assumption that 6th Army's operations went to plan, it was proposed to build up the army air forces in Kyushu in three areas - Miyazaki, Kanoya and in the Kagoshima peninsula - to 159 squadrons or approximately forty groups by D+90,<sup>2</sup> and to develop Kagoshima into an advanced naval base and anchorage for use in the attack on Honshu in 1946.

<sup>1</sup> The B.32, developed in 1944, was an extremely long-range heavy bomber.

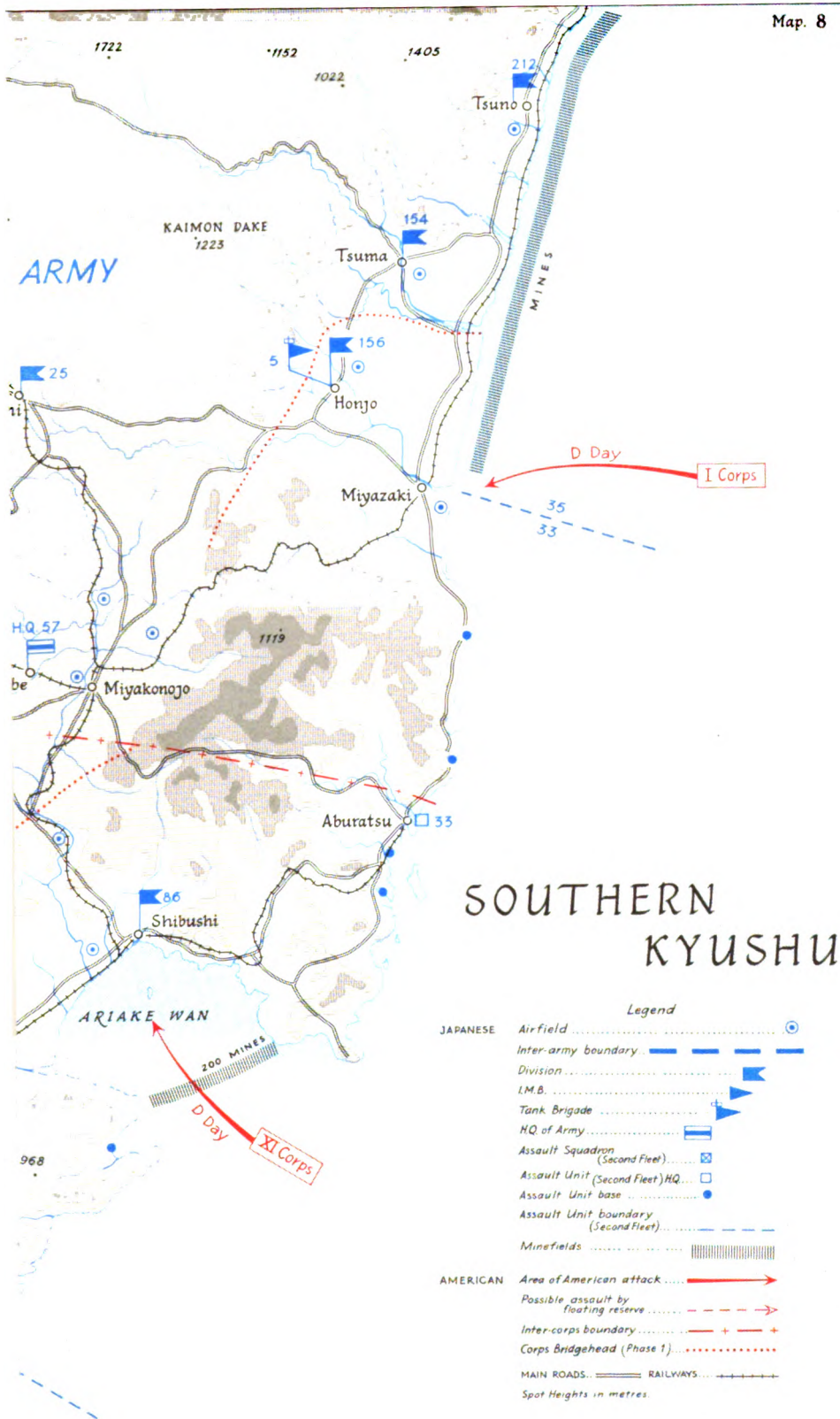
<sup>2</sup> The build-up by D+15 was to be 4 fighter squadrons, 1 night fighter squadron and 1 photographic reconnaissance squadron at Miyazaki; 12 fighter squadrons, 1 night fighter squadron, 3 tactical and 1 photographic reconnaissance squadrons at Kanoya; 8 fighter squadrons, 4 fighter-bomber squadrons and 2 night fighter squadrons at Kagoshima.

It will be seen that, although the Japanese had made an accurate appreciation of the American plan of attack and that the number of formations was about the same on each side, they would have met the invasion at a serious disadvantage since 6th Army consisted of fully-equipped, experienced and veteran formations, whereas most of the formations constituting *16th Area Army* were newly-raised, neither fully trained nor equipped, and their inadequate and unreliable motor transport had little fuel. The Allied air forces had complete air superiority over Japan and would have been able, without meeting serious opposition, to disrupt communications in and around Japan and interfere with any attempt to move reserves to threatened areas.

It is naturally not possible to assess what damage the *Kamikaze* aircraft and units of the Japanese secondary fleet could have inflicted on Allied shipping off Kyushu. The short distances which these aircraft would have to fly to their targets would have made them difficult to intercept, but on the other hand the lack of internal communications and the failure of the Japanese to establish a combined air headquarters for the army and navy aircraft would have prevented co-ordinated air action. This, coupled with the greatly increased air cover over the convoys and the anchorage area, would probably have made them less effective than they were at Okinawa. It must also be remembered that the *Kamikaze* pilots were no longer all volunteers, that the standard of the aircraft available had declined and that fuel was short.

Suicide craft, midget submarines and human torpedoes had not proved very effective at Luzon, Iwojima or Okinawa. Although the range in this case was less and the number available greater, there is no reason to suppose that they would have been any more effective off Kyushu, especially as the bombing of their bases and the measures taken to defend the shipping off Kyushu would have been far more effective than at Okinawa and Luzon.













## CHAPTER XVI

# THE BOMBING AND BLOCKADE OF JAPAN

(April—August 1945)

*See Map 9 and Sketch 10*

THE result of the five incendiary attacks on Japan in March 1945 persuaded LeMay (21st Bomber Command) that, given adequate supplies of aircraft and bombs, air power alone could force Japan to surrender, thus doing away with the need to carry out an invasion.<sup>1</sup> Since his command was due to be increased to five wings by the arrival of 58th Wing from India in April and 315th Wing from Europe in June,<sup>2</sup> he saw no difficulty in stepping up the weight of his offensive from April 1945. But he was unable to concentrate on his task as quickly as he hoped, for Nimitz had been given authority to ask for assistance from 21st Bomber Command in any emergency during the campaign for the capture of Okinawa.<sup>3</sup> The heavy air attacks, mainly by *Kamikaze* aircraft, on American shipping around Okinawa created just such an emergency, and from the 8th April to the 11th May no less than three-quarters of the effort of LeMay's command was used in neutralizing airfields on Kyushu and Shikoku.<sup>4</sup> Despite this, between the 24th March and the 11th May, eleven attacks were made on industrial targets with high explosive bombs and two attacks on cities in Japan with incendiaries. The first four bombing attacks, made at night from 30,000 feet with 500-lb. bombs, caused little damage, but the remaining seven, made by day from 20,000 feet or less with 2,000- and 4,000-lb. bombs, severely damaged aircraft engine factories and aircraft assembly plants at Tokyo, Tachikawa and Nagoya as well as the naval arsenal at Kure. The two incendiary attacks burned out twenty-one square miles of Tokyo and one-and-a-half square miles of Yokohama.

Released from assisting the Okinawa campaign from the 11th May, 21st Bomber Command set to work to complete the task of

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<sup>1</sup> For these incendiary attacks see Chapter XI.

<sup>2</sup> On the transfer of 58th Wing to the Pacific, 20th Bomber Command Headquarters was withdrawn from India to the United States: see Volume IV, pages 404-5.

<sup>3</sup> See page 109.

<sup>4</sup> See Map 9, facing page 161, and pages 115 and 118.

destroying the urban areas of the chief industrial cities. Between the 14th May and the 15th June nine incendiary raids were made on Tokyo, Yokohama, Nagoya, Osaka and Kobe. Six of the raids were made by day but Tokyo was always attacked by night, for it was heavily defended and its size made accuracy not so important. In the 4,678 sorties flown 27,164 tons of bombs were dropped and, for the loss of seventy aircraft and damage to 420, a further forty-eight square miles of the target areas were burned out.<sup>1</sup>

LeMay's bombing programme aimed at bringing Japan to the point of surrender comprised attacks on aircraft factories (which still held priority but could be made only when the weather permitted high-altitude bombing), incendiary raids on fifty-eight selected secondary industrial cities, attacks on oil refineries and storage plants, and mine-laying to close the ports on the Inland Sea and stop the import of raw materials and food from north China, Korea and Manchuria.

Because of bad weather during June and July only five attacks could be made on aircraft factories in the Tokyo bay area, in south-west Honshu and in Shikoku, but all these caused extensive damage. The campaign for the destruction of secondary cities began on the 17th June, two days after the completion of the fire raids on the five main cities. Sixteen attacks, following the same pattern as those on the main cities, were made between the 17th June and the 14th August. As a general rule, four cities were bombed on the same night, a B.29 wing being allotted to each. In these attacks 21st Bomber Command flew 8,014 sorties, dropped 54,184 tons of incendiaries, and destroyed about a half of the total area of the targets for the loss of nineteen B.29s.<sup>2</sup>

During the period thousands of leaflets were dropped announcing in advance which cities and towns were to be bombed on certain

<sup>1</sup> Between February and June seventeen incendiary raids were made on the five most important industrial cities, in which some 7,000 sorties were flown, 136 B.29s were lost and 105½ square miles of the target were devastated.

City	Total urban area in square miles	Area destroyed in square miles
Tokyo and suburbs	121.8	59.9
Yokohama	20.2	8.9
Nagoya	39.7	12.4
Osaka and suburbs	59.8	15.6
Kobe	15.7	8.8
	257.2	105.6

<sup>2</sup> For details see Appendix 14. Only one of the nineteen aircraft lost was due to enemy action.



nights and urging the civilian population to evacuate the target areas. Although only four or five cities were actually to be attacked, the leaflets were dropped over some twelve target areas. Post-war investigation showed that this form of psychological warfare had a considerable effect on the morale of the people in the named cities.

Although the American Chiefs of Staff knew that, because of her losses in tankers and the cutting of the sea lane to the Southern Region early in 1945, Japan's imports of oil had ceased and that her reserves must be at a very low level,<sup>1</sup> they decided that attacks on oil storage and refinery plants would hasten her collapse. On the 10th May 302 B.29s bombed oil storage depots at Tokoyama, Iwakuni and Oshima, but the main offensive did not begin until the 26th June. It was undertaken by 315th Wing, which had gained considerable experience in the air offensive against Germany and was equipped with an improved type of radar. By the 14th August fifteen attacks totalling 1,200 sorties had been made, some 9,100 tons of bombs dropped and, for the loss of only four aircraft, it was estimated that about a seventh of the storage installations had been destroyed and the refining capacity reduced by eighty per cent.

The decision to employ 21st Bomber Command on long-distance mine-laying was made at the request of Admiral Nimitz, who had advocated a mining campaign against Japanese home waters as soon as the B.29 bombers were established within striking distance of Japan. The long-distance blockade of Japan by the United States Navy had begun when the offensive by submarines of the Pacific Fleet was launched in 1942. When the war began the Japanese had some six million tons of shipping and in its early stages had captured a further 800,000 tons. Attrition of this fleet caused by the submarine offensive, by the amphibious campaigns in the Pacific and by the strikes carried out by the fast carrier force had by the end of 1944 reduced this tonnage by slightly more than half, despite great efforts by the shipbuilding yards to replace the losses.<sup>2</sup> Communications to the Southern Region were cut by the Allied occupation of Leyte and Luzon, and the close blockade of Japan, begun when Iwojima was occupied in February 1945, became effective when the Allied invasion forces closed on Okinawa at the beginning of April. From then on Japanese shipping was confined to the East China Sea and the Sea of Japan.<sup>3</sup> The only shipping routes Japan could then hope to use were those to Korea and northern China through the Tsushima Strait. Along these routes and these alone could she now hope to import foodstuffs and such raw materials as could be

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<sup>1</sup> See Appendix 11.

<sup>2</sup> By the end of 1944 approximately 2½ million tons of new shipping had been launched. See Appendix 11.

<sup>3</sup> By March 1945, 35 out of 47 regular convoy routes had been closed down.

provided from Manchuria, Korea and northern China. This situation enhanced the importance of ports on the north-western coast of Honshu and those on the Inland Sea and in the Shimonoseki Strait, while it diminished the value of ports on the Pacific coast such as Tokyo, Yokohama and Nagoya, as well as the use of the exits from the Inland Sea on either side of Shikoku.

To block these routes and the Inland Sea, Nimitz decided to send his submarines into the Sea of Japan, and arrangements were made for 21st Bomber Command to begin mine-laying at the entrances to ports on the Inland Sea, in the Shimonoseki Strait and off ports on the north-western coast of Honshu. Because of its specialist nature one wing was made responsible for the task. The first sorties were flown at the end of March when minefields were laid at both ends of the Shimonoseki Strait and in the approaches to Sasebo, Kure and Hiroshima. Owing to the needs of the Okinawa campaign little mining was possible in April, but during May more than 2,000 mines were laid in the entrances to ports on the Sea of Japan from Niigata to Yuya Bay, in northern Kyushu and on the Inland Sea. The Japanese reacted by holding all shipping in harbour until mine-sweeping could be organized, but the urgent need to import food-stuffs and raw materials meant that risks had to be taken. During April eighteen ships (31,000 tons) were sunk or damaged in the Shimonoseki Strait and in May the strait had to be closed at times and the traffic through it was reduced to less than half of that using it in April. During May mines for the first time took a heavier toll of Japanese shipping than did submarines, no fewer than eighty-five ships (213,000 tons) being sunk or damaged. From June onwards, to overcome enemy attempts at sweeping and to maintain existing minefields, minelaying continued systematically.<sup>1</sup>

The effect of the mining campaign by 21st Bomber Command was startling. Enemy shipping leaving Kobe and Osaka, which had been 320,000 tons in March 1945, had by July fallen to 44,000 tons. Between the 1st July and the 14th August the Shimonoseki Strait was closed completely for sixteen days and in the first fifteen days of August the traffic passing through it had fallen to seven per cent of the March figures. Japanese shipping losses in July and August amounted to some 409,000 tons, and of this total nearly half was attributable to mines.

After the capture of Okinawa the full strength of the Allied naval forces was available to take part in the close blockade of Japan. A

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<sup>1</sup> From the 27th March to the 14th August 1,528 sorties were flown in which about 12,000 mines were laid.

pack of nine submarines was sent through the Tsushima Strait into the Sea of Japan early in June and between the 9th and 20th sank twenty-seven merchantmen of 57,000 tons and one submarine for the loss of one of their number. The success of this foray resulted in six submarines being sent to operate in the Sea of Japan from early July till the end of the war. By this time Japanese ships at sea were so few that only one large and one small merchant ship were sunk. The submarines therefore shelled industrial plants along the northern coast of Honshu and landed raiding parties to carry out sabotage.

The 3rd Fleet was ordered to attack Japanese naval and air forces, shipyards and coastal installations and defences. The fast carrier force (McCain), which had been withdrawn to Leyte for rest and maintenance on the 13th June,<sup>1</sup> sailed north on the 1st July to operate close to the Japanese coast. It was now organized into three groups, each of three fleet and two light carriers, and a powerful escort of battleships, cruisers and destroyers. On the 10th from a point some 175 miles east-south-east of Tokyo an attack was launched on the airfields around the Japanese capital. It was unopposed, and it was assumed that the Japanese were dispersing their remaining aircraft, including fighters, to preserve them for use when the invasion was launched. McCain then moved north to attack Hokkaido and northern Honshu, which lay outside the range of B.29s operating from the Marianas. From a flying-off position eighty miles from the coast, carrier aircraft on the 14th and 15th July struck at the harbours of Muroran and Hakodate, and at the rail ferry across the Tsugaru Strait from Hakodate to Aomori which carried about a third of the coal trade between Hokkaido and Honshu. Twenty-four vessels of various types were sunk and another thirty-nine damaged. The capacity of the coal ferry service was reduced by half, for eight of the twelve railway truck ferries were sunk and a quarter of the colliers and other vessels employed on the coal trade were put out of action. While these attacks were being made, three battleships and two heavy cruisers bombarded the iron works at Kamaishi for two hours at a range of 29,000 yards, bringing production at the works to a standstill,<sup>2</sup> and a similar force bombarded the steel and iron works at Muroran for an hour, inflicting damage which seriously reduced production.

After refitting at Sydney,<sup>3</sup> the British Pacific Fleet sailed north on the 28th June to meet Halsey at a rendezvous some 300 miles east of Kamaishi on the 16th July. There it was agreed that the British fleet should form a fourth task group and would co-operate with

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<sup>1</sup> See page 121.

<sup>2</sup> It was ascertained after the war that the bombardment caused a loss in production equivalent to 2½ months of coke and one month of iron.

<sup>3</sup> See page 120.

McCain's fast carrier force.<sup>1</sup> The combined fleets were now to act together off Japan till nearly the end of the war. The first combined attack took place on the 17th when weather limited strikes and on the 18th when the naval base at Yokosuka was attacked. A destroyer and several small naval vessels were sunk and the battleship *Nagato* damaged. Meanwhile during the night of the 17th/18th the battleships (including the *King George V*) and cruisers had bombarded the industrial area around Hitachi, some eighty miles north-east of Tokyo. Halsey then decided to shift the centre of operations southward to the Inland Sea and Kyushu.

The typhoon season was now at its height and bad weather made air strikes impossible until the 24th July. That day and on the 28th McCain with his three groups attacked the naval base at Kure in the Inland Sea where the immobile remnants of the *Imperial Navy* lay, while the British fleet attacked the Osaka area. The strikes were most successful, and the carrier *Amagi*, the battleship/carriers *Ise* and *Hyuga*, the battleship *Haruna* as well as three modern and two old training cruisers were sunk at their moorings. One other carrier, the *Katsuragi*, was put out of action and a cruiser, five destroyers and many other vessels were damaged. During the 29th the combined fleets struck at Maizura and along the northern coasts of Honshu, while that night destroyers swept into both Suruga and Sagami Bays in search of shipping, and shelled Shimizu.

While these attacks were being made on Japan the Japanese Navy had struck its last blow against the American Fleet in the Pacific. The cruiser *Indianapolis*, which had been sent to the United States for repair after being severely damaged off Okinawa,<sup>2</sup> had on the 26th July completed a high-speed run from San Francisco to Tinian in the Marianas carrying essential components for the atomic bombs being assembled there. She was then ordered to proceed unescorted by way of Guam to Leyte but was sunk by a Japanese submarine just before midnight on the 29th July. For some reason her distress signals were not picked up, and her non-arrival at Leyte went unreported. Eighty-four hours after the ship had sunk a passing aircraft noticed survivors in the water and the alarm was given. Of her complement of some 1,200 men only 318 survived. The *Indianapolis* was the last ship of the United States Navy to be lost in the war.

Early in August the Japanese navy began to collect a force of bombers on airfields in northern Honshu with the intention of

<sup>1</sup> The British Pacific Fleet now consisted of the battleship *King George V*, the fleet carriers *Formidable*, *Victorious* and *Implacable*, six cruisers and fifteen destroyers. The *Implacable*, which had just joined the fleet, carried a heavier complement of aircraft than the older carriers, viz. 78 aircraft. The carrier *Indefatigable* joined the fleet on the 20th July.

<sup>2</sup> See page 112.



crash-landing them with some 2,000 suicide troops on 21st Bomber Command's bases in the Marianas.<sup>1</sup> The concentration was spotted and the combined fleets moved north and made large-scale low-level strikes against the dispersed and camouflaged bombers on the 9th August.<sup>2</sup> For the first time since the end of the Okinawa campaign the Japanese counter-attacked, and a *Kamikaze* succeeded in putting an American destroyer out of action. On the 10th airfields in northern Honshu and on the 13th airfields around Tokyo were attacked.

That a fleet consisting of eighteen carriers, seven battleships and dozens of cruisers and destroyers had been able to operate for a long period always within 400 miles of the Japanese coast and frequently within gunfire range of it with the loss of only one ship, and had inflicted enormous damage to enemy shipping and industrial plants, shows clearly the powerlessness of the Japanese naval and air forces and the completeness of the blockade.<sup>3</sup>

We must now examine the effect that these massive air attacks and the close blockade had on the Japanese and Japan's economy. It has already been shown that, owing to the heavy losses of merchant ships and the consequent serious decline in the imports of raw materials and foodstuffs, Japan's economy began rapidly to run down in the latter part of 1944 and that by March 1945 it was already in a parlous state.<sup>4</sup> The intensive air attacks, the mining of Japanese waters and the close blockade from March onwards accelerated the process to such an extent that by early August Japan was economically in no condition to prolong the war.

The mining of the Inland Sea and its exits was perhaps the most effective of the various forms of air attack for, coupled with the presence of strong naval forces in the East China and Yellow Seas and submarines in the Sea of Japan, it virtually cut Japan off from the mainland of Asia. The Japanese were then forced to live on home-produced food, and industry had to rely on what remained of the stocks of oil fuel and raw materials and the very small quantities of both which could be produced within Japan.

Although air attacks on Japan's oil industry did extensive damage, their effect was more apparent than real for they destroyed mainly empty tankage and unused refining capacity,<sup>5</sup> and played no part in

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<sup>1</sup> The plan was to be similar to that employed with some success against Okinawa on the 25th May; see pages 119-20.

<sup>2</sup> The Americans claimed to have destroyed 251 enemy aircraft and damaged 141.

<sup>3</sup> For Track Chart in July and August, see Sketch 10, facing page 170.

<sup>4</sup> See Chapter X and Appendix 11.

<sup>5</sup> Before bombing of the oil industry began, refinery production had fallen to 4 per cent of the total capacity.

accelerating the decline of her economy. The air attacks on the aircraft industry between March and August 1945, though much more successful than those previously made, had also only a limited effect for the output of the industry had already been reduced by the lack of raw materials to a fraction of the 1944 peak.<sup>1</sup>

The incendiary attacks on sixty-three urban areas (including the five main Japanese cities) were, on the other hand, highly effective. They destroyed or severely damaged a large number of factories producing goods for domestic consumption and for military purposes, as well as thousands of smaller production units established in individual homes. Millions of workers lost their own homes or accommodation in factory dormitories; this, together with the destruction of shops and distribution centres, forced the mass evacuation of factory workers and made it extremely difficult for those factories which remained intact to find labour.

The incendiary attacks also had profound repercussions on civilian morale. The fear of air attack had led to the destruction early in 1944 of some 600,000 houses to provide firebreaks in the more congested urban areas and alongside the main railways, and to the evacuation of some two million people from twelve of the major urban areas. The loss of the Marianas in June 1944 caused a second and voluntary evacuation to take place. No attempt, however, was made, owing to the general shortage of building materials, to provide housing for the evacuees who had therefore to be accommodated by friends and relatives or in public buildings. The incendiary attacks which began in March and continued till June reacted on this situation with decisive force. The burning out of some 106 square miles of the five main cities, as well as about sixty-four square miles of fifty-eight secondary urban areas,<sup>2</sup> destroyed some two-and-a-half million houses and drove more than thirteen million people to flee to the rural areas. Natural causes such as earthquake, local fires and especially floods, which in 1945 (a year of excessive rainfall) were severe, resulted in the loss of a further half a million houses. By July 1945 about a quarter of all the houses in Japan had been destroyed from all causes and some twenty-two million people (about three-tenths of the population) had been rendered homeless.

The scale of the attacks proved far too great for the inadequate air raid precaution organizations in the towns. Casualties ran into hundreds of thousands, and the organizations set up to care for the victims of air attacks were quite unable to meet the demands placed on them in the cities or cope with the hordes of people driven out of the urban to the rural areas. Thus practically nothing was done to ensure that these millions were fed or that even the minimum of

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<sup>1</sup> See Appendix 11.

<sup>2</sup> See Appendix 14.

household goods (already very scarce) and clothing were replaced. The destruction of food stocks, of food distribution centres and of many thousands of shops led to the breakdown of the official rationing scheme. Although as the blockade grew tighter the government had given the import of foodstuffs priority over raw materials, a severe shortage developed and, on the average, the caloric intake in 1945 was reduced to 1,680 calories a day against the agreed necessary minimum of 2,165. The breakdown of rationing forced refugees from the urban areas to rely almost entirely on the black market. Many of those who remained, living in miserable insanitary shacks amidst the debris of the burnt-out areas, were forced to go out into the country to forage for food and clothing, thereby increasing absenteeism from those factories which survived and managed to function.

The following excerpt from an article in the *Nippon Times* on the 2nd August 1945 illustrates how desperate the food situation had become:

'As one step towards the solution of the food problem the government, at the regular vice-ministers meeting on the 30th July, decided on definite plans to collect acorns, in abundance everywhere in Japan, and turn them into food. The entire people will be called upon to give their aid. School children and evacuees in particular will be enjoined to collect the maximum goal of five million 'koku' of acorns.<sup>1</sup>

It is not surprising that in these conditions the morale of the refugees was invariably low and that, wherever they went, they spread discouragement and disaffection. The progressively lowered morale was characterized by loss of faith in their leaders, loss of confidence in Japanese military strength and an increasing distrust of news releases and government propaganda. The situation which led Prince Konoye in February to advise the Emperor that Japan must end the war as soon as possible was very much more dangerous in July and August 1945.<sup>2</sup>

The national traditions of obedience and loyalty, reinforced by close police control, nevertheless remained effective and, although most Japanese became more outspoken in their criticism of the government, of the conduct of the war and of affairs in general, it seems that they retained their faith in the Emperor and it thus seems probable that, had he ordered them to continue the hopeless struggle to the bitter end, they would have done so however great their trials and tribulations.

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<sup>1</sup> A koku equals 4.9 bushels.

<sup>2</sup> See page 99.







## CHAPTER XVII

# JAPAN'S ROAD TOWARDS SURRENDER (1941—1945)

*See Map 16*

**W**HEN Japan went to war with Britain and the United States in 1941 there were a number of Japanese who had grave doubts about the outcome. These men, who included Prince Konoye (an ex-Premier), Marquis Kido (Lord Keeper of the Privy Seal), Mr. M. Shigemitsu (previously Ambassador in London) and other leading court officials and industrialists, formed a group whose aim was to end hostilities as soon as the opportunity arose. Konoye, who as Premier had endeavoured to restrain the army from committing the country to war with the Allies until he had been forced to resign in October 1941,<sup>1</sup> was the leader of the group but, as long as General H. Tojo, who succeeded him as Premier, remained in power with the backing of the Army and Navy, there was little he and his associates could do, more especially as the initial naval and military operations proved to be highly successful. The most formidable obstacle which the peace group had to face was the fact that power was largely concentrated in the hands of the militarist and expansionist clique, whose position was so strong that it was well nigh impossible for a Cabinet to interfere with any course of action which the Services wished to follow.

General Tojo did his best to create a single party régime, to establish Cabinet control over the Services, to end the rivalry between the Army and Navy, which was the cause of much waste and duplication, and to force the industrialists to work wholeheartedly for him. He failed to achieve any of these aims. In 1942 he believed that a peace, which would leave Japan in permanent control of all the territories she had occupied in the early months of the war, would be attainable once the impending Allied assault on the defensive perimeter around the Greater East Asia Co-Prosperty Sphere had met with decisive defeat. Although the Japanese did not achieve the expected victory, the militarists continued to control the

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<sup>1</sup> See Volume I, page 83.

country and Konoye's peace group remained powerless. Although it met in secret from time to time to discuss how best to overthrow the Tojo régime and bring the war to an end, its only success was the appointment of Shigemitsu as Foreign Minister in April 1943. Any hope it then had of accomplishing its aim was made infinitely more difficult by the Allied demand for unconditional surrender first made at Casablanca in January 1943, and reiterated in a joint Anglo-American declaration issued at the Cairo conference in December 1943. This read:

'The several military missions have agreed upon future military operations against Japan. The Three Great Allies expressed their resolve to bring unrelenting pressure against their brutish enemies by sea, land and air. This pressure is rising.

'The Three Great Allies are fighting this war to restrain and punish the aggression of Japan. They covet no gain for themselves and have no thought for territorial expansion. It is their purpose that Japan should be stripped of all the islands in the Pacific which she has seized or occupied since the beginning of the First World War in 1914, and that all the territories that Japan has stolen from the Chinese, such as Manchuria, Formosa and the Pescadores, shall be restored to the Republic of China. Japan will also be expelled from all other territories which she has taken by violence and greed. The aforesaid three great powers, mindful of the enslavement of the people of Korea, are determined that in due course Korea shall become free and independent.

'With these objects in view the three Allies, in harmony with those of the United Nations at war with Japan, will continue to persevere in serious and prolonged operations necessary to produce the unconditional surrender of Japan'.<sup>1</sup>

It meant that Japan would be required to give up all the territories she had added to her empire from 1895 onwards.

This situation in Japan continued until American forces captured the Marianas in June 1944, thus breaching Japan's inner defence perimeter and bringing the homeland within striking range of long-range bomber aircraft.<sup>2</sup> At the same time the greater part of her naval air arm was destroyed in the Battle of the Philippine Sea.<sup>3</sup> Tojo, unable to conceal these events and their probable effect on the course of the war, attempted to counter opposition by reconstructing his Cabinet, but could not ride out the storm and on the 18th July 1944 resigned.<sup>4</sup> The peace group hoped that his resignation would make it possible for more active steps to be taken towards its aim of bringing the war to an end and did its best to ensure that the new Cabinet contained men sympathetic to its views.

<sup>1</sup> United States Department of State Publication 2671 (1947), *Occupation of Japan, Policy and Progress*, Appendix 1.

<sup>2</sup> See Map 16, facing page 600.

<sup>3</sup> See Volume III, Chapter XXXI.

<sup>4</sup> See Volume III, page 452.



The elder statesmen (*Jushin*) met on the 18th July and after a long discussion selected General K. Koiso, a retired officer, as Premier. Since they were uncertain about the attitude he would adopt towards the prosecution of the war, they departed from standard procedure and recommended that Admiral M. Yonai, known as having been opposed to the war from the beginning, be appointed as co-Premier.<sup>1</sup> Koiso was forced to accept the Army's nominee as Army Minister, and was unable to get himself admitted as a full member of *Imperial General Headquarters*. He did, however, succeed in forming a Supreme Council for the Direction of the War composed of only six members – the Premier, the co-Premier (Yonai) who was also the Navy Minister, the Foreign Minister (Shigemitsu), the Army Minister and the two Chiefs of Staff. These new arrangements appeared to give the peace group an opportunity to make its influence felt, but the secretariat for the new Supreme Council was unfortunately provided by officers of *Imperial General Headquarters* with the result that no policy could be formulated without it becoming known to the younger officers in the armed forces.

In September 1944 Yonai and Shigemitsu arranged that Rear-Admiral S. Takagi, who was attached to the Naval General Staff, should undertake a secret study of steps which could be taken to end the war. In 1943 this officer had been given the task of making an analysis of Japan's war capabilities, and had then come to the conclusion that she could not possibly win the war and should therefore seek a compromise peace. He was now required to evolve a formula for peace which the Army would accept and which would preserve the position of the Emperor. Takagi first investigated the internal situation in Japan and the trends in the world at large, and then turned his attention to the courses of action open to Japan. He found that the greatest stumbling block was the Allied demand for unconditional surrender but it seemed to him that, although the Army leaders would not tolerate any suggestion of unconditional surrender, they would not be averse to negotiations being begun to try to secure a compromise peace. The only course of action which therefore appeared feasible was to approach the Russian Government and ask for their good offices to negotiate such a peace.

Japan had no cause to doubt that Russo-Japanese relations were still friendly, since she had scrupulously observed the terms of the Neutrality Pact of 1941, thereby permitting Russia to move troops westwards to meet the German attack, and had in March 1941 given up her coal and mining concessions in north Sakhalin in return for a five year extension of the Russo-Japanese Fisheries Convention. The Koiso Cabinet therefore suggested in September 1944 that a

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<sup>1</sup> See Volume IV, page 53.

special envoy should be sent to Moscow to negotiate the continuance of the Neutrality Pact, to offer to mediate between Russia and Germany or, failing this, to obtain mediation between Japan and the Allies. When approached by the Japanese Ambassador in Moscow (Mr. N. Sato), the Russian Government declined to accept such an envoy and the matter had to be dropped. Shortly afterwards on the 7th November Marshal Stalin publicly denounced Japan as an aggressor, a clear indication that Japan was most unlikely to get Russian aid in her effort to obtain a negotiated peace.

Hoping that Britain might be less rigid than the United States on the question of unconditional surrender, Konoye asked Mr. W. Bagge, the Swedish Ambassador in Tokyo, in September 1944 to forward to London through the Swedish Government a proposal whereby Japan, in return for peace, would be prepared to relinquish all the territory she had conquered since 1941 and, if necessary, Manchuria. This approach would seem to have been made to obtain some clarification of what the term unconditional surrender really meant, for the Japanese leaders were very anxious to ascertain whether there was any possibility of ending the war without complete self-abasement and without losing the Imperial structure on which all social order in Japan rested. The Swedish Ambassador acted as requested, but in reply the Japanese apparently received an intimation that they would have to submit to unconditional surrender. At the same time Konoye endeavoured to obtain a negotiated peace through the medium of Chiang Kai-shek, who was then involved in a bitter quarrel with Stilwell in Chungking.<sup>1</sup> This and similar overtures to Chungking made through Shanghai and Hong Kong failed.

In March 1945 Koiso, who was finding it more and more difficult to retain power, became himself involved in another and disastrous effort to establish peace talks with Chungking, when he attempted to use as a go-between an official of the puppet Nanking Chinese Government (Miao Ping) who claimed that he represented Chiang Kai-shek. This man was invited to Tokyo as a guest of the Japanese Government, but it soon became evident that he did not represent the Generalissimo and the negotiations were brought to an abrupt end.<sup>2</sup> Koiso's part in this affair, coming as it did on top of the steadily deteriorating war situation, forced the resignation of the Cabinet on the 4th April 1945.<sup>3</sup> Although conditions had been more favourable than at any time since the war began, the peace group, in the nine months following the fall of the Tojo Cabinet, had made no real progress towards its objective of a negotiated peace, and had to begin again with a new Cabinet.

<sup>1</sup> For the quarrel see Volume IV, pages 115-17.

<sup>2</sup> At the end of the war Miao Ping was arrested by the Chinese Government and executed as a traitor.

<sup>3</sup> See Volume IV, page 436.

The elder statesmen now selected the elderly Admiral Baron K. Suzuki to succeed Koiso as Premier. Suzuki, who belonged to a generation which remembered the days when Japan was an ally of Britain and friendly with the United States, had taken no part in the events which led up to the outbreak of the war in 1941 and his appointment was to this extent intended as a gesture of appeasement towards the Allies. The Supreme Council now consisted of the Premier (Admiral Suzuki), the Foreign Minister (now Mr. S. Togo), the Navy Minister (Admiral Yonai, no longer co-Premier), the Army Minister (General K. Anami) and the Chiefs of the Army and Navy General Staffs (General Y. Umezu and Admiral Toyoda). Of these, two men (Yonai and Togo) supported the peace group, one (Suzuki) was neutral but unlikely to accept unconditional surrender and three (Anami, Umezu and Toyoda) were opposed to unconditional surrender but took care that the younger officers at *Imperial General Headquarters* were not told of the private discussions of the Supreme Council. The privacy of the Council's discussions was preserved by replacing the officers from *Imperial General Headquarters*' staff in the secretariat by four officers who were opposed to fighting to the bitter end. The peace group was now in a very much stronger position. It is of interest to note that by accepting these changes Anami, Umezu and Toyoda showed that they were aware that the war was lost and that Japan would have to sue for peace on the best conditions she could obtain; nevertheless, all three men hoped that terms could be negotiated which would avoid the disgrace of surrender and occupation. Their hopes in this direction were strengthened by the desperate resistance at Okinawa which augured well for the army's ability to defeat an invasion of Japan. The peace group, however, held the opposite view, for it realized that Japan's economy was rapidly running down and it feared that, should the war last much longer, the inevitable complete collapse and ruin would bring about the fall of the monarchy. It was prepared to surrender, but was determined, even if all else were lost, to save the Imperial dynasty.

Efforts to sound out the possibilities of a negotiated peace which had come to naught in the autumn of 1944 were renewed in the spring of 1945. Towards the end of March the Foreign Minister (Shigemitsu) got in touch through an intermediary with Bagge, the Swedish Ambassador, who was about to return to Stockholm. Bagge gave Shigemitsu to understand that he did not believe the Allies would adhere to their unconditional surrender demand if Japan were to make peace proposals and that, provided Japan took the initiative, it was probable that the Imperial Institution would be permitted to remain untouched. Shigemitsu thereupon asked Bagge to do whatever he could to determine Japan's chances of obtaining a negotiated peace. Just before Bagge was due to leave Tokyo, the

Koiso Cabinet fell and Shigemitsu was replaced as Foreign Minister by Togo. Togo soon found that there were serious misunderstandings over the Shigemitsu-Bagge conversations. The Japanese intention was that the Swedish Government on its own initiative should sound out the feelings of the Allies on the subject of peace terms without receiving any formal request from the Japanese Government. When approached by Bagge, the Swedish Government took the attitude that it was willing to act only if the Japanese Government were to request it formally to do so. Faced with this situation and convinced that the only reply the Allies would make to an official enquiry from Japan would be to repeat their demand for unconditional surrender, Togo came to the conclusion that it would be useless to make further efforts through Sweden and that his only course of action was to make another approach to Russia.

On their own initiative several Japanese nationals living overseas made unofficial efforts to start peace negotiations but, although the Japanese Government took note of their efforts, it gave them little encouragement. The first of these was made by Commander Y. Fujimura, a former Japanese assistant naval attaché in Berlin, who in May 1945 telegraphed from Berne urging his superiors to open negotiations for peace through the American intelligence organization in Switzerland which was headed by Mr. Alan Dulles. He described the straits to which Germany had been brought and told them of the part which the Dulles organization had played in bringing about a separate truce in Italy, and warned them that more British, American and Russian forces were being moved to the Far East. Eventually, after discussing the problem with Dulles' agents, he suggested the despatch of a Cabinet minister or a senior officer of one of the Services to Switzerland. Yonai was in favour of the proposal but was prevented by opposition from the Naval General Staff from taking action. The matter was then referred to Togo, who decided to take no action. The second effort was begun in June 1945 by the former military attaché in Berlin, Lieut.-General S. Okamoto, who also approached the American intelligence organization in Berne and said that Japan wished to preserve the Imperial system and constitution, to retain Korea and Formosa and to see Manchuria neutralized. He was told that, while there was sympathy in the United States for the Japanese desire to preserve their Emperor, no commitments could be made without consultation between the Allies. Dulles also said that Japanese efforts for peace would fail unless they were started before a Russian entry into the war. Dulles reported these Japanese overtures to the American Secretary of War at Potsdam in July so that the President knew of them before the Potsdam Declaration was issued. The Japanese Ambassador in Switzerland had meanwhile tried late in June to obtain the support

of the Foreign Ministry in Tokyo but without success. By the time Togo came to know about the negotiations in Switzerland it was too late and, in any case, he had gathered from the information sent him that Dulles was thinking in terms of unconditional surrender, which at that time Japan was not prepared to accept. The only practical effect produced by these private negotiations was to stimulate the Allies to bring more pressure on Japanese leaders in order to bring home to them as soon as possible the hopelessness of their cause.

Even the war party in Suzuki's Supreme Council had now come to the conclusion that no chance should be lost of securing a negotiated peace. The only possible hope now seemed to lie in another approach to Russia for, although the Russians had denounced the Russo-Japanese Neutrality Pact on the 5th April, they had told the Japanese Ambassador in Moscow (Sato) that their attitude towards Japan would be determined by the fact that the pact remained in force for another twelve months. Clutching at this straw, the Supreme War Council decided on the 14th May to rely on Russian help. On the 15th Japan renounced the Anti-Comintern Pact which she had signed with Germany in November 1936, an empty gesture in view of Germany's defeat, and Togo commissioned Mr. K. Hirota, an ex-Premier and a former Ambassador in Moscow, to sound the Russian Ambassador in Tokyo with a view to negotiating a new pact to replace the Neutrality Pact, which would now end in April 1946. After considerable delay this approach met with a rebuff. A further approach to Russia on these lines was now clearly impossible. The Cabinet still hoped that it would be possible to enlist Russia's good offices to obtain favourable surrender terms from the Allies but realized that, to have any hope of success, action would have to be taken without further delay.

On the 6th June 1945 the Chiefs of the Armed Services laid before a full meeting of the Supreme Council a memorandum entitled 'The Fundamental Policy to be followed henceforth in the Conduct of the War'. This called for mass mobilization to meet the expected invasion, claiming that it was only by achieving at least a partial success that terms favourable to Japan could be secured and her national polity maintained. At the same time, to support their proposed policy, they submitted two subsidiary memoranda entitled 'Estimate of the World Situation' and 'The Present State of National Power'. These had been apparently prepared before the memorandum demanding a basic policy decision on the future conduct of the war and gave no grounds for confidence that their 'fundamental policy' could succeed. Nevertheless by declaring that Japan had come to the fork in the road of destiny and that the life and death of the nation and of the Imperial Institution was at stake, the Armed

Services had launched a psychological offensive which was certain to achieve their object. Although the subsidiary memoranda showed beyond reasonable doubt that the country lacked all the essential means with which to continue the struggle and Togo did his best to point this out, the Supreme War Council adopted the main memorandum which demanded all-out resistance to the bitter end, with only Togo dissenting. The Cabinet endorsed the decision on the 7th and it was accepted at an Imperial Conference the next day.

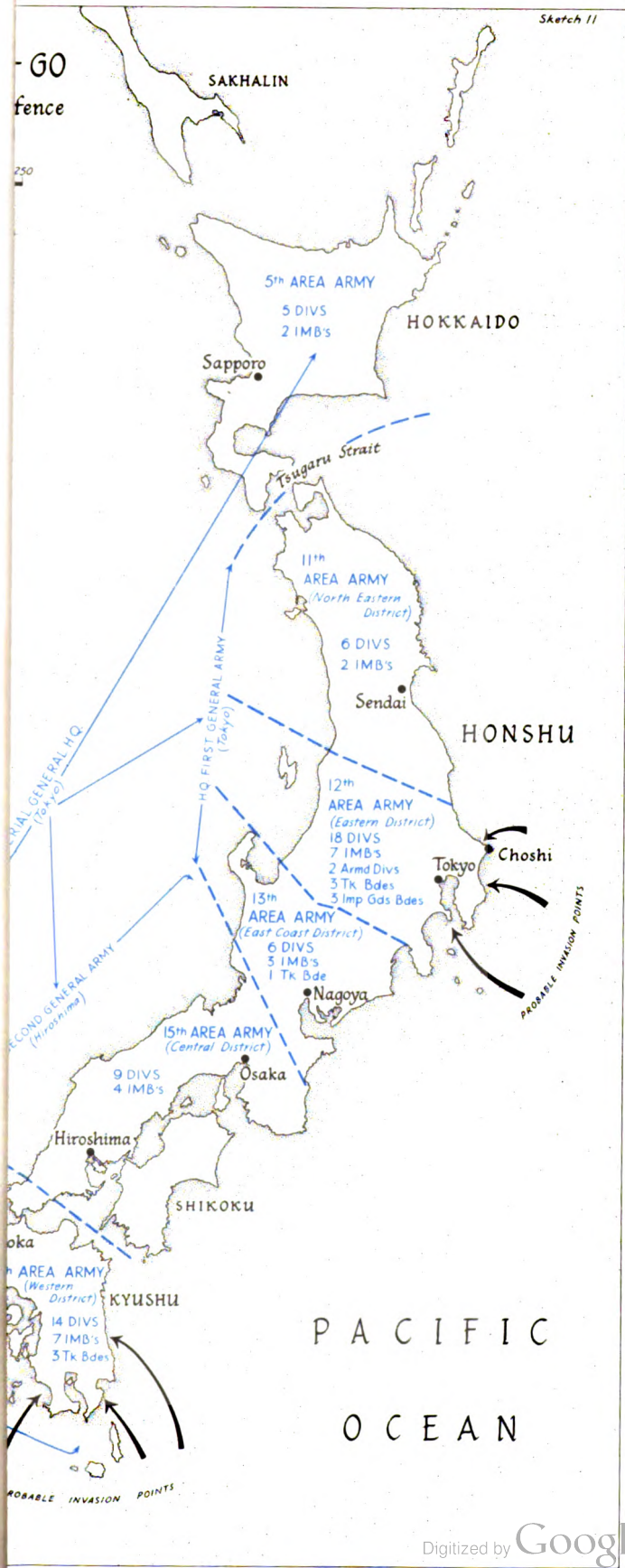
The memorandum on 'The Present State of National Power', despite last minute efforts by the Armed Services to modify it before its submission to the Supreme War Council, clearly showed that the nation could not carry on the struggle beyond the autumn and that no drastic measures to control men and materials could offset the fact that, as an island power without a fleet, Japan was being steadily throttled. This fact became obvious later in the month even to the extremists when it became evident that Okinawa was lost. As a result the six members of the Supreme Council met on the 18th June in secret and agreed that it had become imperative once again to seek Russian mediation in the hope that terms could be obtained which would at least ensure the preservation of the Monarchy. Marquis Kido thereupon advised the Emperor to cancel the decision to accept the memorandum made by the Imperial Conference on the 8th June. On the 22nd the Emperor summoned the Supreme War Council and commanded its members to lose no time in taking steps necessary to restore peace and to disregard the decisions of the 8th. Despite a protest from Umezu, the council accepted the Imperial wish and agreed to act in accordance with his demands.

There was now clearly need for haste, for reports had been received that an Allied conference was shortly to be held in Berlin, the scale of bombing on Japanese towns was rapidly increasing and the intelligence services had reported a large increase in the strength of the Russian armies in the Far East. Nevertheless Togo once again lost time by arranging for Hirota to approach the Russian Ambassador in Tokyo. This move failed, as had the previous one. It was not till the 7th July, when the Emperor once again asked the Supreme War Council to negotiate for peace, that Togo told Prince Konoye that he had been selected to act as a special envoy to Moscow. On the 12th Togo sent Sato a message to be passed to the Russian Government informing him that Konoye would be coming to Moscow bearing a letter from the Emperor stressing his desire for negotiations to bring hostilities to a speedy end, that Japan repudiated unconditional surrender and that, if Britain and the United States were to insist on it, Japan would be forced to fight to the bitter end and with all her might in order to vindicate her honour and safeguard her national interests, a course which, to his intense

regret, would entail further bloodshed. By the time the message arrived in Moscow, Stalin and his Foreign Minister, Mr. V. M. Molotov, were leaving for the Potsdam Conference and it had to be sent on to them there. On the 18th July the Russian Government told Sato that no definite reply could be given since the message contained no definite proposals and did not indicate clearly the object of Konoye's mission. In reply to this Togo sent two messages on the 21st, the first saying that Konoye would come to seek Russia's good offices to end the war, and the second saying that Japan desired peace but that under no circumstances would it be possible for Japan to accept the terms of unconditional surrender demanded by the Allies. These replies did not reach Sato till the 24th and it was not till the 25th July that he was able to pass their contents to the Russian Foreign Office. While the exchange of telegrams was taking place, Sato repeatedly warned Tokyo that the Potsdam Conference would probably end all chances of Russian mediation. His warnings proved to be justified.

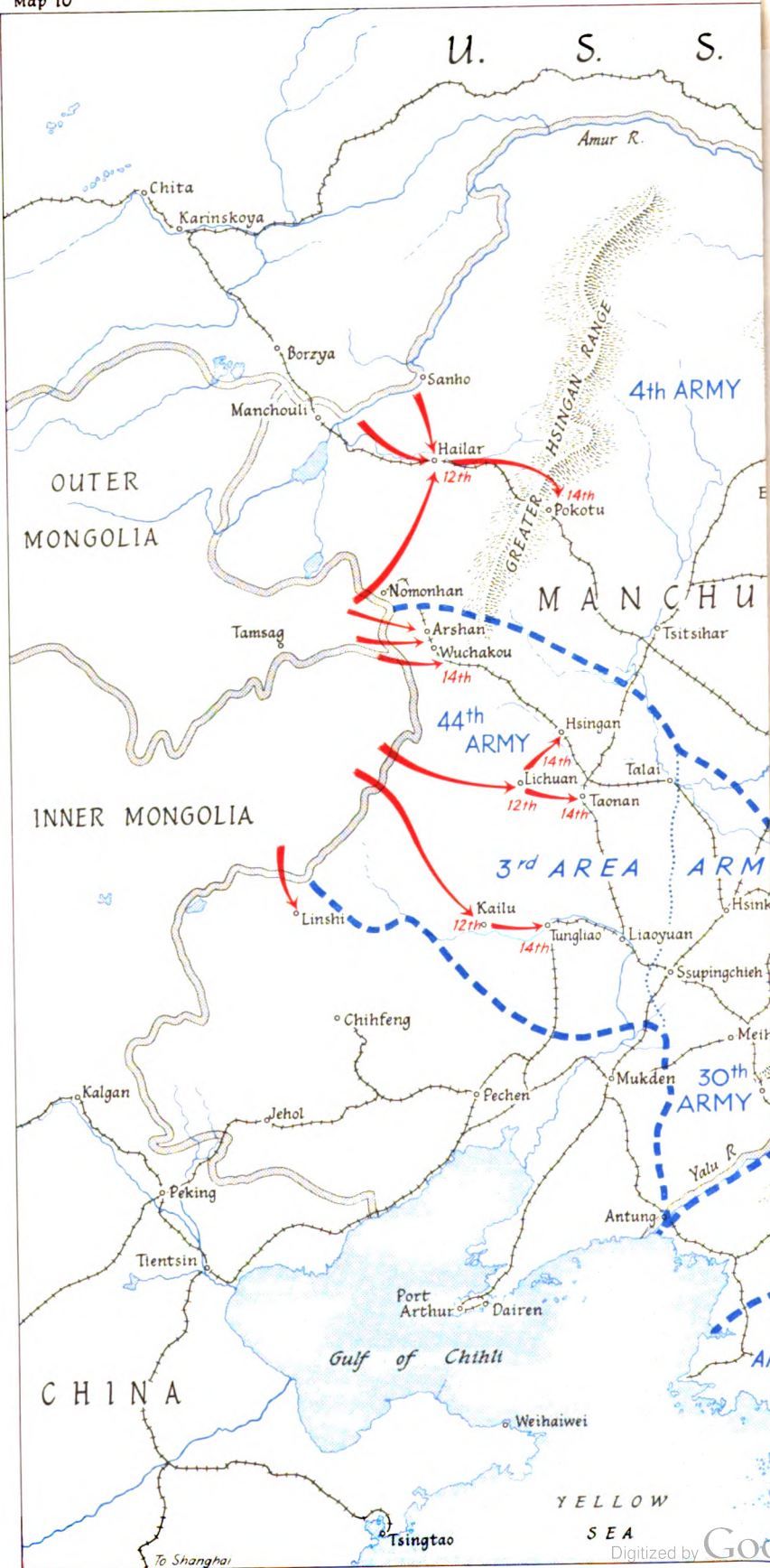












CHAPTER XVIII

ALLIED EFFORTS TO  
END THE WAR

The Terminal Conference  
(May—July 1945)

*See Maps 3, 9 and 10*

WITH the surrender of Germany at the beginning of May 1945 the American Chiefs of Staff turned their full attention to the problem of bringing the war against Japan to a speedy end with the least loss of men and material. There appeared to be four courses open to them: to invade Japan (as had always been envisaged as the final operation of the war); to continue the bombing and blockade until Japan was starved into surrender; to induce the Japanese Government to surrender by defining more clearly what unconditional surrender would involve in such a way that the peace group in Japan, which was known to exist, could overcome the opposition of the army leaders to a course which was not permitted by Japanese tradition; or, finally, to frighten Japan into surrendering by making her realize that continued resistance meant utter destruction by much more powerful weapons than had hitherto been used (i.e. the atomic bomb) and by the entry of Russia into the war.

The information on which the American Chiefs of Staff decided which course to follow was assembled in a paper produced by the Combined Intelligence Committee early in July on the current military, economic and political situation in Japan. This paper was fairly accurate, although the committee was naturally not in a position to make an accurate assessment of the balance of influence between the peace group and die-hard militarists. On the military side, the committee's opinion was that air and naval operations had so damaged the Japanese air force and navy that they could be used only for suicide operations but, although aircraft and fuel were short, sufficient of each was available to enable Japan to launch all-out *Kamikaze* attacks on the invasion forces, for which purpose the remaining aircraft were being carefully husbanded. The army, however, was still strong, and consisted of some two million men

plentifully supplied with ammunition, though somewhat immobile for lack of transport and fuel; it still retained its discipline and would be ready and eager to fight to the death to repel an invasion, and would probably have the backing of the civilian population who might form a national volunteer army and/or home defence units.

From the economic point of view, the committee continued, Japan was in a very poor way since she was completely cut off from the resources of the Southern Region, and the close blockade, together with mine-laying and air attacks on ports, towns and cities, had now virtually cut her off from the inner zone comprising Manchuria, Korea and north China. The shortage of raw materials and the increasing damage caused by the growing air attacks had seriously reduced her industrial output, which was likely to diminish even more rapidly in the coming months. Although the food position was causing anxiety, supplies would be adequate throughout 1945, but losses from air attack and damage to the distribution systems would seriously affect those who lived in urban areas. There was already a very serious shortage of consumer goods, which tended to lower civilian morale, and the shortage was being aggravated almost daily by the bombing of industrial areas. Nevertheless, although the intense and continual bombing of Japan would eventually result in her becoming a nation without cities and with completely disrupted internal communications, the committee doubted whether the general economic deterioration had yet reached, or would reach for some time, the point at which it would affect the ability of the nation to fight to repel an invasion.

On the political front the opinion of the committee was that a large proportion of the Japanese population had begun to realize that absolute military defeat was probable. The ever-increasing effort of the blockade and particularly of the strategic bombing would inevitably make this realization much more general. Although many individual Japanese would willingly sacrifice themselves in the service of the nation, it was doubtful whether the nation as a whole would be disposed towards national suicide; on the contrary the Japanese would probably prefer national survival, even through surrender. There was, however, a belief in Japan that unconditional surrender would be equivalent to national extinction, and the idea of foreign occupation, foreign custody of the person of the Emperor and the loss of face caused by accepting unconditional surrender was repugnant to most Japanese. It seemed that the military and civil rulers in Japan were aware of the desperate military situation and were thus increasingly anxious to effect a compromise peace, but would not accept unconditional surrender. The committee believed, therefore, that sooner than surrender unconditionally Japan would

fight for as long as possible in the hope of avoiding complete defeat and of acquiring a better bargaining position in a negotiated peace. In other words Japan was playing for time, hoping that some miracle, such as Allied disunity or war weariness, might present an opportunity for a compromise peace.

The committee thought that, if the Allies could forego occupation and ensure the survival of the Imperial régime, the Japanese Government might be willing to withdraw from all occupied territory on the Asiatic continent and in the south Pacific and even perhaps from Korea and to accept disarmament of their military forces. But, since the Army was the principal repository of the Japanese military tradition and controlled (with the Navy) the Cabinet, it appeared that the Army chiefs would have to be forced to acknowledge defeat before the Japanese Government could agree to surrender. This state of affairs might be brought about either by the defeat of the Japanese armies on Japanese soil, or through the desire of the Army chiefs to salvage something from the wreck in order to maintain the military tradition. They were unlikely to consider surrender unless they believed that it would neither entail discarding the warrior tradition nor prevent the ultimate resurgence of the army.

The committee expressed the opinion that bombing and blockade alone would not force Japan to surrender unconditionally before the date which had already been decided on for the invasion of Kyushu,<sup>1</sup> although a conditional surrender by the Japanese Government might be made on the lines indicated at any time up to the moment when all power of resistance had been destroyed.

Having weighed the evidence the American Chiefs of Staff came to the conclusion that, although an attempt to force the Japanese to surrender by bombing and blockade might eventually produce results, it would not do so before November 1945. The best military course, therefore, was to continue with the agreed plan for the invasion of Kyushu in November and of Honshu in March 1946.<sup>2</sup> They therefore on the 25th May sent a formal directive to MacArthur, Nimitz and Arnold ordering them to plan for the invasion of Kyushu on the 1st November with the object of intensifying the blockade and bombing, containing and destroying large Japanese forces and creating conditions favourable to the decisive invasion of the industrial heart of Japan in Honshu in March 1946.

It was, however, clear to all concerned with policy in the United States that the invasion of Kyushu might result in such a resurgence of national spirit that the Japanese would fight to the death for every

<sup>1</sup> See Map 3, facing page 95.

<sup>2</sup> See pages 154 et seq.

inch of ground, as they were doing in Okinawa. Should this occur there would be no short cut to peace. Millions of lives, American and Japanese, might then have to be sacrificed, the war might be prolonged into the winter of 1946 and most of Japan would be left devastated, thus bequeathing a legacy of bitterness for the future and possibly allowing a Communist régime to become established in the country. There was also the fear that American losses in the Kyushu campaign might be on the scale of those at Okinawa, where about a third of all those engaged were becoming casualties. Although MacArthur pointed out that operations in Kyushu would be of a very different type from those on Okinawa since there would be room to manoeuvre, and that casualties in the first thirty days might not exceed those suffered in a similar period in Luzon (some 31,000), the fear of heavy losses was ever present in the minds of the policy makers. Having heard all the arguments put forward for and against an invasion, the President, on the 18th June, confirmed the directive already issued by his Chiefs of Staff, but he and his advisers felt that it was their duty to explore every means of persuading or forcing the Japanese to surrender before the 1st November, the date of the invasion of Kyushu.

This led to an examination of the possibility of giving the peace group in Japan a means whereby it could overcome the determination of the army to fight to the last rather than accept unconditional surrender. It was evident that the phrase 'unconditional surrender' would have to be defined in such a way that it would be acceptable to the Japanese leaders. At a press conference on the 8th May the President had confirmed the declarations made at Casablanca and Cairo in 1943, saying that it was the intention of the United States to continue the war until the Japanese military and naval forces had laid down their arms in unconditional surrender. He had added, however, that, although this would mean the end of the influence of the military leaders who had brought Japan to the brink of disaster, it did not mean the extermination or enslavement of the Japanese people. This pronouncement had been treated in Japan as merely propaganda and ignored.

Between the 8th May and the 18th June the State Department brought considerable pressure on the President to issue a declaration on unconditional surrender which would include a promise that it would not mean the elimination of the Imperial dynasty, since only the knowledge that they would be allowed to determine their own political future and retain the Emperor would put the Japanese leaders into a position which would permit them to save face and so accept the other unpleasant consequences of surrender. The State Department also pointed out that it would be of considerable advantage to the Allies if the Emperor was left in office, for he and



he alone could issue the order which would prevent the Japanese armies outside Japan from continuing to fight even after the armies in Japan had surrendered and Tokyo had been occupied. The War Department did not agree entirely with the State Department for they felt that no declaration would be heeded until Japan had been more thoroughly beaten and unless it contained an impressive warning of utter destruction.

Although urged to issue such a declaration when the final capture of Okinawa would bring home to the Japanese the danger of their position, the President refused to do so until he had had an opportunity of discussing the matter with Mr. Churchill and Marshal Stalin at the conference to be held at Potsdam in July and until more was known about the date on which the first atomic bomb could be used operationally.

Nevertheless, in the weeks preceding the President's departure to Europe for the Potsdam Conference, a declaration on the lines indicated above was drafted by the War Department. Since in the view of the department the declaration had to include an impressive warning of utter destruction, the date on which an atomic bomb or bombs would be ready for use was of considerable importance both in the wording of the declaration and in the timing of its issue. It had become evident by the end of April that this new weapon would be ready for use some time in August, and the time had therefore come to decide whether it should be used operationally. A civilian committee under the chairmanship of the Secretary of War was set up in April to consider the problem and advise the Chiefs of Staff and the President. It reported its conclusions at the end of May. It is not for this history to describe the work of the committee or to spell out its detailed conclusions,<sup>1</sup> but it is necessary to summarize the arguments which resulted in the decision to use the bomb against Japan.

It was hoped, as described above, that the Japanese might be induced to surrender if a declaration were made defining the term 'unconditional surrender'. It was felt, however, that, should there be no satisfactory response to the declaration, military sanctions would have to be applied. Since it was of some importance that the war should be brought to an end before the date of the contemplated invasion, it was evident that the sooner the sanctions were applied the better. There were only three possible military sanctions other than invasion: the entry of Russia into the war, an intensification of the blockade and of the air attacks and the use of the atomic bomb. Stalin had already agreed to declare war on Japan probably some time in August, and Russian forces would probably have no difficulty in occupying Manchuria, part of north China and possibly

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<sup>1</sup> For details see Ehrman, Chapter IX.

Korea. Although the loss of these areas would ensure the collapse of Japanese resistance on the Asiatic mainland, it was unlikely to have an immediate effect on the Japanese population in the homeland or cause the army leaders to alter their uncompromising opposition to unconditional surrender, unless forced to do so by the defeat of the Japanese armies on Japanese soil. The blockade was already almost complete and air attacks could not be intensified until more airfields had been built in Okinawa and new air formations brought in; no acceleration of air attacks before the date fixed for the invasion of Kyushu was therefore possible. This left the atomic bomb as the only really effective sanction likely to bring Japan quickly to the point of surrender, since it would compel the Japanese leaders to recognize that surrender was the only way of avoiding national extinction. The use of the atomic bomb would also have the advantage that, although it would probably cause complete local destruction in the selected target area, it would probably save far greater and more widespread destruction throughout Japan and a very large number of both American and Japanese lives. From a purely military point of view the atomic bomb was only a normal though radical advance in the development of the weapons of war (just as breech-loading guns had replaced muzzle-loading guns and high explosives and cordite had replaced gunpowder) and its use, strategically or tactically, was therefore justified.

There were, however, two other reasons, both political, which led to the conclusion that the atomic bomb should be used against Japan. One was that the factual demonstration of the enormous power and potential of the new weapon might deter nations in the years to come from following policies which would lead to war, since the widespread use of the weapon would almost certainly lead to the extinction of civilization. It could, therefore, once demonstrated, be a means of preventing war and ensuring peace in the future. In this respect the scientists had little doubt that, although Britain and the United States (particularly the latter) had a temporary advantage over other nations, the advantage would disappear in the following decade and it was therefore better to let the world know what power of destruction the weapon could produce than to try and keep it secret. It was suggested that a demonstration might be staged on some deserted area to which representatives of all nations, including Japan, could be invited as observers, but this was deemed impracticable since it would fail to show the effect of the bomb used against strategic and tactical targets. The other reason was that the immense cost of the development and production of the bomb would eventually have to be disclosed, and Congress might be very critical of the Administration if the result of the expenditure had not been used to hasten the end of the war and prevent the very considerable loss of

life inevitably involved in the pursuance of military operations on Japanese territory. For all these reasons it appeared that the use of the atomic bomb operationally would not only afford a military advantage in that it would save life and further destruction within Japan (though it might have unknown and possible serious consequences) but also achieve diplomatic and political advantages for the future which could be gained in no other way.

Early in June the President decided in principle that the atomic bomb should be used and so informed the British Government. On the 2nd July the Prime Minister agreed to its use, but said that he would like to discuss the matter with the President at Potsdam. From then onwards the decision on how and when the bomb should be used lay in the hands of the American Chiefs of Staff, who were in control of the operations in the Pacific theatre. The only questions left to be settled were whether Japan should be given warning of what was likely to befall her, and whether any indication should be given in the proposed declaration on unconditional surrender that an atomic weapon would be used if she failed to accept its terms. Although a full-scale test of the atomic bomb was to take place in the New Mexican desert before the weapon was used operationally, there was no certainty that a bomb dropped on a parachute from an aircraft would function properly. Furthermore, it was felt that the use of the weapon without warning would be the only way of obtaining the required shock effect on the Japanese leaders. It was therefore decided in Washington that no warning should be given or any form of threat used which mentioned a specific weapon, and that the first target areas selected should contain both military and industrial establishments so that the resulting destruction could be brought home to military, industrial and political leaders alike.

While the President was travelling to Potsdam the bombing of Japan's cities and oil installations, aerial mining of her harbours and exits from the Inland Sea and attacks on her ports and coastal towns by the Allied navies continued at an increasing pace.<sup>1</sup> In Washington the State and War Departments were endeavouring to compose a declaration telling the Japanese what unconditional surrender would mean in such terms that they might be induced to surrender before the date fixed for the invasion of Kyushu. Both in the United States and in the Marianas plans were being perfected to drop the atomic bomb as soon as it had been proved a satisfactory weapon. The methods to be employed to bring the war to a speedy conclusion which the United States representatives took with them to the Potsdam Conference were thus threefold – a declaration on the meaning of unconditional surrender to induce Japan to surrender,

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<sup>1</sup> See Chapter XVI.

the use of the atomic bomb to shake her into surrender and, if both these failed, military invasion to force her by military defeat into surrender.

The Potsdam (Terminal) Conference began on the 17th July and was attended by the Prime Minister (Mr. Churchill, replaced on the 28th by Mr. C. R. Attlee), the President (Mr. H. S. Truman, who had become President on the death of Mr. F. D. Roosevelt in April), Marshal Stalin, the Foreign Ministers of Britain, the United States and Russia and the Chiefs of Staff of the three powers. Its main purpose was to deal with the many pressing problems arising from the defeat of Germany, but a number of matters concerning the war against Japan were also discussed.<sup>1</sup> In this chapter we are concerned only with Russian plans to enter the war and the issue of the Potsdam Declaration.

The Prime Minister and the President had first raised the matter of Russian participation in the war against Japan at the Teheran Conference in November 1943.<sup>2</sup> Stalin had then said that it was 'impossible for the Soviet to join in the struggle against Japan at the present time . . . The moment for joining their friends in this [Pacific] theatre would be the moment of Germany's collapse; they would then march together'. In October 1944, at the Tolstoy Conference in Moscow, the Russians said that they intended to declare war on Japan a few months after the end of the war with Germany (which the British and Americans took to mean about three),<sup>3</sup> but to secure the necessary military preponderance some thirty divisions would have to be sent to the Far East along the Trans-Siberian railway. The move of the divisions would take some two and a half to three months and the build-up would therefore have to begin without delay. During the Argonaut Conference at Yalta in February 1945, at which China was not represented, Stalin confirmed his intention of entering the war against Japan some three months after the collapse of Germany, provided that the *status quo* in outer Mongolia was preserved, that the southern half of Sakhalin and the Kurile Islands were returned to Russia, that the commercial port of Dairen was internationalized, that the lease of Port Arthur for use as a naval base was restored to Russia,<sup>4</sup> and that the Chinese Eastern and South Manchurian railways were jointly operated by a Russo-Chinese company, although China would retain full sovereign

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<sup>1</sup> See pages 224-5.

<sup>2</sup> See Volume III, page 58.

<sup>3</sup> See Ehrman, pages 213-15.

<sup>4</sup> See Map 10, facing page 181. The Japanese had captured Port Arthur from the Russians in the Russo-Japanese War of 1904-5.

rights over Manchuria. These demands were accepted by Britain and America subject to Chiang Kai-shek's concurrence.<sup>1</sup> At the Potsdam Conference statements by Stalin to Churchill made it evident that Russia intended to attack Japan soon after the 8th August (perhaps a fortnight later),<sup>2</sup> but he was more vague about his intentions in conversation with Truman.<sup>3</sup>

At a meeting between the Combined Chiefs of Staff and their Russian counterparts on the 24th July, the latter said that their troops were in process of concentrating in the Far East and would be ready to begin operations in the latter half of August, but that the actual date would depend on the result of negotiations which were in progress to conclude a pact of friendship and alliance with the Chinese National Government so that Russian armed forces could assist China to recover the provinces which had been occupied by the Japanese. The object of the operations would be to destroy the Japanese army in Manchuria and advance to the Liaotung Peninsula. After the defeat of Japan, their armies would withdraw from Manchuria. They estimated that the Japanese had in Manchuria some thirty divisions, with a possible twenty Manchurian divisions and, this being the case, they stressed the importance of American forces in the Pacific ensuring that Japan was not able to reinforce her armies there. General Marshall in reply described the situation in the Pacific and assured the Russians that the movement of Japanese reinforcements into Manchuria was by that time well nigh impossible.

There was very little difference of opinion among the American and British representatives at the conference on the subject of the draft declaration on unconditional surrender drawn up in Washington, except over the point whether it should state concisely that the Imperial Institution in Japan would be preserved after surrender or be worded in such a way that the Japanese could read into it that they might choose freely their method of government in the future. The matter was discussed by Churchill and Truman on the 18th July. By that time both knew that Japan was trying to get Russia to mediate on her behalf to obtain a negotiated peace.<sup>4</sup> Churchill agreed that the declaration should be despatched since it might be the means of ending the war quickly and saving many lives, but was prepared to leave it to the Americans to find a formula which would ensure future peace and security in the Pacific, while giving the

<sup>1</sup> White Paper, Command 6735 (1946).

<sup>2</sup> Ehrman, page 303.

<sup>3</sup> Feis, *Japan Subdued* (Princeton University Press, 1961), pages 60 and 68.

<sup>4</sup> See Chapter XVII.

Japanese some means of saving their honour and some assurance of their future, once they had complied with the safeguards demanded by the Allies.

The one sentence over which there was doubt read, 'This may include a constitutional monarchy under the present dynasty if it be shown to the complete satisfaction of the world that such a government will never again aspire to aggression'. The American Chiefs of Staff, anxious to retain the Emperor's authority to order the surrender of the Japanese armies outside as well as inside Japan, wished this to be amended to 'Subject to suitable guarantees against further acts of aggression, the Japanese people will be free to choose their own form of government'. After considerable discussion it was decided to say that the occupying forces of the Allies would be withdrawn from Japan as soon as their objects had been accomplished, and 'there has been established in accordance with the freely expressed will of the Japanese people a peacefully inclined and responsible government'.<sup>1</sup> This left it to the Japanese leaders to interpret from this phrase whether or not they would retain their Imperial form of government. The final wording was agreed on the 23rd July.<sup>2</sup>

Since the last sentence of the declaration contained the words 'The alternative [to surrender] for Japan is prompt and utter destruction', the President felt he could not despatch it until he knew the date on which the atomic bomb would be available for use operationally. The successful detonation of the first test atomic bomb in New Mexico was reported to the President on the 16th; but it was not known until the 21st that its explosive effect was equal to some 20,000 tons of the normal high explosive (T.N.T.) and not known until the 23rd that the earliest date on which an atomic bomb would be ready to be dropped on a target in Japan would probably be the 4th/5th August and not later than the 10th. On the 24th July the President, who already had the Prime Minister's agreement to the wording of the declaration, sent the text to Generalissimo Chiang Kai-shek to obtain his concurrence and stated that he would issue it as soon as he received a reply.

The same day an order to Spaatz (Commanding General of the U.S. Strategic Air Force) was drafted which authorized a special composite group of 20th U.S.A.A.F to drop the first atomic bomb on either Hiroshima, Kokura, Niigata or Nagasaki as soon after the 3rd August as the weather permitted visual bombing.<sup>3</sup> Additional bombs were to be dropped on these targets as soon as they were available. This draft was sent to Potsdam and approved on the 25th

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<sup>1</sup> See Feis, pages 69 and 94.

<sup>2</sup> For the text of the declaration see Appendix 15.

<sup>3</sup> See Map 9, facing page 161.

by the President, who told the Secretary of War (Mr. H. Stimson) that the order would stand unless he notified Stimson that the Japanese reply to the Potsdam Declaration was acceptable.

Although Stalin had been told on the 24th of the existence of the atomic bomb and of the Allies' intention to use it soon unless Japan surrendered, he was not consulted on the wording of the Potsdam Declaration since Russia was still neutral in the war against Japan. He was, however, informed that a declaration was being made which defined the British, American and Chinese views on unconditional surrender. Stalin, through his Foreign Minister, Molotov, asked for the declaration to be delayed for two or three days, since events were moving too fast and there was the possibility that, on receipt of the declaration, Japan might surrender before Russia had thrown in her lot with the Allies. Truman was not prepared to countenance any delay, for the atomic bomb was almost ready for use and there was now no need from the American and British point of view for Russia, already proving an awkward ally in Europe, to come into the war in the Pacific.

On the 26th July Chiang Kai-shek agreed to the text of the declaration and that evening it was broadcast to the Japanese Government. Two other important events occurred that day: the cruiser *Indianapolis* delivered the fissionable material for the first operational bomb at Tinian in the Marianas, and news reached Potsdam of Mr. Churchill's defeat in the General Election.

At a plenary meeting on the 28th Stalin informed Truman and Attlee (who had replaced Churchill) that his Government had received from the Japanese Ambassador in Moscow a message from the Emperor asking that Russia should act as mediator between Japan and the Allies. Since the message did not contain a sufficiently definite proposal, his Government had replied that they were unable to give an answer. He had now received a letter from Mr. Sato explaining that the Emperor proposed to send Prince Konoye to ask the Russian Government to mediate between the Japanese and the Allied Governments with a view to bringing the present war to an end and to negotiate on questions relating to Soviet-Japanese relations. Konoye would arrive with special authority from the Emperor and his only object was to achieve the Emperor's desire to avoid further bloodshed on both sides.<sup>1</sup> Stalin added that, since the proposal was simply another attempt to obtain Russian collaboration in the furtherance of Japanese policy, his Government had, in the circumstances, returned an unhesitating negative.

This information was not, in fact, news to Truman since the messages between the Japanese Foreign Minister and his Ambassador in Moscow had been intercepted. Thus the United States

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<sup>1</sup> See pages 178-9.

Government knew before the issue of the declaration on the 26th July that the Emperor desired to secure the termination of the war, and that Sato had already told Tokyo that there was no chance whatever of obtaining Russian support for the Japanese proposals.

Russia, being a neutral, had an embassy in Tokyo and thus Stalin was in a position to keep in close touch with events in Japan. It appears, fearing that the Japanese might accept the terms offered by the Allied declaration and that it would be too late to enter the war if he delayed until the latter part of August, he took steps not only to bring forward the date on which war against Japan would be declared, but saw to it that the Japanese Ambassador in Moscow was kept waiting for a reply on the subject of the Konoye Mission till 11 p.m. (Tokyo time) on the very evening that it had been decided to begin operations – the 8th August.



CHAPTER XIX

RUSSIA INVADES MANCHURIA,  
SOUTH SAKHALIN AND  
THE KURILES  
(August 1945)

*See Maps 10 and 15 and Sketch 12*

FROM its occupation in 1931 Manchuria, with its raw materials and growing industrial resources, had become increasingly important to the Japanese economy. Since it had a common border with Russia on the east, north and west, it had always been protected by *Kwantung Army*. Tension between Japan and Russia along the common border had often been high but when Russia, aware of the probability of war with Germany, signed a Neutrality Pact with Japan in April 1941 it lessened, and Russia was able with less anxiety to accelerate the move of troops which had begun in February from eastern Siberia to her western front. When Germany invaded Russia in June 1941, Japan mobilized the twelve divisions of *Kwantung Army* and sent two additional divisions to Manchuria, withdrawing one of these about a month later. In December 1941 when Japan went to war with Britain, the United States and the Netherlands, *Kwantung Army* comprised thirteen infantry divisions with two air divisions.<sup>1</sup> In the summer of 1942 its strength was increased to seventeen divisions by the addition of two infantry and two armoured divisions, supported by *2nd Air Army* of two air divisions.<sup>2</sup> Its strength remained at that level until defeats in the Pacific forced *Imperial General Headquarters* to begin to draw on it from September 1942 for reinforcements for that area.<sup>3</sup> Almost simultaneously with the beginning of the decline in the strength of *Kwantung Army* Russia was able to launch a general counter-offensive in the west, and gradually to slow down the movement of her troops from Siberia to the west. The decline in the strength of *Kwantung Army* continued and by August 1944 it had been reduced to ten infantry divisions and one armoured division, of which four infantry

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<sup>1</sup> See Volume I, Appendix 5.

<sup>2</sup> See Volume III, page 472 and Volume I, page 496.

<sup>3</sup> See Volume III, page 97.

divisions were newly-raised.<sup>1</sup> Conditions on the Manchurian-Siberian border remained, however, more or less normal throughout 1943 and 1944.

At the end of 1944 two more of the original first-line infantry divisions were moved from Manchuria and replaced by newly-raised infantry divisions.<sup>2</sup> Early in 1945 another first-line infantry division was sent to Formosa, reducing the strength of *Kwantung Army* to nine infantry divisions (of which only three were first-line divisions) and an armoured division. To give *Kwantung Army* a semblance of strength eight new infantry divisions were raised, bringing it to a strength of seventeen infantry and one armoured divisions.<sup>3</sup> With the loss of the Philippines and Iwojima, which exposed Japan to invasion, *Imperial General Headquarters* ordered *Kwantung Army* in March 1945 to return to Japan its remaining three first-line infantry divisions and its armoured division as well as quantities of arms and equipment and a large number of selected officers and men to provide the nucleus of some of the new formations being raised in Japan for the defence of the homeland,<sup>4</sup> and to send the three best trained of its newly-raised infantry divisions to Korea. Since one infantry division was at the same time sent from Korea to Manchuria, *Kwantung Army* by mid-June 1945 consisted of twelve infantry divisions (of which only four had been in existence for any length of time) and no armour.<sup>5</sup> It still had the support of 2nd Air Army.

In the event of war with Russia, the role of *Kwantung Army* had from 1931 onwards been to take the offensive with the object of seizing the Russian air bases in the Maritime Province from which air attacks on Japan could be launched.<sup>6</sup> This role remained unchanged until events in the Pacific forced a drastic reduction in the strength of the army in Manchuria. An offensive into the Maritime Province then became impracticable and, on the 18th September 1944, *Imperial General Headquarters* ordered General O. Yamada, Commander-in-Chief *Kwantung Army*, to adopt the defensive if engaged in war with Russia, and attempt to destroy the invading enemy armies inside the country in the zone formed by the mountain range west of Mutanchiang, the Lesser Hsingan Range, the Greater Hsingan Range and the Tsitsihar-Ssupingchieh railway; under the worst circumstances the mountainous area in south-eastern Manchuria near the Korean

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<sup>1</sup> See Volume IV, page 448.

<sup>2</sup> See Volume IV, page 448.

<sup>3</sup> See page 95 and Volume IV, page 227.

<sup>4</sup> See page 97.

<sup>5</sup> See Appendix 10. The *Kwantung Army* also had one I.M.B.

<sup>6</sup> See Map 10, facing page 181.

border was to be firmly held and resistance there to be protracted. This change of plan meant that the army could take advantage of the frontier fortifications which had been strengthened over the years rather than abandon them at the outset of hostilities by advancing across the frontier. Although it was thought that the frontier areas could not be held for more than a few weeks, the plan would still enable Japan to defend Manchuria. At the same time *Imperial General Headquarters* placed *Korea Army* (later redesignated *17th Area Army*)<sup>1</sup> under operational command of *Kwantung Army*.

The gradual build-up of the Russian Far Eastern Army group, which became obvious in February 1945, and the denunciation of the Neutrality Pact in April increased the tension between Russia and Japan. Since *Kwantung Army's* numerical inferiority was such that it could not now hope to hold the frontier zone, Yamada recommended to *Imperial General Headquarters* in April that the defensive plan be abandoned in favour of purely delaying operations. This recommendation was approved, and regrouping of formations began in May 1945. By the end of that month *Imperial General Headquarters* came to the conclusion that Russia might well eventually enter the war on the side of the Allies. Consequently on the 28th May the Commander-in-Chief *China Expeditionary Force* (Okamura) was ordered to transfer at once to central and northern China all his forces disposed along the Hankow-Canton and the Hengyang-Tuhshan railways in the provinces of Hunan, Kwangsi and Kiangsi,<sup>2</sup> and to prepare to send an army headquarters and four infantry divisions to Manchuria.<sup>3</sup> In this way *Kwantung Army's* strength would be increased to sixteen infantry divisions. A few days later Umezu, Chief of the Japanese Army General Staff, held a conference at Dairen with Yamada and Okamura to co-ordinate the action of the forces in China, Korea and Manchuria, which now appeared likely to be involved in war with the United States and the Soviet Union simultaneously.<sup>4</sup> He placed *Kwantung Army* on a war footing,<sup>5</sup> and confirmed the plan for it to fight a delaying action in Manchuria, falling back slowly to an area around Tunghua in south-east Manchuria north of the Yalu River and then standing fast to cover Korea.

To increase the army's strength still further Yamada decided to call to the colours about a quarter of a million Japanese civilians

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<sup>1</sup> See page 95.

<sup>2</sup> See page 141 and Map 15, facing page 546.

<sup>3</sup> The *34th Army Headquarters* and *39th, 59th, 63rd and 117th Divisions* arrived in Manchuria between the 19th June and the 21st July. In addition one I.M.B. was sent from China to Manchuria.

<sup>4</sup> On his way to Dairen Umezu had stopped at Seoul and explained the position to the Commander-in-Chief *17th Area Army*.

<sup>5</sup> Although mobilized in the summer of 1941 *Kwantung Army* had been considered as a peace-time organisation despite the fact that Japan was at war.

living in Manchuria. Mobilization began early in July, by which time it was estimated that the 1944 strength of the Russian Far Eastern forces had been about doubled, bringing it up to some one and a third million men, 3,000 tanks and 5,600 aircraft. By the end of the month eight new divisions (*134th* – *139th* and *148th* and *149th*) as well as seven independent mixed brigades had been formed, thus bringing the strength of *Kwantung Army* up to twenty-four divisions and nine independent mixed brigades (I.M.B.s). There were in addition two tank brigades, a tank training unit and one independent infantry brigade. The army was supported by *2nd Air Army* consisting of one air brigade, one air regiment and one air squadron with a first-line strength of 225 fighters, forty bombers, forty-five reconnaissance and twenty *Kamikaze* aircraft, with 640 training aircraft in reserve.

Although on paper *Kwantung Army* appeared to be a formidable force, this was far from the case. The eight new divisions and seven new I.M.B.s were almost totally untrained and woefully short of equipment; except for three of the divisions from China (which were under strength) the remainder were all newly-raised formations whose strength and efficiency were much below normal. Generally speaking the morale of both officers and men, especially in the new divisions, left much to be desired. The number of medium and light machine-guns with infantry units was less than half the authorized number. There were no anti-tank guns, nearly all the infantry guns were obsolete and there was a general shortage of artillery and ammunition. The Japanese estimated that the average efficiency of each division was not greater than three-tenths of that of a pre-war first-line division. It was with this partially-trained force that Yamada had to be prepared to meet the onslaught of a numerically superior Russian force.

In August 1945 *Kwantung Army Headquarters* was at Hsinking and consisted of *1st Area Army* (General S. Kita) of ten divisions and one I.M.B. with headquarters at Mutanchiang, *3rd Area Army* (General J. Ushiroku) of nine divisions, three I.M.B.s and two tank brigades with headquarters at Mukden, *4th Army* (Lieut.-General M. Uemura) of three divisions and four I.M.B.s with headquarters at Tsitsihar and *34th Army* (Lieut.-General S. Kushibuchi) of two divisions and one I.M.B. with headquarters at Hamhung in Korea.

The *1st Area Army*, consisting of *3rd* and *5th Armies*, was given the task of defending the eastern frontier from the Sungari River in the north to the Korean border in the south, a front of some 800 miles. The *3rd Army* (Lieut.-General K. Murakami) with its headquarters at Yenchi disposed its four divisions and an I.M.B. to cover the

southern sector with a small detachment at Najin. The *5th Army* (Lieut.-General N. Shimizu) with its headquarters at Yehho disposed its three divisions to cover the centre sector opposite Lake Hanka. Kita retained three divisions in reserve but located one (*134th*) at Chiamussu to protect the Sungari River area on the northern flank of *5th Army*.

The *3rd Area Army*, consisting of *30th* and *44th Armies*, had the task of defending the southern portion of Manchuria and in particular the Hsinking-Ssupingchieh-Seoul and the Mukden-Dairen railways and the industrial centres located along them, but was to be prepared to retreat to and hold the redoubts in the Tunghua area. The *44th Army* (Lieut.-General Y. Hongo) with its headquarters at Liaoyuan disposed its three divisions and one tank brigade to cover the Inner and Outer Mongolian borders from Arshan in the north through Taonan to Tungliao in the south. The *30th Army* (Lieut.-General S. Iida) with its headquarters at Meihokou disposed its four divisions to cover Hsinking and the redoubt area.<sup>1</sup> Ushiroku retained one division, three I.M.B.s and a tank brigade in reserve near Mukden, and another at Jehol in south-west Manchuria.

The *4th Army* was responsible for northern Manchuria and was disposed with a division and an I.M.B. in the Hailar area, a division and two I.M.B.s in the Heiho-Sunwu area, one division at Tsitsihar and an I.M.B. at Harbin. The *34th Army* had its two divisions concentrated around Hamhung and a garrison unit defending Chongjin.

These dispositions placed the greatest strength along the eastern frontier and in the south-east, since it was from the Maritime Province that the main Russian thrust was expected to be delivered. It was estimated that northern Manchuria could not be held for long, despite its mountainous nature, and was thus lightly defended. Since intelligence reports up to the day before hostilities began did not indicate a heavy Russian attack from either Inner or Outer Mongolia, only the chief towns on the railways, which constituted the main lines of communication in the western area and which led towards Hsinking and Ssupingchieh, were held.

The Soviet Far East General Army Group (Marshal A. M. Vassilievsky) controlled three area armies: First Far East Area Army (Marshal K. A. Meretskov) based on Vladivostock, Second Far East Area Army (General M. A. Purkayev) based on Khabarovsk,

<sup>1</sup> General Iida, who had commanded the Japanese army which invaded Burma in 1942 (See Volume II), had been recalled from retirement.

and Trans-Baikal Area Army (Marshal R. Malinovsky) based on Chita.<sup>1</sup> The First and Trans-Baikal Area Armies had a high proportion of armour. The Russian plan was to attack Manchuria with First Far East Area Army striking west from the Maritime Province between Lake Hanka and the coast directed on Harbin, while Trans-Baikal Area Army struck east from Outer and Inner Mongolia through Tungliao and Taonan directed on the capital, Hsinking, and the main communication and industrial centre of Mukden with the object of cutting off *Kwantung Army* from north China. Detachments from Trans-Baikal Area Army were to drive eastwards from Manchouli along the railway over the Greater Hsingan Range towards Tsitsihar, and make a dash southwards towards Peking. The Second Far East Area Army was given a secondary role: it was to move southwards from Blagoveshchenck through Heiho and Sunwu and thence across the Lesser Hsingan Range towards Tsitsihar and south-westwards from Khabarovsk up the Sungari River to link up with First Far East Area Army at Harbin. The ultimate object was to secure the Voroshilov-Harbin-Manchouli and the Harbin-Mukden railways and cut *Kwantung Army's* line of retreat to Korea.

The Soviet land offensive was to be supported by two fleets. The Pacific Fleet (Admiral I. Yumashev) based on Vladivostock, consisting of two cruisers, nineteen destroyers, seventy-eight submarines and a large number of motor torpedo-boats, was to disrupt communications between Japan and *Kwantung Army* and support landings on the Korean eastern coast at Najin and Chongjin. The Amur River Fleet (Rear-Admiral N. V. Antonov), consisting of some 200 vessels including twenty monitors and gunboats and a large number of armoured cutters, was to support Second Far East Area Army's river crossings and its advance up the Sungari River.

Russia declared war at midnight on the 8th/9th August (Japanese time). Her troops immediately began to cross the frontier, and Mutanchiang, Hsinking and Hailar were bombed. Yamada, who did not know till some hours later that Russia had declared war, immediately ordered all his formations to check the Russian invasion on the frontiers and to prepare for hostilities in all other areas.

On the 1st Area Army front a Russian force advanced up the Sungari River and, in accordance with orders, 134th Division retreated

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<sup>1</sup> See Map 10, facing page 181. The First Far East Area Army consisted of four armies, an independent rifle corps and a mechanized corps, supported by an air army. The Second Far East Area Army consisted of three armies, a rifle corps and naval division, supported by an air army. The Trans-Baikal Area Army consisted of four armies, a tank army and a cavalry mechanized group, supported by an air army.

towards Ilan. By the 14th August the Russians had reached Fuchin. West of Lake Hanka *5th Army* was steadily driven back by strong Russian forces, supported by tanks, which had crossed the frontier at Suifenho and Tungning, and by the 14th had been forced back some 100 miles and was defending Mutanchiang and the hilly area north-west of Lotzukou against strong enveloping attacks. Farther south, *3rd Army* had also withdrawn and when the war ended it was defending the Tumen area against strong forces advancing from both the north and the east. In Korea the Russians launched an amphibious operation on the 10th and captured Najin, and by the 11th a Russian column was some twenty miles south-west of Najin and advancing towards Chongjin.

On the *3rd Area Army* front events moved rapidly. It became evident early on the 9th August that strong Russian forces with tanks were carrying out an enveloping attack on Arshan and Wuchakou in the north, and that, farther south, armoured columns had crossed the frontier from Inner Mongolia and were making for Lichuan and Kailu. In these circumstances Ushiroku decided on the 10th to concentrate his area army on the general line of the Hsinking-Mukden-Dairen railway, with the object of counter-attacking the Russian forces approaching Lichuan and Kailu when their lines of communication were extended to the limit. He therefore ordered *44th Army* to withdraw from its dispersed and exposed positions to the Ssupingchieh-Mukden area and *30th Army* to move north from the Tunghua redoubt area and take over the defence of the area around Hsinking. Ushiroku's decision meant that the plan to fight a delaying action and retreat to the Tunghua redoubt area had been abandoned. Yamada did not entirely agree with Ushiroku's plan but, faced with a *fait accompli*, gave it his formal approval on the 11th. He, however, withdrew his own headquarters from Hsinking to Tunghua. This change of plan meant a switch of formations between *44th* and *30th Armies*: the division which was withdrawing north of the railway from the Arshan-Wuchakou area and the one withdrawing from Taonan towards Talai were placed under command of *30th Army*, while the division withdrawing from Jehol to the Mukden area as well as the two divisions and a tank brigade already in the Mukden area came under command of *44th Army*. This left Ushiroku with one reserve division located near Tunghua.

The advance of the Russian Trans-Baikal Area Army was very rapid, though impeded to some extent by Japanese air attacks and by Japanese refugees making their way eastwards. On the 12th the Russians reached Lichuan and Kailu and on the 14th Hsingan, Taonan and Tungliao. Early on the 15th, before the Emperor broadcast the Imperial Rescript bringing hostilities to an end, further air attacks were made against the advancing Russian

armoured columns. When the war ended *3rd Area Army's* redeployment was still incomplete and there would appear to have been little chance of its being able to prevent the Russian armoured columns from reaching and cutting the Hsinking-Mukden railway.

On the *4th Army* front in the north the Russians made much less progress. They crossed the Amur River on the night of the 10th and during the 11th, and by the 14th were in contact with Japanese formations holding Sunwu and Erhchan. Farther west, forces advancing from Sanho, Manchouli and Nomonhan carried out an enveloping attack on Hailar which forced the Japanese to withdraw to a position covering Pokotu. On the 14th Yamada ordered *4th Army* to withdraw to Meihokou to defend the redoubts along the Korean border, but the army was in such close contact with Russian forces that it was unable to disengage and fighting in the north continued until the cease-fire order was received on the 17th. On *34th Army's* front there was little action except in north-east Korea where amphibious landings made by the Russians at Najin on the 10th and at Chongjin on the 13th led to severe fighting. Chongjin fell on the 16th but hostilities continued till the 18th August.

It is evident from the events described above that by the 14th August the situation of *Kwantung Army* was critical. Its *4th Army* was virtually cut off in the north, and *1st Area Army*, having suffered some 40,000 casualties, was on the point of being driven from the last defensive positions covering Harbin and Hsinking from the east. The *3rd Area Army* was in no position to prevent the main railway line of communication to Korea from being cut and only *34th Army* was intact. The end of the war on the 15th August undoubtedly saved *Kwantung Army* from complete destruction in battle.

The severity of the fighting during the seven-day campaign can be gauged from the fact that the Russian losses amounted to 8,219 killed and 22,264 wounded, and they claimed to have inflicted 80,000 casualties on the Japanese.<sup>1</sup> When hostilities ceased some 594,000 Japanese, including 148 general officers, surrendered. Most of the prisoners were removed to Siberia, although some were formed into labour companies and kept in Manchuria.

Simultaneously with the invasion of Manchuria, Russian forces crossed the border from northern into southern Sakhalin on the 9th August.<sup>2</sup> This area was the responsibility of *5th Area Army*, whose headquarters were at Sapporo on Hokkaido Island, and its defence had been entrusted to *88th Division*. On the 12th Russian troops

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<sup>1</sup> There was no confirmation from Japanese sources of their losses.

<sup>2</sup> See Sketch 12, page 201.





landed on the west coast immediately south of the frontier and next day another landing was made at Esutoru, due west of Shikuka. The *145th Infantry Regiment* held out in the vicinity of Koton till the receipt of the Imperial Rescript on the 15th August, but on the 20th fighting broke out again near Maoka where a further Russian landing was made. Hostilities finally ceased on the 22nd.

After the surrender *145th Infantry Regiment* was formed into three labour battalions and sent to north Sakhalin. The remainder of *88th Division* and administrative troops numbering some 13,000 were removed to Siberia towards the end of September.

The Japanese defence of the Kuriles was organized in three sectors: the northern, held by *91st Division* on Shumushu and Paramushiro Islands; the central, held by *41st I.M.B.* on Matsuwa Island and *125th I.M.B.* on Uruppu Island; and the southern, held by *89th Division* on Etorofu Island. There was no fighting except in the northern sector where Russian troops landed on Shumushu Island under cover of a bombardment on the 17th August. A cease-fire was agreed between Russian and Japanese commanders on board a Russian warship on the 23rd August. In the central and southern sectors the Russians landed on Matsuwa Island on the 25th, at Rubetsu on Etorofu Island on the 28th and on Uruppu Island on the 31st August. The Japanese troops were all disarmed by the 31st and were then formed into labour battalions and moved to Siberia or north Sakhalin.

Discussions on the proposed pact between Russia and China began in Moscow on the 1st July, seventeen days before the Terminal Conference at Potsdam. The Chinese negotiators realized that, although they had not been party to the decisions reached at the Argonaut Conference,<sup>1</sup> they would have to accept them as a basis for negotiations. They had also been told that Stalin would be meeting Churchill and Truman at Potsdam about the middle of the month and that Russian troops would be likely to be moving down through Mongolia and Manchuria into Korea and northern China sometime in August and would therefore come into contact with Mao Tse-tung's Chinese Communist régime in north-west China. When the conference in Moscow opened the Russians went far beyond the Yalta agreement and demanded that China should recognize the independence of Outer Mongolia, concede a military zone in Manchuria which would include Dairen and Port Arthur and agree to Russia having a controlling interest in the Chinese Eastern and South Manchurian Railways. In return for these concessions Stalin offered a treaty which would pledge Russia to support Chiang Kai-shek and abstain from supporting the Chinese Communist régime. Since these demands were so much greater than those agreed at Yalta and the Russians refused to modify them, the Chinese negotiators had to return to China to seek further instructions.

Negotiations were resumed in Moscow on the 7th August. Although in the meantime Truman, warned by his advisers that Russian control of the Manchurian railways might result in their economic domination of Manchuria and the closing of the 'Open Door',<sup>2</sup> had raised the matter with Stalin and had obtained an

<sup>1</sup> See pages 188-9.

<sup>2</sup> The 'Open Door' meant equality of commercial opportunity.

assurance that Dairen would be a free port and that railway concessions would not block United States trade in Manchuria, Stalin was not prepared to make any real concessions to the Chinese, for his troops were about to invade Manchuria and he was in a position to threaten the Nationalist Government if they did not quickly agree to his demands.

A Sino-Soviet Treaty of Friendship and Alliance, accompanied by two exchanges of notes and four agreements, was signed on the 14th August under which Russia obtained most of her demands of the 1st July. By the terms of the treaty Russia and China agreed to help each other in the war against Japan and not to conclude without mutual consent any armistice or peace treaty with any Japanese Government which did not renounce all aggressive intentions, to work together in close and friendly collaboration after the coming of peace, to respect each other's sovereignty and territorial integrity, to abstain from interference in each other's internal affairs and to render each other economic assistance in the post-war period. In the first note Russia gave a pledge that aid given to China would be entirely given to the National Government as the central government of China, that she would respect China's sovereignty over Manchuria and would not interfere in Sinkiang; in the second the Chinese National Government declared that, should a plebiscite of the Outer Mongolian peoples confirm a desire for independence, it would recognize the independence of that area. The four agreements dealt with the Manchurian railways, Port Arthur, Dairen (where Russia agreed not to exercise military authority in times of peace) and the relationship between the Russian forces and the Chinese civil authorities in Manchuria. The treaty was at first considered in the United States as an important step forward in the relations between Russia and China and a practical example of the mutual helpfulness and amity which should characterise the acts of members of the United Nations. It was hoped that Russia would assist Chiang Kai-shek to compel the Chinese Communists to come to terms, thus avoiding a civil war in China and uniting the country but, in the months that followed the Japanese surrender, Russia began to violate the treaty.



## CHAPTER XX

# JAPAN SURRENDERS

(August 1945)

*See Map 9*

**T**HE text of the Potsdam Declaration was received in Tokyo at 6 a.m. on the 27th July and was immediately passed to the Foreign Ministry. Togo's first reactions were that the absence of Stalin's signature on the declaration showed that Russia appeared to be maintaining her attitude of neutrality towards Japan, since he must almost certainly have been consulted about its issue, and that the Allies had apparently abandoned their insistence on absolute unconditional surrender. He therefore believed, incorrectly, that the modification made in the meaning of unconditional surrender was due to Russia's intervention on Japan's behalf. He considered that, although the terms of the declaration were very severe, they were close enough to what the Japanese could hope for in view of the extremely adverse military situation, and it might be possible to negotiate for some easement in them through Russia, should she agree to Japan's request for mediation. He concluded that Japan's attitude should not be decided until Stalin's reply to the Emperor's request to send the Konoye mission to Moscow had been received, and that it was advisable not to reject the declaration, thereby retaining a loophole for possible negotiations.

The Supreme Council met that day to consider the declaration. The peace group welcomed it as indicating that Japan would not be treated with complete ruthlessness and, to give its members support, the Emperor let it be known that he considered the declaration to be acceptable in principle. Togo, with whom Premier Suzuki agreed, pointed out that the Allies, while demanding unconditional surrender, were in fact offering peace on terms and, having said that he was in favour of acceptance, warned his colleagues of the disastrous consequences should the demands of the Allies be refused. The Service chiefs (particularly Toyoda) demanded its rejection, but reluctantly agreed to it being published provided its more lenient provisions were deleted. In these circumstances the Supreme Council, and later the Cabinet, agreed to await the result of their appeal for Russian mediation, and in the meantime to make no reply to the declaration.

Since the declaration had been broadcast all over the world it was essential that the Government made some statement to the press, but their problem was how to strike a balance between the decision not to say anything which would destroy the possibility of negotiating for better terms through Moscow, and the necessity of saying something to the Press which would satisfy both the military leaders and the popular desire to know what was going on. A solution was found in a proposal made by Suzuki during the discussions on the 27th that the government should simply '*mokusatsu*' the declaration, a word meaning 'take no notice of' or 'ignore by keeping silence', and it was arranged that the Press should publish an expurgated version of the text on the 28th, treating everything relating to the declaration as inconspicuously as possible and without editorial comment. The passages to be eliminated from the text were, 'We do not intend that the Japanese shall be enslaved as a race or destroyed as a nation' and 'The Japanese military forces, after being completely disarmed, shall be permitted to return to their homes with the opportunity to lead peaceful and productive lives'. The Cabinet Information Board, however, fearing that the absence of any official comment might invite suspicion that the Government was wavering, instructed the Press, when publishing the expurgated version, to add a rider (the source of which was not to be divulged) that the Government seemed to be ignoring the declaration.

The newspapers duly published the expurgated version of the declaration, and added that the Government's attitude was '*mokusatsu*'. One leading Tokyo newspaper even quoted the Government as saying that, 'Since the joint declaration of America, Britain and Chungking is a thing of no great value, it will only serve to re-enhance the Government's resolve to carry the war forward unflinching to a successful conclusion'. Togo immediately protested to his Cabinet colleagues that the statement in the Press contradicted the Government's discussions of the 27th and that, by permitting the Press to add the rider, the Government had publicly avowed that the declaration was unworthy of notice and would not affect Japan's determination to fight on. His protest was too late, for the Japanese Overseas Broadcasting Organization had already announced that the Government was treating the declaration as of no great value and was ignoring it. The Service leaders, especially Toyoda, took exception to even these half measures on the ground that they might result in demoralizing the armed forces. The Army and Navy Ministers, together with Umezu and Toyoda, demanded that the Prime Minister should make it known that the Government denounced the declaration. Under pressure, Suzuki, in answer to an arranged question at a Press conference late on the 28th said, 'I

consider the joint proclamation of the Three Powers to be a re-hash of the Cairo declaration. The Government does not regard it as a thing of any value; the Government will just ignore it. We will press forward resolutely to carry the war to a successful conclusion'. On the 30th, the day on which this statement was published in the Japanese Press, newspapers throughout the world informed their readers that Japan had dismissed the Potsdam Declaration.

In these circumstances the United States Government could but take the view that Japan had rejected the declaration, and demonstrate to the Japanese people that the words 'the alternative for Japan is prompt and utter destruction' were not an idle threat. Truman therefore allowed the order to Spaatz to stand.<sup>1</sup> On the morning of the 6th August the first atomic bomb was dropped over Hiroshima, a city which contained a population of 343,000, the headquarters of *Second General Army* and many military supply depots.<sup>2</sup> Little attention was paid to the approach of the three B.29s (two of which were observation aircraft) although an alert had been sounded. At 8.15 a.m. the bomb was dropped accurately and detonated successfully above the centre of the city. The blast and the heat demolished all buildings near the centre of the explosion and set most of the city on fire. Casualties were 78,150 killed and 51,048 injured, most of whom were suffering from horrifying burns. Out of a total of 76,327 buildings and installations some 48,000 were completely destroyed and 22,178 severely damaged, leaving 176,987 of the surviving inhabitants homeless. *Headquarters Second General Army* was not destroyed and military casualties were not heavy. Early on the 7th the President broadcast a statement that 'the atomic bomb dropped on Hiroshima on the 6th August will no doubt bring a revolutionary change in the course of the war. And, so long as Japan does not comply with the surrender terms, similar bombs will be dropped elsewhere in Japan'.

The news of the destruction of Hiroshima did not reach Tokyo till the afternoon of the 6th and stated only that the Allies had used a bomb of unprecedented destructive power. On the 7th *Imperial General Headquarters* received a more detailed report, for the Commander-in-Chief *Second General Army* and his Chief of Staff flew to Tokyo. They said that, although their headquarters was not far from where the bomb was dropped, they were unaffected and only a few soldiers were killed. The bomb apparently had little effect below the surface of the ground and it was only those with no protection who suffered. The damage to Hiroshima though severe

<sup>1</sup> See pages 190-1.

<sup>2</sup> See Map 9, facing page 161.

was not as great as that caused by the B.29 raids.<sup>1</sup> Experts in Japan were aware that the Allies and Germany had been conducting research into the use of atomic power as a weapon but had no knowledge of the progress made. It was thought, therefore, that the bomb dropped at Hiroshima might be atomic as stated in Truman's broadcast and experts were immediately sent to Hiroshima to carry out an investigation. They reported on the evening of the 8th that the bomb dropped was indeed an atomic bomb.

That day Togo had an audience with the Emperor. Having told him of the events at Hiroshima and of Truman's broadcast, he explained that all the members of the Supreme War Council were agreed on the need to seek peace but could not agree on what would constitute acceptable conditions. The leaders of the armed forces were insisting on terms which would preclude the occupation of Japan, permit the nation to disarm her own forces and to try her nationals before Japanese courts, and allow the retention of the Imperial Institution. He himself wished to accept the terms of the Potsdam Declaration, with the sole proviso that the Emperor's position was not affected, so that the war could be ended as soon as possible. The Emperor accepted Togo's views and told him that he was to lose no opportunity of ending the war by attempting to gain more favourable terms. In the early hours of the 9th a Russian broadcast declaring war on Japan was picked up in Tokyo, and this, coming on top of the dropping of the atomic bomb, created a crisis of unparalleled dimensions. The members of the peace group, although in grave danger of assassination by the extremists, recognized that these events gave them a supreme opportunity to secure for themselves some real control of national policy.

The Supreme Council met on the morning of the 9th. No one present, now that the hope of Russian mediation no longer existed, was opposed in principle to the acceptance of the Allied terms, but there was a considerable difference of opinion over the exact conditions of acceptance. Togo opened the discussion by pointing out that the military position was now quite hopeless, and that it was clearly necessary to make peace without further delay. He advocated the acceptance of the Allied declaration and that conditions for its acceptance should be limited only to those which were absolutely essential to Japan. The military representatives, however, continued to press for conditions which would avoid the occupation of Japan by Allied troops and make the Japanese themselves responsible for disarmament and for dealing with war criminals. Togo said that the Allies would never accept such conditions, and proposed that the only condition Japan should put forward was that of the inviolability

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<sup>1</sup> It must be remembered that at that time the after-effects of radiation were not known.



of the Imperial House. Umezu and Anami, representing the Army, both considered that there was no necessity for Japan to accept the declaration unconditionally since, although she could not win a decisive battle in the homeland, the army was still capable of fighting a battle and might possibly repel an invasion; Japan ought therefore to make a further effort to improve her position. Umezu also pointed out that Japanese soldiers, sailors and airmen were not permitted to surrender and that the Services penal code prescribed heavy penalties for those who sought to lay down their arms. All ranks had been brought up to understand that in the last extremity the only honourable course was to commit suicide. This being the case, he doubted whether the armed forces would obey an order from Tokyo to surrender. Since Suzuki, Togo and Yonai were balanced against Anami, Umezu and Toyoda, the Supreme Council was unable to reach any decision and the matter was taken to the Cabinet.

While the members of the Supreme Council were unsuccessfully arguing, the second atomic bomb was dropped at 11.30 a.m. on Nagasaki, a town with 270,000 inhabitants. The damage was not so great as at Hiroshima since the bomb did not explode over the centre of the target area, but 23,753 of the inhabitants were killed and 43,020 wounded. It is perhaps interesting to reflect that, in the big fire raid on a small area of Tokyo on the night of the 9th/10th March, 84,000 were killed and over 40,000 wounded.<sup>1</sup> The view expressed that the use of the atomic bomb against Japan, though it might cause almost complete local destruction, would save far greater and widespread destruction elsewhere was not far from the mark.<sup>2</sup>

The news of the dropping of the second atomic bomb had not reached Tokyo when the Cabinet met on the afternoon of the 9th. The same views which had been stated in the Supreme Council in the morning were reiterated throughout the afternoon and evening. At 8.30 p.m. Suzuki called for a consensus of opinion. Some ministers supported the view expressed by Togo, some opposed it and a few remained undecided. Since a decision required unanimity and not a weak majority, the meeting was adjourned, Suzuki saying that, as Cabinet Ministers were unable to decide the issue, he proposed to visit the Emperor and find out his wishes. About 11 p.m. Suzuki and Togo were received in audience at the Imperial Palace. Suzuki gave the Emperor a detailed account of the proceedings of the Supreme Council and Cabinet meetings, an account which made it clear that a decision to end the war could not be expected from these bodies. The Premier then proposed that an Imperial Conference should be

<sup>1</sup> See pages 103-4.

<sup>2</sup> See page 187.

convened the same night, a request to which the Emperor at once gave his sanction.

The Imperial Conference began shortly before midnight on the 9th. Although it was now known that a second atomic bomb had been dropped, the discussion again disclosed the same division of opinion between the two opposing groups. In the circumstances Suzuki declared that the gravity of the position was such that he had no other course open except to seek a decision from the Emperor. The Emperor then made the crucial decision and gave his sanction to the acceptance of the Potsdam Declaration subject to the sole condition that the Imperial House should not be deposed. His decision was unanimously approved by the Cabinet between 3 and 4 a.m. on the 10th August, thus legalizing it.

Between 7 a.m. and 10 a.m. that day a note giving Japan's acceptance of the declaration was sent by wireless through Switzerland and Sweden for transmission to the Governments of the United States, Great Britain and China, a copy being given to the Russian Ambassador in Tokyo. The note was also broadcast to the world. It read:

'In obedience to the gracious command of His Majesty the Emperor who, ever anxious to enhance the cause of world peace, desires earnestly to bring about a speedy termination of hostilities with a view to saving mankind from the calamities to be imposed on them by further continuation of the war, the Japanese Government several weeks ago asked the Soviet Government, with which neutral relations then prevailed, to render good offices in restoring peace vis-à-vis the enemy powers. Unfortunately, their efforts in the interest of peace having failed, the Japanese Government in conformity with the august wish of His Majesty to restore the general peace and desiring to put an end to the untold sufferings entailed by war as quickly as possible have decided upon the following.

The Japanese Government are ready to accept the terms enumerated in the joint declaration which was issued at Potsdam on July 26th, 1945, by the heads of the Governments of the United States, Great Britain and China, and later subscribed by the Soviet Government, with the understanding that the said declaration does not comprise any demand which prejudices the prerogatives of His Majesty as a Sovereign Ruler.

The Japanese Government sincerely hope that this understanding is warranted and desire keenly that an explicit indication to that effect will be speedily forthcoming.<sup>1</sup>

With the assistance of the Emperor the peace group had gained its ends but, despite this apparent victory, it was still to face many difficulties.

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<sup>1</sup> U.S. Department of State, *Occupation of Japan*, Appendix 4.

The receipt of the Japanese note in Washington made it necessary to reach a quick decision on the role of the Imperial Institution. Opinions on this subject differed: some demanded that the Emperor be denied any place in the country's future on the grounds that as long as he remained militarism could not be stamped out, while others wished to see his retention as a constitutional monarch. Admiral W. D. Leahy, the President's Chief of Staff,<sup>1</sup> urged the prompt acceptance of the Japanese proposal for he was convinced that the surrender could be effected only by Imperial command. The State Department felt that it was for the United States and not for the Japanese to propose conditions and saw no reason why there should be any withdrawal from the demand for unconditional surrender, especially since the Allied ultimatum had been lodged and rejected before the entry of Russia into the war and the use of the atomic bombs. It was eventually decided that the Supreme Commander for the Allied Powers would oversee and even limit, but would not eradicate, the Imperial prerogative and the governmental authority. After consultation with the Allies the text of the reply, sent through the Swiss Government on the 11th August by Washington on behalf of the Governments of the United States, Great Britain, the U.S.S.R. and China, read:

'With regard to the Japanese Government's message accepting the terms of the Potsdam proclamation but containing the statement, "with the understanding that the said declaration does not comprise any demand which prejudices the prerogatives of His Majesty as a sovereign ruler", our position is as follows:

From the moment of surrender the authority of the Emperor and the Japanese Government to rule the state shall be subject to the Supreme Commander of the Allied powers who will take such steps as he deems proper to effectuate the surrender terms.

The Emperor will be required to authorize and ensure the signature by the Government of Japan and the Japanese *Imperial General Headquarters* of the surrender terms necessary to carry out the provisions of the Potsdam Declaration and shall issue his commands to all the Japanese military, naval and air authorities and to all the forces under their control wherever located to cease active operations and to surrender their arms, and to issue such other orders as the Supreme Commander may require to give effect to the surrender terms.<sup>2</sup>

Immediately upon the surrender the Japanese Government shall transport prisoners of war and civilian internees to places of safety, as directed, where they can quickly be placed aboard Allied transports.

The ultimate form of government of Japan shall, in accordance with the

<sup>1</sup> Leahy was Chief of Staff to the President in the latter's capacity as Commander-in-Chief of the armed forces.

<sup>2</sup> The original American draft proposed that the Emperor should personally sign the surrender terms; this the British thought unwise and suggested the draft should be changed to include this formula.

Potsdam Declaration, be established by the freely expressed will of the Japanese people.

The armed forces of the Allied Powers will remain in Japan until the purposes set forth in the Potsdam Declaration are achieved.<sup>1</sup>

The wireless message giving the American reply was monitored at 12.45 a.m. on the 12th August in Tokyo. Prompted by the assumption that the Army and Navy leaders would do everything in their power to distort its meaning (and might even provide their own translation) the Japanese Foreign Office set to work to provide not only a Japanese translation of the English text which would reflect the meaning of the original but also, more important still, their interpretation of it. Togo realized that he had to take the risk of assuming that his interpretation, based on the special knowledge of diplomacy possessed by the Foreign Office, would at this critical juncture be accepted, for if it were not he might be forced to align himself with the military leaders and thus bring about the rejection of the Allied reply, an act which would lead to invasion and destruction of the Imperial Institution. While the translation was being made, Umezu and Toyoda went to the palace and told the Emperor of the Supreme Command's opposition to the reply. The Emperor, who realized that they were acting under pressure from their subordinates, merely said that the matter would be studied in detail as soon as the official note had arrived in Tokyo.

Throughout the 12th August the monitored broadcast was studied by the members of the Supreme Council and the Cabinet who, once again, after heated discussion failed to reach any unanimous decision. To give time for the members of the Supreme Council and the Cabinet to calm down and for the staff at the Foreign Office to devise new arguments in support of their interpretation which was based on the text which might have been inaccurately monitored, Togo arranged that, should the official communication from Washington be received on the evening of the 12th, it should be recorded as arriving on the morning of the 13th. No sooner had this decision been reached than the official communication reached Tokyo at 6.40 p.m. but, as arranged, it was recorded as arriving at 7.40 a.m. on the 13th.

The official text (which agreed with the monitored text) was forwarded to all concerned on the morning of the 13th, and from 9 a.m. that day till midnight the members of the Supreme Council conferred in secret but reached no decision. While the discussions were taking place unrest among the younger army officers increased. Posters began to appear in Tokyo denouncing leaders of the peace group as traitors who should be assassinated, and there were

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<sup>1</sup> U.S. Department of State, *Occupation of Japan*, Appendix 5.

rumours of a *coup d'état* aimed at cutting the Emperor off from access to anyone likely to influence him towards peace. It was evident that Anami, the Army Minister, was being put under great pressure by certain groups in the army. Although his colleagues did not believe that he would lend himself to a *coup d'état*, all felt that there might well be a revolt within the army, in which case Anami would be compelled to resign and the nation would be committed to a course which could only lead to final ruin. There was thus an urgent need for a decision.

The pressing need to decide what action should be taken on the Allied reply was endorsed by a cable from the Japanese legation in Stockholm who described Washington's reply as a great diplomatic victory for the United States, since the other Allies were not in entire agreement with Washington's views on the Emperor and the Imperial Institution.<sup>1</sup> They suggested that any further enquiries or representations from Japan would probably wreck the negotiations altogether, and result in greater war casualties and a deeper Russian penetration in the Far East.

While the Japanese Government remained unable to come to any decision, American aircraft had been dropping millions of leaflets and copies of the Potsdam Declaration on Japanese cities. In the early morning of the 14th August one of the leaflets giving the verbatim text of the Japanese note of the 10th and Washington's reply of the 11th was handed to Marquis Kido. He at once realized that the secrecy regarding the negotiations which the Government had striven to maintain no longer existed. The attitude of the armed forces had stiffened against peace negotiations and there was now a distinct danger that the leaflets would get into their hands. It was evident that, if the Government were to control the situation, swift action would have to be taken. Kido immediately went to see the Emperor to urge him to summon an Imperial Conference and demand a termination of the war. The Emperor at once agreed and told Kido that, in the event of continuous deadlock, he would command the Cabinet to accept the text of the United States reply of the 11th as it stood and to prepare an Imperial Rescript embodying the decision.

The Imperial Conference began at 10.50 a.m. on the 14th. Outlining what had taken place at the sessions of the Supreme Council and the Cabinet on the 13th, Suzuki apologized for the Cabinet's inability to present a unanimous opinion. He then turned to the three leading dissenters, Anami, Umezu and Toyoda, and called upon them to state their case so that the Emperor could decide the issue which the Cabinet and Supreme Council had been unable to

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<sup>1</sup> There was no actual disagreement on this point.

resolve. The Army representatives declared that Japan should negotiate further since the acceptance of the Potsdam Declaration on the basis of the United States reply would endanger the national polity and, if Japan could not be sure of maintaining it, there was no alternative to carrying on the struggle even at the cost of a 100 million lives. Although the Russian invasion was mentioned in discussion, Umezu said that even this could not change his mind. The effect of the atomic bombs was also mentioned but only in passing, and was dismissed for the damage caused was no greater than that effected by a single incendiary raid by B.29s. Toyoda confined himself to saying that, as Japan could not possibly accept the United States reply as it stood, it was appropriate that she once again put forward her views. No transcript of what the Emperor said is available, but the gist, taken from accounts written by persons present at the conference, is as follows:

'It is not lightly, but upon mature consideration of conditions within and without the land, and especially of the developments taken by the war that I previously determined to accept the Potsdam Declaration. My determination is unaltered. I have heard the disputation over the recent reply by the Allied Powers, but I consider that in general they have confirmed our understanding. I agree with the Foreign Minister that it is not intended to subvert the national polity of Japan, but, unless the war be brought to an end at the moment, I fear the national polity will be destroyed and the nation annihilated. It is therefore my wish that we bear the unbearable and accept the Allied reply, thus to preserve the State and spare my subjects further suffering. I wish you all to act in that intention. The Army and Navy Ministers have told me that there is opposition within the army and navy. I desire that the Services also may be made to comprehend my wishes.'

For the second time the Emperor had committed himself, but this time his words were final for the Cabinet endorsed his views immediately after the Imperial Conference adjourned and not only began drafting a rescript to be broadcast by the Emperor that afternoon but also authorized the Foreign Office to inform the Allied Powers of the Imperial decision to accept the Potsdam Declaration.

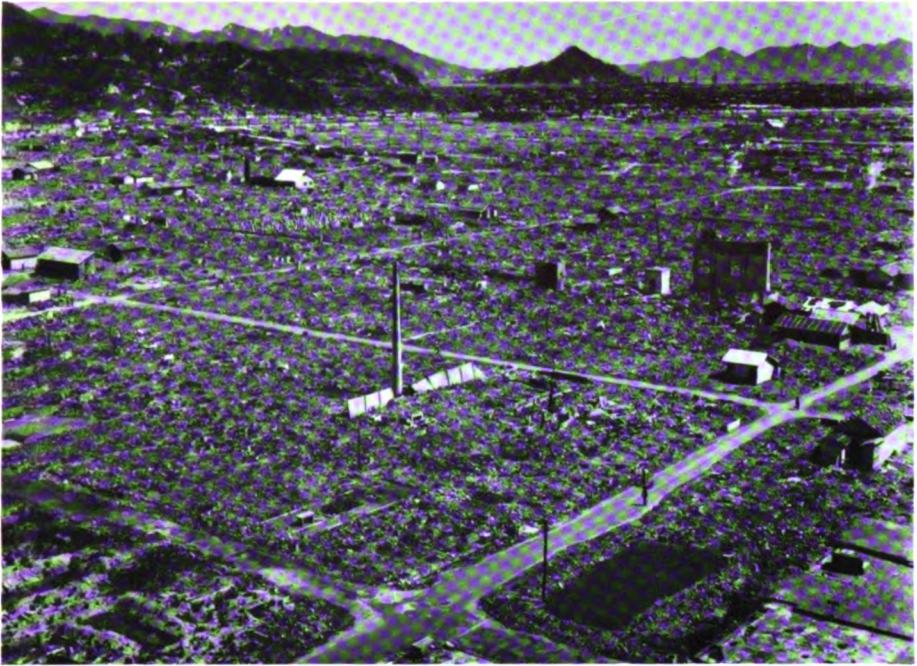
The Emperor and the Premier accepted the draft with minor adjustments but Anami made difficulties, and it was not till 11 p.m. that final Cabinet agreement was reached, a prerequisite to the formal promulgation of the rescript which took place at 11.30 p.m. on the 14th (Tokyo time).<sup>1</sup> A cable was then despatched to Japan's ambassadors in Switzerland and Sweden which read:

'His Majesty the Emperor has issued an Imperial rescript regarding Japan's acceptance of the provisions of the Potsdam declaration.

'His Majesty the Emperor is prepared to authorize and ensure the

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<sup>1</sup> Tokyo time is nine hours in advance of Greenwich Mean Time.

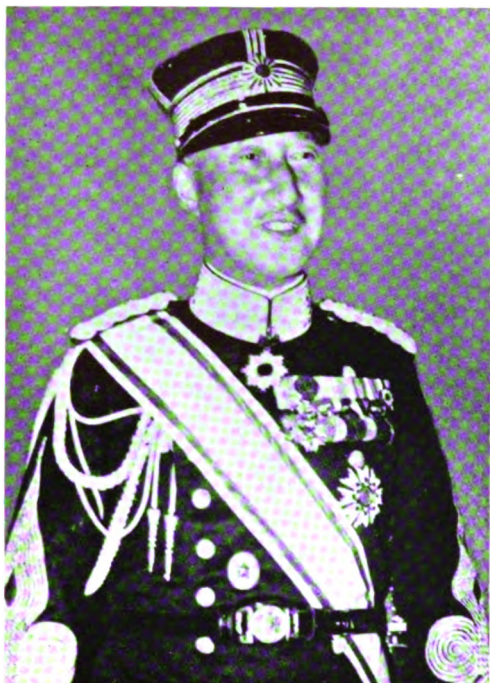


10. Hiroshima.



11. A crashed *Kamikaze* on H.M. carrier *Formidable*.





12. Field-Marshal Count H.  
Terauchi.



13. Admiral Baron K. Suzuki.



14. General K. Anami.

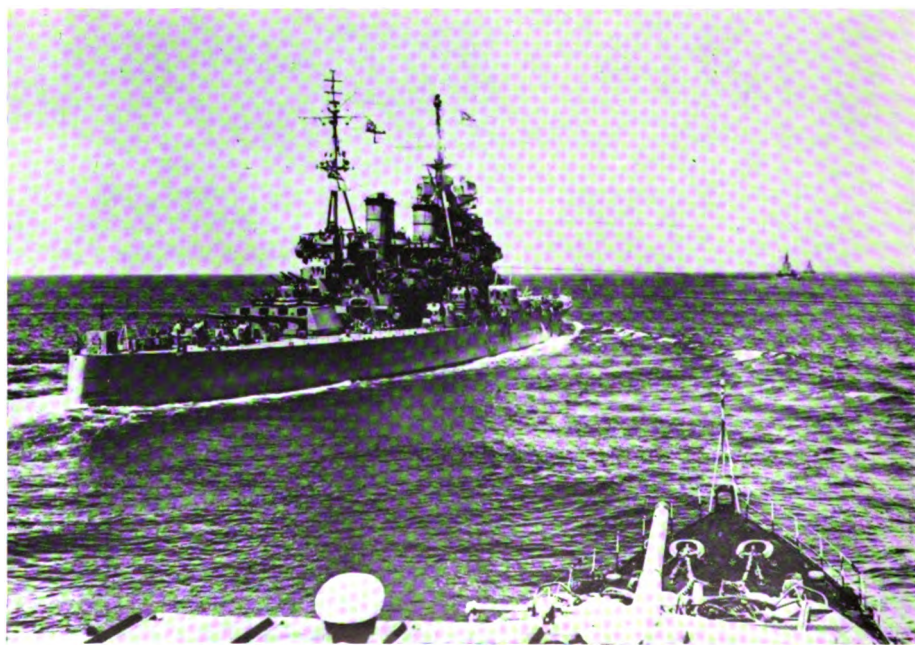


15. General K. Doihara.





16. Fleet Admiral C. Nimitz being piped aboard H.M.S. *King George V*.



17. H.M.S. *Duke of York* entering Sagami Bay with U.S.S. *Iowa* and *Missouri*, 27th August 1945

signature by his government and the *Imperial General Headquarters* of the necessary terms for carrying out the provisions of the Potsdam declaration. His Majesty is also prepared to issue his commands to all the military, naval and air authorities of Japan and all the forces under their control wherever located to cease active operations, to surrender arms and to issue such other orders as may be required by the Supreme Commander of the Allied Forces for the execution of the above-mentioned terms.<sup>1</sup>

With this telegram the Emperor ended the war, with his army and civil administration and a national economy, which had just avoided complete breakdown, still in being.

On the afternoon of the 14th August Anami and Umezu, together with the Inspector-General of Military Training, Doihara, and Field-Marshal Sugiyama and Hata, assembled at the War Ministry.<sup>2</sup> After signing a document proclaiming that the army would act strictly in accordance with the Imperial decision, they discussed its future position and action. They, together with General Kawabe (*Air General Army*), issued a message at 6 p.m. to all formations which explained the Emperor's reasons for accepting the Potsdam Declaration and went on to say that:

'It is our desire that all forces act in accordance with the wishes of His Majesty and strive not to impair a glorious tradition or invalidate their meritorious military service. It is of the utmost importance that the Japanese people act in such a way as to give a good impression. We fervently desire that each man refrain from any rash action and thus manifest the honour and glory of the Japanese forces.'<sup>3</sup>

Later that day Anami and Umezu summoned all their subordinates, gave them the substance of the message despatched to formations, and told them that the only proper procedure left for the army was strictly to follow the Emperor's wishes. Anami added that 'although the nation will be subjected to increasing difficulties hereafter, we believe that over hasty suicide attacks will not serve you to accomplish your missions'.

Despite these instructions there were a number of incidents in Tokyo during the night of the 14th/15th August which were inspired by the younger officers of the general staff at *Imperial General Headquarters* and the War Ministry. An attempt was made to force an entry into the buildings of the Imperial Household Ministry with the intention of separating the Emperor from the peace party. Army

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<sup>1</sup> U.S. Department of State, *Occupation of Japan*, Appendix 6.

<sup>2</sup> General Doihara, former commander of 7th Area Army in Singapore, had assumed the post of Inspector-General on the 4th July.

<sup>3</sup> On the 15th Admiral Yonai summoned all the fleet commanders and commandants of naval stations in the Tokyo area and gave them similar explanations and instructions.

aircraft dropped leaflets denouncing the surrender rescript as false. An attempt was made on the life of the Premier and his house was burnt down. The commander of *Imperial Guards Division*, Lieut.-General T. Mori, was assassinated in his headquarters alongside the Imperial Palace for refusing to co-operate with the leaders of the military revolt. Early on the 15th a group of men, armed with hand grenades, swords and revolvers, raided Kido's house and, failing to find him since he had taken refuge in the Imperial Household Ministry, burnt it to the ground. This revolt was brought to an end by the *12th Area Army* commander. At about the same time a group of officers who still wished to fight on put a proposal to the Army Minister (Anami) that there should be a *coup d'état* led by the Army leaders so that the army would take over the government of the country and continue the war. Anami referred the matter to Umezu (Chief of the Army General Staff), who refused to give his approval.

In the early morning of the 15th General Anami committed hara-kiri in the Army Minister's official residence. His example was followed by Vice-Admiral T. Onishi, who had begun and encouraged the *Kamikaze* operations, by the commander of *First General Army* (Field-Marshal Sugiyama) and the commanders of *10th*, *11th* and *12th Area Armies* in Japan, by General S. Honjo (a former commander of *Kwantung Army*) and by several other lieutenant-generals.

The Tokyo central broadcasting station had announced at intervals on the evening of the 14th that there would be an important broadcast at noon the next day and called on everyone to listen. Most Japanese had no idea what to expect and were astonished to hear early on the 15th that the announcement at noon would be made by the Emperor, who had never before made use of the microphone to speak to his people. Excitement grew and many assumed that, in view of the critical situation following the entry of Russia into the war, his object would be to exhort them to make even greater efforts for victory. By noon all traffic was at a standstill and there was complete stillness everywhere. The Emperor told his people that he had decided to effect a settlement of the conditions obtaining in the Japanese Empire by resorting to extraordinary measures. Despite the best that had been done by everyone, the gallant fighting of the military and naval forces, the diligence and assiduity of the civil servants and the devoted service of the whole nation, the war situation had not turned to Japan's advantage and the general trend of the world had turned against the nation's interest. Furthermore, the enemy had begun to employ a new and cruel bomb, the power of which to do damage was indescribable and which, should the nation continue the fight, would not only result in an ultimate collapse and obliteration of the Japanese nation but would also lead to the total extinction of human civilization. To save



millions of his subjects he had ordered his Government to tell the Governments of the United States, Britain, China and Russia that the Japanese Empire accepted the provisions of their joint declaration. He ended by exhorting the nation to devote its total strength to the construction of the future and advised his subjects to cultivate the ways of rectitude, to foster nobility of spirit and work with resolution to enhance the glory of the Imperial State and keep pace with the progress of the world.

The spirit of unquestioning obedience is deeply inbred in the Japanese and resilience one of their greatest assets. Although after the shock of the news of defeat heard from their Emperor himself a few committed suicide, the great majority accepted the inevitable, many with a sense of relief. It may here be noted that in his broadcast the Emperor made no mention of unconditional surrender and gave no hint of what it might mean for Japan. Nevertheless a number of officers in both Services still hoped to reverse the decision and, shortly after the end of the Emperor's broadcast, naval airmen dropped leaflets over Tokyo which denied the validity of the Imperial Rescript and called upon all true patriots to rise to the defence of the Emperor and the throne, and some army and air units vowed that they would undertake *Kamikaze* attacks on any Allied naval forces entering Tokyo Bay to accept Japan's surrender. Fortunately the War Ministry had as a precaution arranged for all army aircraft to be disarmed and have no fuel.

On the 16th August *Imperial General Headquarters* issued a cease-fire order to all commands with the proviso that, until the conclusion of negotiations for the cessation of hostilities, they were permitted to act in self-defence should the Allies attack. Simultaneously with the issue of the order an overseas broadcast was made saying that at 4 p.m. on the 16th the Emperor had ordered the Japanese army and navy to cease operations immediately. The following day an Imperial Rescript bidding the army and navy to obey the order to surrender was published and conveyed to all concerned through the Army and Navy Ministers. The same day, in order to ensure that his intentions and wishes were correctly understood and acted upon by the Japanese armed forces overseas, the Emperor gave instructions for three Imperial princes to proceed by air, one to *Headquarters Southern Army* at Saigon and *10th Area Fleet* at Singapore, a second to *Headquarters China Expeditionary Force* at Nanking and Peking, and a third to *Headquarters Kwantung Army* in Manchuria and *17th Area Army* in Korea to confirm orally what he had said in his rescript. Also on the 17th the Suzuki Cabinet, which had resigned on the 15th, was replaced by a new one; Prince N. Higashikuni, a general of wide experience, became Premier, Prince Konoye Vice-Premier and Mr. Shigemitsu Foreign Minister.

On the 18th *Imperial General Headquarters* issued a further order that, at times to be notified later, each force would be relieved of its assigned operational mission and all armed action would be suspended. The times were: for the naval Commander-in-Chief and the army forces in the homeland, midnight on the 24th August; for the forces under the commanders of *South-East Area Fleet*, *South-West Area Fleet* and *China Area Fleet*, as soon as possible after the 22nd; and for all other overseas forces, midnight on the 25th. In view of the exceptional circumstances in China, where there was intermittent war between the Nationalist Government and the Communists, self-defence measures were permitted when unavoidable.

Under international law, the Japanese forces became prisoners-of-war when they were ordered to cease the use of armed force and were disarmed. In view of the Japanese tradition and belief that a warrior should kill himself rather than face the dishonour of being made a prisoner, *Imperial General Headquarters* added the following paragraph to their cease-fire orders:

‘Japanese military personnel and civilians who are taken by the enemy after the proclamation of the Imperial Rescript will not be considered prisoners-of-war. All military personnel and civilians will immediately understand that they must be patient and have confidence in the success of the national reconstruction.’

On the 24th August the Army Minister ordered all Regimental Colours to be burned by the 31st, at that time the day when the surrender instrument was due to be signed. In all 444 Regimental Colours were destroyed, 179 in Japan and 265 overseas.

On the 25th the Emperor issued a Rescript ordering the demobilization of all army and naval personnel. It ended,

‘We ask you, members of the armed forces, to comply with our wishes. Turn to civilian occupations as good and loyal subjects, and by enduring hardships and overcoming difficulties exert your full energies in the task of post-war reconstruction.’

The Allies had meanwhile agreed, but not without some objection from Moscow, that General MacArthur should be the Supreme Commander for the Allied Powers. On the 15th August the State Department notified the Japanese Government of MacArthur’s appointment and instructed them to send emissaries to him to receive orders. The next day MacArthur himself sent an order to Tokyo ordering the Japanese to send to Manila a representative authorized to accept the requirements for the execution of the surrender terms on behalf of the Emperor, the Japanese Government and *Imperial General Headquarters*. Lieut.-General T. Kawabe (Deputy Chief of the Army General Staff) was chosen to lead the delegation, the other

members of which were Mr. K. Okazaki of the Foreign Ministry, a major-general, a rear-admiral and some army and naval officers. Owing to the change of Cabinet it was not till the 18th that Kawabe received his orders. On the 19th, under extreme secrecy to avoid the danger of assassination and interference by *Kamikaze* aircraft, Kawabe flew with his delegation to Ie-shima, where they transferred to an American aircraft and reached Manila in the late afternoon. Kawabe supplied information on the location of prisoner-of-war camps in Japan and on the military establishments in the Tokyo Bay area and the Kanoya area in Kyushu where American occupation forces were to land. On the 20th Kawabe was given a copy of the Instrument of Surrender,<sup>1</sup> instructions for the preparations to be made for the occupation forces, a proclamation which was to be issued by the Emperor after the signing of the Instrument of Surrender,<sup>2</sup> and a copy of General Order No. 1 issued by the Supreme Allied Commander.<sup>3</sup> Kawabe asked that ten days should be allowed for Japan to make preparations for receiving the occupation forces in view of the problem of ensuring control of the Japanese armed forces and avoiding regrettable incidents. This request was granted and it was arranged that the move of the occupation forces, arranged for the 25th, would be postponed until the 28th, although an advanced party would land at Atsugi airport near Tokyo on the 26th. The Japanese delegation returned to Tokyo later on the 20th, thus giving the new Japanese Government adequate time to study MacArthur's requirements and prepare for the arrival of the occupation forces.

On the 21st *Imperial General Headquarters* ordered the immediate withdrawal of all Japanese military and naval forces from the Tokyo Bay and Kanoya areas, except for a few men armed only with swords to maintain law and order. The order emphasized that this was necessary to comply faithfully with the Imperial Rescript of the 14th and to prevent incidents between Japanese troops and the occupation forces. Other measures were taken in these areas to remove arms and explosives, to control aircraft and submarines and to prepare the airfields at Tokyo and Kanoya for the arrival of the advanced parties. Disorder within some Japanese units, unrest among the civilian population, unreliable means of communication and lack of materials made it difficult to make satisfactory preparations for the reception of the Allied occupation forces, but a typhoon which struck the Kanto area on the 22nd, Honshu on the 25th and Kyushu on the 26th postponed their arrival by forty-eight

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<sup>1</sup> See Appendix 16.

<sup>2</sup> See Appendix 17.

<sup>3</sup> See Appendix 18.

hours and the signing of the Instrument of Surrender was put off till the 2nd September.

The advance of the occupation forces began with the arrival on the 27th August of major units of the U.S. 3rd Fleet off Sagami Bay, where they made rendezvous with representatives of the Japanese Navy in a destroyer.<sup>1</sup> The latter were told to prepare for the occupation of the Yokosuka naval base and then, piloted by Japanese pilots, ships of the 3rd Fleet, accompanied by the *Duke of York* (flagship of the British Pacific Fleet),<sup>2</sup> entered the bay and anchored. On the 28th an advanced party of some 150 men of the American army landed at Atsugi airport outside Tokyo. At 6 a.m. on the 30th troops landed and occupied the forts guarding the entrance to Tokyo Bay, and sailors and Marines landed at and occupied the Yokosuka naval base without incident. At 2.05 p.m. General MacArthur landed at Atsugi airport.

The Instrument of Surrender was signed on board the American battleship *Missouri* in Tokyo Bay at 9 a.m. on the 2nd September. In accordance with the Emperor's orders the Japanese plenipotentiaries were Mr. Shigemitsu (Foreign Minister) and General Umezu (representing, most unwillingly, *Imperial General Headquarters*) accompanied by nine others (three each from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Army and the Navy). The Japanese requested that the two plenipotentiaries should be allowed to sign 'by command of and on behalf of the Emperor of Japan' in accordance with the Japanese constitution, but the request was refused. Shigemitsu therefore signed 'by command of and on behalf of the Emperor of Japan and the Japanese Government' and Umezu 'by command of the Japanese *Imperial General Headquarters*'. General MacArthur then signed on behalf of all the Allied Powers, Admiral Nimitz on behalf of the United States, Admiral Fraser for Great Britain, General Blamey for Australia, Colonel L. M. Cosgrove for Canada, Air Vice-Marshal L. M. Isitt for New Zealand, General Hsu Yung-chang for China, General P. Leclerc for France, Admiral C. E. L. Helfrich for the Netherlands and Lieut.-General K. N. Derevyanko for Russia.

Thus the Second World War, which had lasted a day short of six years, came to its end.

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<sup>1</sup> See Map 9, facing page 161.

<sup>2</sup> The *Duke of York*, which became the flagship when she arrived at Sydney from the United Kingdom on the 1st July, had joined the ships of the 3rd Fleet at sea on the 16th August.



## PART 3

S.E.A.C. in the Post-War Period  
(August 1945—November 1946)



## CHAPTER XXI

### HIGH-LEVEL EVENTS AFFECTING S.E.A.C. (July—August 1945)

*See Maps 11 and 16*

**A**S current operations in the S.E.A.C. theatre were likely eventually to converge with those in the South-West Pacific Area, Mountbatten had obtained the approval of the Chiefs of Staff while he was in London in August 1944 to accept a long-standing invitation from General MacArthur to visit him.<sup>1</sup> The operations in Burma from November 1944 to May 1945 which led to the recapture of Rangoon made it undesirable for Mountbatten to be absent from his command, and it was not until the planning for 'Zipper' was complete on the 9th July that the visit was possible. He left Kandy on the 11th July and, flying by way of Calcutta and China, reached MacArthur's headquarters in Manila on the 12th. There the two commanders and their staffs had a number of discussions on matters of common interest and among other things decided that, as long as the inter-theatre boundaries remained unchanged, aircraft from S.E.A.C. could undertake offensive operations in the sea area between the east Malayan coast, Borneo and Java, against enemy shipping at sea and in harbour, and against enemy-occupied airfields, in this latter case notification of the intention to attack being given to Manila. Three Liberator, two Mitchell (B.25), four Beau-fighter and two Mosquito squadrons of the R.A.A.F. in Borneo would be available for air operations in S.E.A.C. if required, and aircraft operating from S.E.A.C. airfields would be able to use the airfields at Labuan, Tarakan and Balikpapan. They also agreed that Lieut.-General C. H. Gairdner, the Prime Minister's representative with MacArthur, should act as senior liaison officer between Mountbatten and MacArthur in addition to his existing duties, in a manner similar to that by which Lieut.-General Sir Adrian Carton de Wiart represented both the Prime Minister and Mountbatten at Chung-king; and that, in the event of any change in the theatre boundaries, any intelligence organization in the area to be transferred would pass under control of the new command.

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<sup>1</sup> For Mountbatten's visit to London, see Volume IV, pages 6-11.

Mountbatten left Manila on the evening of the 14th, spent the 15th in Rangoon and got back to Kandy the next day. Since it was now almost a year since he had last met the Prime Minister and the Chiefs of Staff, he had obtained their agreement early in July that he should pay them a visit. He therefore left for London on the 22nd July, and stopped off at Delhi to discuss matters such as 'Python' and 'Zipper' with Auchinleck before continuing his journey.

At the Terminal Conference at Potsdam, the Combined Chiefs of Staff were meanwhile discussing the scope and nature of British participation in the main operations against Japan and agreed that the British Pacific Fleet would continue to operate with the American Fleet, that ten squadrons of British long-range bombers would participate from December 1945, the number being increased to twenty when more airfields were available, and that a Commonwealth land force, and if possible a small tactical air force, should take part in the invasion of Honshu subject to a satisfactory solution of the operational and administrative problems involved.

The control of operational strategy in the Pacific Theatre would remain, as before, in the hands of the American Chiefs of Staff, who would give the British Chiefs of Staff full and timely information of any future plans and intentions. The Americans would, however, consult their British colleagues on matters of general strategy, provided that in the event of disagreement the final decision lay with them. Should the British Chiefs of Staff decide that they could not commit their troops to operations proposed by the American Chiefs of Staff, they were to give notice of their decision sufficiently in advance to enable the necessary rearrangement of plans to be made. For the purpose of planning production and the allocation of manpower the Combined Chiefs of Staff decided that the planning date for the end of organized resistance by Japan should be the 15th November 1946, although this date should be adjusted provisionally to conform to the course of the war.

The Combined Chiefs of Staff also agreed that a large part of the South-West Pacific Area should pass to British control, a matter first raised by the Americans in April.<sup>1</sup> Borneo, Java, Celebes and that portion of Indo-China which lay south of latitude 16° North would be attached to S.E.A.C. as soon as feasible and the remainder of the area to be transferred would come under Australian command. The northern part of Indo-China would for the time being remain under the China Theatre, since it was important that General Wedemeyer should have the responsibility for the security of the

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<sup>1</sup> See page 154.

flank of his projected operations in China, although it was possible that the whole of Indo-China might later be included within S.E.A.C.'s sphere of operations. The British Chiefs of Staff undertook to obtain the agreement of the Australian, New Zealand and Dutch Governments to these arrangements.

On the 20th July the Combined Chiefs of Staff approved a directive for Mountbatten informing him of the decisions taken and giving him his tasks for the future. It read:

- '1. Your primary task is the opening of the Strait of Malacca at the earliest possible moment. It is also intended that British Commonwealth land forces should take part in the main operations against Japan which have been agreed as the supreme operations in the war; and that operations should continue in the Outer Zone to the extent that forces and resources permit.
2. The eastern boundary of your command will be extended to include Borneo, Java and Celebes . . .
3. Further information will be sent you regarding Indo-China.
4. It is desirable that you assume command of the additional areas as soon as practicable after the 15th August 1945. You will report to the Combined Chiefs of Staff the date on which you expect to be in a position to undertake this additional responsibility.
5. From that date, such Dominion and Dutch forces as may be operating in your new area will come under your command. They will, however, continue to be based on Australia.
6. The area to the east of your new boundary will be an Australian command under the British Chiefs of Staff.<sup>1</sup>
7. It has been agreed in principle that a British Commonwealth land force of from three to five divisions, and, if possible, a small tactical air force, should take part in the main operations against Japan in the spring of 1946. Units of the British East Indies Fleet may also take part. Certain important factors relating to this are still under examination.
8. You will be required to provide a proportion of this force together with the assault lift for two divisions. The exact composition of this force and its rôle and the mounting and supporting arrangements will be discussed between Admiral Nimitz, General MacArthur and the British force commanders and will receive final approval by the Combined Chiefs of Staff.
9. The requirements for the force taking part in the main operations against Japan must have priority over all other tasks indicated below.
10. Subject to the fulfilment of the higher priority commitments given above, you will, within the limits of available resources, carry out operations designed to:
  - (a) Complete the liberation of Malaya.
  - (b) Maintain pressure on the Japanese across the Burma-Siam frontier.
  - (c) Capture the key areas of Siam.

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<sup>1</sup> For the areas to be taken over by S.E.A.C. and the Australian command see Map 16 facing page 600.

(d) Establish bridgeheads in Java and/or Sumatra to enable the subsequent clearance of these areas to be undertaken in due course.

11. You will submit a programme of operations to the British Chiefs of Staff as soon as you are in a position to do so.

12. You will develop Singapore and such other bases as you may require to the extent necessary for operations against the Japanese.<sup>1</sup>

When Mountbatten landed at Cairo airport from Delhi at 1.45 a.m. on the 24th July, he was handed a telegram containing orders from the Prime Minister for him to fly direct to Berlin, if he could arrive there that day, so that he could meet the President and the American Chiefs of Staff. He reached Berlin in the early afternoon and later that day attended a Combined Chiefs of Staff meeting, where he was apprised of the contents of his directive and asked how soon he thought he could take over command of his new area. Since he had not expected to be called upon to assume responsibility for the new area until he had captured Singapore, he asked for time to consider the problems involved in taking it over earlier. On being assured that the forces then in the area would be left there, he said that that would make things easier and it appeared that his problem would be merely that of taking control of the higher direction of operations in the area.

After the meeting Marshall and Arnold informed Mountbatten under a pledge of secrecy of the plan to drop the atomic bomb. That evening the Prime Minister, with whom Mountbatten dined alone, also told him the secret about the atomic bomb, and advised him, since it was thought that Japan would probably surrender about the middle of August, to take all the necessary steps to be ready for the capitulation. Mountbatten therefore sent a telegram to his Deputy (Lieut.-General R. A. Wheeler, U.S. Army) and his Chief of Staff (Lieut.-General F. A. M. Browning) at Kandy saying that there were strong reasons for thinking that the Japanese might capitulate any time after mid-August and that the Prime Minister wished S.E.A.C. to have a plan ready for occupying Singapore, either direct or through Port Swettenham and Port Dickson, the moment that Japan capitulated.<sup>2</sup> It seemed certain, he added, that the war would end in 1945, although much would remain to be done in S.E.A.C. Next morning the President also told him of the atomic bomb, and said that its dropping would bring the war to an abrupt conclusion.

When approached about the alteration to the South-West Pacific boundaries, the Australian Government recommended that the area east of Celebes and west of the boundary of the Australian Mandated

<sup>1</sup> A copy of the directive was sent to Kandy on the 2nd August.

<sup>2</sup> See Map 11, facing page 282.

Territories and including Dutch New Guinea should also be added to S.E.A.C. since Australian forces would not be able to undertake operations there in addition to those they were already committed to in Australian New Guinea, the Solomon Islands and New Britain,<sup>1</sup> and at the same time provide a contingent for the Commonwealth force required for the main attack on Japan.

The problem was discussed between the Chiefs of Staff, Mountbatten and an Australian representative on the 7th August in London. Mountbatten said that he had been given to understand that the Australian forces would have to be withdrawn from Borneo and Morotai in order to form and train a composite division to take part in the invasion of Honshu and to enable their release scheme to be implemented, and that American forces in Dutch New Guinea would also be withdrawn to garrison the Philippines before the invasion of Honshu. This made it impossible for him to assume early responsibility for the area, since, until the Strait of Malacca had been secured, he was not in a position to control the relief, reinforcement and maintenance of the forces needed to control the area. The Australian representative said that Australian forces would not abandon any area they held until properly relieved and suggested that the whole question of the new boundaries should be referred back to the American Chiefs of Staff. Only if this approach failed should the Australian Government be asked to retain the responsibility for Borneo and the neighbouring areas until they could be relieved by forces from S.E.A.C.

On the 9th the Chiefs of Staff explained the situation to their American colleagues. They gave the reasons why the Australian Government did not wish to accept the extra commitment and pointed out that the provision of British forces from outside S.E.A.C. to relieve the Australians was precluded by shipping difficulties. Since Mountbatten was not yet in a position to exercise effective command of, and allocate forces to, an area to which he had no line of communication open at a time when all his energies and resources were taken up with the invasion of Malaya and the capture of Singapore, they proposed that the transfer should be effected in three stages. In the first, to begin at once, Mountbatten would take over responsibility for all future operational planning in his new area, including planning for civil affairs and clandestine operations, but that the provision of garrisons in the various islands should remain a joint American-Australian responsibility. The second stage of the transfer would follow the capture of Singapore and the opening of the Strait of Malacca, when Mountbatten would assume full control of Borneo including the provision of a garrison for the island. The

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<sup>1</sup> See Chapter XIII.

third stage would follow the opening of secure lines of communication through the Java Sea, when American garrisons in the area east of Celebes would be released and the control of the area would pass to the British Chiefs of Staff. In this way MacArthur would be relieved at an early date of a large measure of his existing responsibility in the South-West Pacific Area and Mountbatten would lose no time in becoming acquainted with the theatre for which he would ultimately become responsible.

Since it seemed that these proposals were now likely to be overtaken by events, the Chiefs of Staff suggested on the 10th that the adjustment to the boundaries should take effect from the date of the cease-fire. The American Chiefs of Staff, however, replied that the adjustment should take place from the date of the Japanese surrender.

In view of the probability of the imminent surrender of Japan, the Chiefs of Staff, with the approval of the Defence Committee, gave Mountbatten a further directive on the 13th August, which read:

‘1. As soon as [the] Japanese surrender has been accepted by Governments our main tasks will be:

- (a) The reoccupation of key areas of occupied territories, in order to secure effective control and to enforce the surrender and disarmament of the Japanese armed forces.
- (b) Earliest release of British and Allied prisoners-of-war and internees.
- (c) Protection of British interests in China.
- (d) Participation in the occupation of Japan.

2. In making your plans, you should take the following assumptions on policy:

- (a) The South-West Pacific area will pass to British and Australian command on the cease-fire.
- (b) It is highly important that we should accept the surrender of Hong Kong and that we should show the British flag in the main Chinese ports.
- (c) We shall take part in the occupation of Japan with a British Commonwealth force, in which it is proposed each of the following countries will be represented by a brigade group supported by an air component: Great Britain, India, Australia, New Zealand and probably Canada.

3. Accordingly you should make and submit to us plans for operations in the following order of priority; initial moves should not be held up pending Chiefs of Staff approval:

- (a) The completion of the reoccupation of Burma, the reopening of the Strait of Malacca and the occupation of Singapore and the key areas of Malaya.
- (b) The re-establishment of a British garrison in Hong Kong. Initial occupation will be undertaken by British Pacific Fleet and an Australian force from Borneo. It will be necessary, however, for you to



relieve these forces as soon as possible with a force of about a brigade with a tactical air force contingent on British types if possible from S.E.A.C. This force will be augmented with the necessary Civil Affairs organization later on, but must be prepared initially to carry on unaided.

(c) You may be required to find small forces for certain Chinese ports.

(d) Occupation of Japan. You should earmark at once a force of one brigade group from the British troops and one brigade group from the British/Indian troops under your command. This force, under arrangements to be made by us with the Australian, New Zealand and Canadian Governments, will in due course form part of the British Commonwealth occupational force for Japan.<sup>1</sup> Shipping need not be allocated for this force until arrangements are firm.

(e) French Indo-China. The despatch of a force to Saigon to ensure control of the headquarters of the Japanese Southern Armies. We are arranging to ship French forces and civil affairs personnel to follow up your forces, which should not occupy more of French Indo-China than is necessary to ensure the control of the headquarters of the Japanese Southern Armies.

(f) Siam. We are at war with Siam, but the Americans do not regard themselves at war with her. In order to re-establish our position there, it is important that British troops should be the first to arrive in Siam. Instructions regarding policy to be adopted towards Siam will be sent to you separately.

(g) Java. The despatch of forces to Java as soon as possible to accept the surrender of Japanese forces and to prepare for the eventual handing over of this country to the Dutch civil authorities. We are arranging the shipment from here of Dutch security forces and civil affairs personnel.

(h) Sumatra. Occupation of Sumatra is a lower priority than that of Java, but should be effected as soon as forces and shipping permit.

4. We are inviting the Australian authorities to accept initial responsibility for Borneo and enemy occupied territories to the east thereof. You may for the time being retain all shipping allocated to you for 'Zipper' but at a later date you must expect to provide the Australians with a small proportion of Force 'W' and some merchant shipping, in order to implement their operations.

5. Since there are many matters which will need local consultation, we consider it most desirable that liaison missions should be sent by you to General MacArthur and C.-in-C. Australian Forces. You should earmark personnel for these tasks but not despatch them till further orders.

6. You will appreciate that many of these arrangements are subject to

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<sup>1</sup> The British and Indian Division (Major-General Cowan) which eventually formed part of the British Commonwealth Occupation Force consisted of 5th (British) Infantry Brigade (2nd Royal Welch Fusiliers, 2nd Dorsetshire Regiment and 1st Queen's Own Cameron Highlanders), 268th Indian Infantry Brigade (5/1st Punjab Regiment, 1/5th Mahratta Light Infantry and 2/5th Royal Gurkha Rifles) with 7th Light Cavalry, one battery R.A., one battery Indian artillery, three companies of Indian Engineers and a full complement of ancillary units.

the agreement of the Governments of the U.S.A., Dominions and of India which we are now obtaining.'

Mountbatten returned to Kandy on the 14th August, the day on which the Japanese accepted unconditional surrender,<sup>1</sup> and on the 15th, instructed by the Chiefs of Staff to suspend operations, accepted responsibility for his new area according to his directive. On the 21st, however, he was told that the transfer of command would become effective on the date that the formal surrender took place.

Meanwhile General MacArthur, who had been designated Supreme Commander for the Allied Powers to make overall arrangements for the surrender of Japan,<sup>2</sup> had on the 15th August received General Order No. 1 signed by the President of the United States on behalf of the Allied Powers. In this it was stated that:

'The senior Japanese Commander and all ground, sea, air and auxiliary forces within the Andamans, the Nicobars, Burma, Thailand (Siam), French Indo-China south of 16 degrees north latitude, Malaya, Borneo, the Netherlands Indies, New Guinea, the Bismarcks and the Solomon Islands shall surrender to the Supreme Allied Commander, South-East Asia Command, or Commanding General, Australian Forces—the exact breakdown between Mountbatten and Australia to be arranged between them. Details of this paragraph will then be prepared by the Supreme Commander for the Allied Powers.'<sup>3</sup>

MacArthur had immediately issued instructions that the actual documents of surrender in theatres other than his own could be signed only after the main documents had been signed in Tokyo, and that no landings on or reoccupation of territory in Japanese hands might be made until after the formal surrender document had been signed. This took place on the 2nd September.<sup>4</sup> Mountbatten therefore took over official command of his new area at midnight on the 1st/2nd September.

The tasks facing Mountbatten when Japan surrendered were immense. The decision by the Combined Chiefs of Staff to transfer to S.E.A.C. a large portion of the South-West Pacific Area had increased the area for which he was to be responsible from about 1 million to 1½ million square miles containing more than 128 million people. Throughout the whole of this area there was no reliable civil police force and, except in Siam, there was no civil government which had even a shadow of an independent administration; it contained nearly three-quarters of a million Japanese, of

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<sup>1</sup> See Chapter XX.

<sup>2</sup> See page 218.

<sup>3</sup> See Appendix 18.

<sup>4</sup> See page 220.

whom 630,000 were armed troops, and it was not then known whether they would obey the surrender terms; and there were some 123,000 Allied prisoners-of-war and internees who had to be safeguarded and provided with relief until they could be recovered. Furthermore he had no intelligence service covering the area other than that provided by Force 136 and other agents already in Malaya, Java, Sumatra and French Indo-China. Mountbatten had not only to rescue Allied prisoners and internees, reoccupy all Japanese-held territories in his enlarged theatre and Hong Kong and disarm and repatriate all Japanese forces, but also to overcome what would without doubt be a serious economic situation throughout the area before he could hope to restore law and order to the point that he could hand back each territory to a properly constituted civil authority and S.E.A.C. could be abolished. To undertake these many tasks he had at his disposal only the East Indies Fleet, 12th Army in Burma, 14th Army in India, which was preparing to embark for the invasion of Malaya, a small army reserve (also in India) and Air Command, South-East Asia (A.C.S.E.A.). The shipping he had was sufficient only for the invasion of Malaya and the maintenance of his forces in Malaya and Burma.



## CHAPTER XXII

# THE REGROUPING OF A.L.F.S.E.A. FOR THE OCCUPATION OF JAPANESE-HELD TERRITORIES (August 1945)

*See Maps 11 and 16*

AS a result of the telegram Mountbatten had sent from the Potsdam Conference,<sup>1</sup> S.E.A.C. Headquarters began to study what action would be necessary if the Japanese capitulated in the near future and on the 5th August Wheeler, Deputy Supreme Commander, ordered the three Commanders-in-Chief to begin planning for the emergency occupation of Singapore. The most readily available army formations to carry out the operation were 5th Indian Division in Burma and 3 Commando Brigade in India, neither of which was involved in the initial 'Zipper' landings. As both formations were in the force assembling for 'Zipper', this was the first step in the downgrading of that operation and the regrouping of the forces in S.E.A.C. for the reoccupation of territories overrun by the Japanese.

Since it might prove necessary to make a show of force in Malaya, it was agreed that the 'Zipper' assault landings at Port Dickson and Port Swettenham should still be carried out but, as the movement to Indian ports of the troops earmarked for them and the loading of stores could not be accelerated, it would not be possible to advance their D-day from the 9th September. This meant that the occupation of Singapore would probably precede 'Zipper' and it was therefore decided that Penang should first be occupied to provide an advanced naval anchorage and air staging base between Rangoon and Singapore.<sup>2</sup> The earliest date on which 3 Commando Brigade could reach Penang was the 26th August, and therefore to avoid any delay in taking advantage of a Japanese capitulation a plan was evolved whereby a naval force, carrying a force of Royal Marines, would arrive off the island on the 21st and conduct negotiations for its surrender. If these were successful, the Royal Marines would then

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<sup>1</sup> See page 226.

<sup>2</sup> See Map 11, facing page 282.

occupy the island, being relieved by the commando brigade when it arrived on the 26th. A detachment of Royal Marines was also to occupy Sabang Island off the northern tip of Sumatra, since it was needed to provide shelter for small craft. The fleet would sail on to Singapore to conduct surrender negotiations on the 27th and, if these were successful, two brigades of 5th Division would land and occupy the island on the 28th, its third brigade arriving by air the same day.

On the 11th August Wheeler decided that the preliminary moves to put the reoccupation plan into effect should begin, and that evening A.L.F.S.E.A. issued orders for the move of 5th Division to Rangoon for embarkation and for members of Civil Affairs (Malaya) and R.A.P.W.I. teams and naval and air detachments required for Singapore to be collected at the port. These moves were to take precedence over the build-up of the Rangoon base ('Stanza'), repatriation under 'Python' and leave.

Mountbatten returned to Kandy from London on the 14th, the day on which Japan surrendered, and next day Slim also arrived from England,<sup>1</sup> where he had been on short leave, and took over command of A.L.F.S.E.A. from Christison, who had been officiating since the departure of Leese. Christison then left to resume command of XV Corps. On the 17th Mountbatten outlined to his Commanders-in-Chief the actions to be taken now that Japan had surrendered, and said that his policy (based on the directive he had received from the Chiefs of Staff)<sup>2</sup> was to seize strategic areas with the utmost speed while concurrently accepting the surrender of the Japanese troops in Burma, and subsequently to reoccupy the remaining areas in S.E.A.C. The order of reoccupation of territory, other than the remainder of Burma, was Malaya, Saigon in French Indo-China (the location of *Southern Army Headquarters*), Bangkok in Siam, Batavia and Sourabaya in Java, Hong Kong and then the remaining areas.<sup>3</sup> No modification was to be made to operation 'Zipper' until after the D+8 convoy. One British and one Indian brigade group and an air component of British aircraft (to include one Indian Air Force squadron) was to be earmarked for the occupation of Japan, and a British brigade for the occupation of the main ports on the China coast, other than Hong Kong. All Japanese forces were to be concentrated and disarmed, and steps were to be taken to protect, succour and evacuate Allied prisoners-of-war and internees, to establish and maintain law and order, to set up appropriate military administrations and to provide food and other supplies for civilian needs.

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<sup>1</sup> Slim had been promoted General on the 1st July.

<sup>2</sup> See pages 228-30.

<sup>3</sup> See Map 16, facing page 600.

On the advice of his planners Mountbatten had agreed on the 16th that the third brigade of 5th Division should move to Singapore by sea and not by air, the six squadrons of Dakotas thus released being used instead to fly control parties into Saigon and Bangkok. The distance by air to Saigon necessitated the order of reoccupation of these two cities being changed so that an air staging post could be established at Bangkok. Extremely anxious to get a land force quickly to Hong Kong, the Chiefs of Staff told Mountbatten on the 18th that, since Australia could not spare a brigade,<sup>1</sup> he should arrange for a brigade from the forces under his command to reach the colony as soon as possible after the arrival there of units of the British Pacific Fleet.<sup>2</sup> Mountbatten therefore issued orders next day for 3 Commando Brigade not to go to Penang but to stand by to sail for Hong Kong as soon as the East Indies Fleet had swept the Strait of Malacca.

Slim issued his first directive as Commander-in-Chief A.L.F.S.E.A. on the 17th to 12th and 14th Armies and to XV and XXXIV Corps, and on the 23rd issued a comprehensive directive giving the complete plan for the occupational deployment, which was to be carried out in five phases: first, the occupation of Singapore and the initial stages of 'Zipper', the completion of the occupation of Burma, the establishment of an air base at Bangkok and the move of a military mission to Saigon; second, the occupation of Malaya; third, the occupation of French Indo-China and Siam; fourth, the necessary regrouping to form Burma Command and the reallocation of responsibilities between 12th and 14th Armies; and fifth, a further regrouping to find forces for the Netherlands East Indies. No forecast of timings could be given until the availability of shipping and the attitude of the liberated peoples and the Japanese could be assessed.

Christison, with a modified XV Corps Headquarters, was to accompany 5th Division to Singapore and take over control there. The task of 12th Army (Stopford) was to complete the reoccupation of Burma, send 7th Division to Bangkok to establish an air staging post for the move of the Allied Control Commission to Saigon and then take the surrender of the Japanese forces in Siam, and send 20th Division to Saigon by air and sea.<sup>3</sup> The task of 14th Army (Lieut.-General Sir Miles Dempsey) was to mount 26th Division, if required, for operations in Siam, submit fresh plans for the build-up of 'Zipper' after D+8 and take command in Malaya for its reoccupation by XXXIV and XV Corps after the landings at Singapore and Port Dickson.<sup>4</sup> Finally IV Corps (Messervy) was to become Burma Command, 12th Army was to move to Bangkok and

<sup>1</sup> See page 228, paragraph 3 (b).

<sup>2</sup> See Chapter XXVI.

<sup>3</sup> See Chapter XXVII.

<sup>4</sup> Dempsey had become G.O.C.-in-C., 14th Army on the 10th August.

assume overall control in Siam and French Indo-China and 14th Army was to occupy the Netherlands East Indies.<sup>1</sup>

On the 15th, 16th and 17th August Admiral Walker's naval force sailed from Trincomalee for Penang,<sup>2</sup> and on the 18th the mine-sweepers which were to clear the Strait of Malacca sailed from Colombo. On the 16th, however, Mountbatten received a telegram from MacArthur giving the estimated times it would take for the cease-fire orders issued that day by the Japanese to reach the various war zones, which for S.E.A.C. could be the evening of the 22nd. So that Walker's force should not reach Penang before these orders had had time to disseminate to lower formations, Mountbatten decided on the 17th that the Penang operation should be postponed forty-eight hours.

This was the first of many postponements which had to be made to S.E.A.C.'s reoccupation plans, for on the 19th Mountbatten received orders from MacArthur that no landing in any occupied territory was to be carried out until the formal surrender document had been signed in Tokyo, probably about the 28th. The 3 Commando Brigade, which had sailed from Bombay on the 18th, had therefore to be called into Trincomalee. The naval force concentrated off the north-east coast of the Great Nicobar Islands on the 20th and the minesweepers anchored in the lee of an island off the west coast of Sumatra. The convoy carrying divisional headquarters and two brigades of 5th Division, which had completed embarkation at Rangoon on the 22nd August, could not sail. On the 24th Walker was ordered to sail a cruiser, two escort carriers and four destroyers back to Trincomalee for refuelling, since it was then known that the signing of the surrender document in Tokyo would not take place until the 31st. Next day it was learned that a typhoon had further delayed the signing until the 2nd September, which meant that no landings could begin until the 3rd.

Meanwhile on the 20th August All India Radio had established communications with Field-Marshal Terauchi (*Southern Army*) at Saigon, and Mountbatten had immediately sent him orders to send a delegation by air to Rangoon to sign a preliminary agreement prior to the signature of the formal instrument of surrender of all Japanese forces in S.E.A.C. at Singapore. Terauchi made it clear in dignified and correct terms that he could act only on orders from his Emperor as and when they were received. On the 23rd, however, information was received that the Japanese High Command had ordered a

<sup>1</sup> For the final proposed regrouping and deployment of A.L.F.S.E.A. see Appendix 19.

<sup>2</sup> It included the force destined for Sabang: the cruiser *London* (Commodore A. G. Poland) and 120 Royal Marines.



cease-fire from that day and a message from Field-Marshal Terauchi was intercepted by 12th Army Signals at Rangoon saying that he was sending a mission to Rangoon by air on the 26th headed by his Chief of Staff to conduct surrender negotiations.

The Japanese delegation, consisting of Lieut.-General T. Numata and Rear-Admiral Chudo, arrived at Rangoon on the 26th August as promised and met Mountbatten's representatives led by General Browning, and officers representing the United States, Australia, China, France and the Netherlands. A document was placed before the Japanese delegates which firmly placed the responsibility for the execution of Mountbatten's orders on Terauchi and required him to provide for a standfast of all land and air forces, to remove minefields and other obstacles to movement, to prohibit all communications other than in clear and to undertake full responsibility for the maintenance of law and order until control was assumed by Allied forces. He was to take action to alleviate the lot of Allied prisoners-of-war and internees and assist in their recovery. In addition the document made it clear that any agreement signed was preliminary only and that Mountbatten intended to accept a general surrender from Terauchi at Singapore on the 12th September, and that Allied troops would begin their landings on the 3rd. Meanwhile Terauchi was required to allow, from the 28th August, reconnaissance flights by Allied aircraft over Japanese-controlled areas and the movement of Allied warships and other vessels within Japanese-controlled waters, including minesweeping operations (for which the Japanese were to provide information on the location of minefields they had laid). He was also to allow the clearance of Japanese troops from certain areas (including the provision of Japanese staff officers to ensure its smooth working), the movement of an Allied Military Control Commission to Saigon and the dropping of supplies and medical personnel to Allied prisoner-of-war camps. Numata agreed to the terms laid down in the document and at 1 a.m. on the 28th August accepted them on behalf of Terauchi in the following terms:

1. The Supreme Commander, Japanese Expeditionary Forces, Southern Regions, hereby acknowledges receipt of detailed orders dated 27th August 1945 for the evacuation of certain areas required in pursuance of the local agreement regarding preliminary actions to be carried out by the Japanese Forces under the command or control of the Supreme Commander, Japanese Expeditionary Forces, Southern Regions, prior to any formal surrender that may be made. He understands that he will be informed by wireless signal from the Supreme Allied Commander, South East Asia immediately the Instrument of General Surrender has been signed in Tokyo.
2. Immediately on receipt of this wireless signal the Supreme Commander, Japanese Expeditionary Forces, Southern Regions, hereby undertakes immediately to send a signal by wireless to the Supreme

Allied Commander, South East Asia to inform him that all orders and instructions contained in the detailed orders referred to in para. 1 above have been carried out effectively and completely.

Since it was obvious the Japanese intended to obey his orders, Mountbatten now considered that he would not have to face large-scale opposition and could thus take certain risks. He therefore ordered the operation for the recovery of Allied prisoners-of-war and internees (R.A.P.W.I.) to begin on the 28th August.<sup>1</sup>

With the signing of the agreement in Rangoon, which allowed the use of Japanese coastal waters and minesweeping, it was now possible for the convoys carrying 5th Division and Tactical Headquarters XV Corps to be sent to Singapore. On the 29th Christison with Tactical H.Q. XV Corps and the third brigade of 5th Division embarked, and the whole division put to sea on the 30th.<sup>2</sup> At the same time the force destined for Hong Kong (3 Commando Brigade and attached troops) was ordered to accompany the 5th Division convoy and precede it through the Strait of Malacca as soon as a channel had been swept. Also on the 29th, 114th Brigade of 7th Division began to move to a concentration area fifteen miles north of Rangoon to prepare for its move to Bangkok to follow up the headquarters and advanced party of the division, which was to fly to Bangkok on the 3rd September.<sup>3</sup> The fly-in of 114th Brigade was timed to begin on the 6th September and that of Headquarters 20th Division, an Allied Control Commission and a brigade group to Saigon on the 9th September.

While these moves were in progress, IV Corps in Burma, under orders of 12th Army, continued the task of organizing the surrender of Japanese forces in that country and planning for the reoccupation of Tenasserim, and the 'Zipper' convoys were on their way from India to the landing beaches in the Port Swettenham-Port Dickson area. The clearance of the Strait of Malacca and the occupation of Singapore had to be completed, however, before the move of the seaborne forces from Burma and India to Siam, French Indo-China, Hong Kong and Java could take place.

To deal with the vast economic problems with which he was faced, Mountbatten had in August set up an Economic and Currency Committee at Supreme Headquarters in Kandy to organize and control on his behalf the supply of food, fuel, timber and currency in each of the territories within S.E.A.C. as they were reoccupied.

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<sup>1</sup> See Chapter XXIII.

<sup>2</sup> The third brigade of 5th Division, which was to follow up the Marines who landed at Penang, was in the event not required there and went on to Singapore with the rest of the division.

<sup>3</sup> See Chapter XXVII.

At the surrender conference in Rangoon the Japanese admitted that in the territories they occupied the stocks of food, especially rice, were either non-existent or so small that they had no idea how they could have fed the subject population if the war had continued any longer. This shortage of rice was not confined to South-East Asia, and the Combined Food Board in Washington was as interested as Mountbatten in obtaining supplies of rice to meet the world-wide deficiency. Mountbatten's first concern was therefore to obtain supplies from the traditional rice-exporting countries of Siam, Borneo and French Indo-China, and then to allocate them in accordance with the instructions of the Combined Food Board, moving them not only within his theatre but also to India, the Philippines, the French Colonies in West Africa and, as required, to meet the needs of U.N.R.R.A.

The rice-producing and pre-war exporting countries had all suffered from Japanese neglect during the war; their economic recovery was therefore the first step towards overcoming the general rice shortage. Confidence had to be restored, consumer goods provided as an incentive to production, arrangements made to obtain possession of all supplies surplus to the minimum local requirements, shipping found to export rice and, in the countries ravaged by war, arrangements made to organize markets and provide transport for its distribution.

By the 23rd August it was estimated that there were about 20,000 tons of rice available for export from Rangoon. From this amount Mountbatten allocated 5,500 tons to Malaya, 5,000 tons to Singapore and 7,500 tons to Hong Kong, leaving in Rangoon a reserve of 2,000 tons. There was at that moment no time to obtain the approval of the Combined Food Board to these allocations, for in these particular areas the import of rice was essential if the military administrations were to be able to begin their work. Thereafter, as information on surplus supplies came to hand, allocations were made in accordance with the wishes of the Combined Food Board.

One of Mountbatten's greatest difficulties in the immediate post-war period was the general shortage of shipping in South-East Asia. He had a fleet of only some 130 cargo ships which had been made available to him for the maintenance of the forces in Burma and for the build-up and maintenance of the forces allotted for the invasion of Malaya. These ships were sufficient for their wartime tasks, but were far too few to cope with post-war maintenance in the greatly increased South-East Asian theatre. Moreover their carrying capacity was greatly reduced by the longer turn-round as the distances at which the occupation forces had to be maintained increased and by the inability of port authorities to unload ships quickly owing to the lack of port equipment (most of which had

suffered war damage) and shortage of labour. The need to carry rice from Burma and Siam to prevent starvation in other liberated areas added a load which the planners of 'Zipper' in London and India could hardly have foreseen. Starvation in liberated areas was, however, avoided, although at times there were serious shortages which impeded economic recovery.

The distribution of coal and petrol, oil and lubricants (P.O.L.) for the bunkering of ships and to provide power for the liberated territories was also a vital call on shipping. Under normal peacetime conditions most of the coal in South-East Asia (excluding India) had come from northern French Indo-China. This area had not, however, been placed under Mountbatten's control. In September 1945 the Japanese gave as their estimated monthly production of coal some 30,000 tons in Malaya, 30,000 tons in Sumatra and 3,000 tons in Java, figures which unfortunately proved to be grossly over-optimistic for most of the mines had been neglected, some had been flooded and there was a general shortage of miners. Since it was evident that a long time would pass before the area could produce all the coal it needed, supplies had to be exported from India, which added yet another load to S.E.A.C.'s already inadequate shipping. P.O.L. fortunately did not provide such a difficult problem. For operational purposes a fleet of about sixty small tankers had been built up in South-East Asia to support the proposed amphibious operations in 1945 and to provide oilers for the East Indies Fleet, and when Singapore was reoccupied it was found that a large number of storage tanks were undamaged and workable, thanks to Mountbatten's prohibition since February 1945 of the bombing of naval installations, harbours and oil storage facilities in Singapore.<sup>1</sup> Singapore was therefore developed as the main oil base for S.E.A.C. and the responsibility for operating the tankage there was transferred in September to the civil oil companies, a Petroleum Board being set up in the city on the lines of the Petroleum Committee which had functioned satisfactorily throughout the war in India. The oil companies also undertook the distribution of civil supplies in Malaya on behalf of the British Military Administration. The responsibility for the import of oil remained with Supreme Headquarters until the 1st April 1946, when the British Military Administration handed over its functions to the civil governments of the Malayan Union and Singapore.<sup>2</sup> From then on the oil companies in Singapore became responsible for meeting all military and civil needs. The same system was followed in Hong Kong and French Indo-China, and eventually in Siam. In the Netherlands East Indies a Petroleum Board similar to that in Singapore was set up, but

<sup>1</sup> See Volume IV, page 405.

<sup>2</sup> See page 281.

maintenance remained under the Supreme Commander until control in the Netherlands East Indies had passed to the Dutch.

A general shortage of timber existed throughout S.E.A.C. and, although considerable quantities were available, little could be done to begin to export it from Burma and Siam until the economy of these countries had recovered and transport was available. The disturbed political conditions in both French Indo-China and the Netherlands East Indies ruled them out as sources of supply. To help overcome the grave shortage of firewood in Hong Kong, it was found possible to send 8,000 tons from British Borneo between September 1945 and April 1946.

Currency problems existed in all the territories occupied by the Japanese. In some they had issued special currency (for example, Japanese guilders in the Netherlands East Indies) and in others the pre-war currency was still in circulation but, owing to inflation, had lost much of its value. Each territory had therefore to be dealt with on an *ad hoc* basis in order to ensure sufficient stability for the re-establishment of the economy to begin. Arrangements had also to be made to ensure that Allied personnel were not penalized by having to make use of devalued currency.

The provision of consumer goods proved most intractable for none could be provided by the war-worn European countries, even if shipping had been available, and local industries suffered from a shortage of raw materials, power and skilled labour. Consequently demands could not be met and this not only delayed economic recovery but led, in the case of Malaya, to a situation which was exploited by Communist agitators and produced civil unrest and strikes.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> See pages 280-1.



CHAPTER XXIII

THE RECOVERY OF ALLIED  
PRISONERS-OF-WAR AND  
INTERNEES  
(August—September 1945)

*See Maps 2 and 16*

IN April 1944 the Evasion and Escape organization at General Headquarters, India, which assisted air crews brought down behind enemy lines and prisoners-of-war to escape, was expanded into 'E' Group, S.E.A.C. and India Command. When necessary the group co-operated with the clandestine Force 136,<sup>1</sup> but its field work at this time was mainly confined to Burma and Yunnan. When long-range bombers began to operate from bases in India in the autumn of 1944, the group began to pay special attention to gathering information on the location of prisoner-of-war camps (which the Japanese did not provide) so that the possibility of inflicting casualties on prisoners could be avoided. As Force 136 gained touch with the growing resistance movements in Malaya, Siam and French Indo-China, knowledge of the distribution of camps and the numbers they contained increased (but by no means became complete). The capture of Rangoon in May 1945, which brought the whole of the South-East Asian theatre within operational air range, enabled the activities of Force 136 and 'E' Group to be considerably increased. In Malaya, where by August 1945 ninety-seven Force 136 officers with fifty-two wireless sets were operating, an 'E' party was dropped in Johore in April to contact camps on the mainland and on Singapore Island, and in July other parties were dropped near Kuala Lumpur to set up an evasion organization for 'Zipper'.<sup>2</sup> In French Indo-China Force 136 had, through the French, established a number of resistance groups by the end of 1944 and three 'E' parties were operating in the country when the war ended. Plans were completed by mid-August to introduce three 'E' parties into Siam, where thirty-three British and Siamese Force 136 officers with twenty-one wireless sets were operating. The first Force 136 group in

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<sup>1</sup> For the organisation of clandestine operations see Volume IV, pages 30-33.

<sup>2</sup> See Map 2, facing page 63.

Sumatra began functioning in June and by August there were four groups with five wireless sets on the island.<sup>1</sup>

In view of the rapid progress of operations in the Pacific, Mountbatten was instructed by the War Office on the 3rd February 1945 to place planning for the recovery of Allied prisoners-of-war and internees (R.A.P.W.I.) on a firm basis. Since it was considered at that time that their recovery would be basically a military operation carried out by field formations as forces recaptured territory which had been in Japanese occupation, the responsibility for planning and controlling R.A.P.W.I. was placed on the Commander-in-Chief, A.L.F.S.E.A. When planning for the invasion of Malaya and the recapture of Singapore was undertaken, it was estimated that some 20,000 prisoners and internees would be recovered. A.L.F.S.E.A. therefore created two R.A.P.W.I. control staffs (each of four officers), one of which was to be attached to XXXIV Corps for 'Zipper' and the other to be sent to Singapore when the island was occupied, and set up a Searcher Clearing House at Calcutta to control three searcher teams which were to be deployed in the field as necessary.

In May a Red Cross Co-ordinating Committee was formed at Supreme Headquarters under the chairmanship of the Director of Medical Services, S.E.A.C. (Major-General T. O. Thompson) and included representatives of the Red Cross organizations of Great Britain, Australia, India, Burma, France and the Netherlands. This committee had the task of co-ordinating the requirements for Red Cross aid throughout S.E.A.C. and allocating resources to meet demands.

To help in evacuating their prisoners found in S.E.A.C., the Australians formed a P.O.W. Reception Group to move overseas when required to operate under the command of A.L.F.S.E.A. The Australian Liaison Mission at Supreme Headquarters undertook to represent the requirements of Australian R.A.P.W.I. and, where appropriate, to make known to the Supreme Commander the views of the Australian Government. In August an Indian Army Mission was formed to advise and help A.L.F.S.E.A. control staffs with the recovery of Indian prisoners, and a similar mission was sent to Brisbane to help deal with those recovered by the Australians. British, Australian and Indian reception groups were also sent to Manila to assist in dealing with prisoners of these nationalities recovered by American forces.

When Japan surrendered in August and S.E.A.C.'s boundaries were enlarged, it was no longer a matter of recovering prisoners and

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<sup>1</sup> See Map 16, facing page 600.



internees over a period as operations progressed, but of recovering them all simultaneously from camps spread over a vast area. It was estimated that there were about 70,000 in the original South-East Asia Theatre with a further 55,000 in Java. These were spread over some 225 to 250 known camps.<sup>1</sup>

By the General Order No. 1 issued on the 16th August to MacArthur as Supreme Commander for the Allied Powers,<sup>2</sup> the Japanese were required to provide information on the location of all camps and were made responsible for the safety of prisoners and internees, for providing them with adequate food, shelter, clothes and medical care until their care could pass to the Allied Powers, and for handing over each camp together with its equipment, stores, arms and ammunition and records to the senior Allied officer in each camp. Since it was known that in many areas prisoners and internees were suffering from starvation and neglect, it was of the first importance that they were contacted and recovered as soon as possible.

Mountbatten immediately set up a R.A.P.W.I Co-ordination Committee at his headquarters and assumed responsibility for the whole operation in S.E.A.C. This step was essential since not only would the need for speed necessitate a much greater degree of co-ordination between the three Services if the fullest use of the resources was to be ensured, but those entrusted with the planning of the operation would have to work in close co-operation with the Commonwealth and Allied Missions and Governments. This committee, under the chairmanship of Mountbatten's deputy Wheeler (who was also Principal Administrative Officer, S.E.A.C.), began work on the 22nd August and became the co-ordinating centre of the whole operation, acting as a clearing house for information and a channel through which Mountbatten's decisions on policy priorities and allocation of responsibility were disseminated. The three Commanders-in-Chief remained responsible for executive action and were instructed to treat the recovery of prisoners and internees as an operation of war and use all available resources, including the clandestine forces already established in enemy-occupied territories.

On the 17th August A.L.F.S.E.A. increased the number of R.A.P.W.I. control staffs from two to six, which were to work with XXXIV Corps in Malaya, 5th Division in Singapore, 20th Division in French Indo-China, 7th Division in Siam, 3 Commando Brigade in Hong Kong and with the formation allotted to Java. After finishing its task, the control staff in Malaya was to go to Sumatra with any force which might be detached to occupy that island. At the same time administrative units, including Red Cross and the

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<sup>1</sup> The recovery of prisoners and internees in Borneo and to the east of it was to be undertaken by the Australians under the general instructions of MacArthur.

<sup>2</sup> See Appendix 18.

Commonwealth/Allied units and representatives were attached to the headquarters of each force commander.

The object of the operation was first to contact the prisoners and internees and provide them as soon as possible with food and medical aid, then to move them to collection centres (mainly Singapore for those recovered from the Netherlands East Indies, and Rangoon for those recovered from French Indo-China and Siam) and finally to evacuate them as transport became available either to India or to their country of domicile or through the Civil Affairs organization in the country concerned if they were locally domiciled. The normal medical evacuation routes were to be used, although walking cases, after receiving medical treatment, were to be moved by any available means, staging if possible at convalescent depots. Priority of evacuation was to be given to sick or wounded and no difference in priority was to be made between prisoners of different nationalities, between different services and civilians or between officers and other ranks. The repatriation of all Allied prisoners-of-war and internees was to be given top priority in the use of transport over all military personnel, including class 'A' releases.<sup>1</sup> General Headquarters, India, was to be responsible for making arrangements for their reception, medical care, documentation and eventual repatriation, for it was expected that the great majority would be evacuated to India.

The first phase of the rescue operation (operation 'Birdcage') was the dropping by air of leaflets giving notice of the surrender of Japan to guards at P.O.W. camps, to the local population and to prisoners and internees. Leaflets in Japanese and in the local language were to be dropped first on all known camps, main towns and concentrations of Japanese troops, followed about an hour later by leaflets in English giving instructions to prisoners and internees to stay in their camps until contacted so that food and medical supplies could be dropped to them. In the second phase (operation 'Mastiff'), which was to follow as soon as possible after the leaflets had been dropped, food and medical supplies were to be dropped and medical and Red Cross relief teams with wireless sets and operators parachuted into known camps as quickly as possible. At the same time the Force 136 officers and 'E' parties operating clandestinely in occupied territories were to try to contact camps. As soon as the initial supply-drop had been completed, the R.A.F. was to undertake the maintenance of all camps other than those reached by land forces (such as on Singapore Island) by dropping special food,

<sup>1</sup> The pattern to be followed had been laid down in a directive issued to theatre commanders by the Combined Chiefs of Staff on the 14th June 1945.

medical supplies, clothing and Red Cross stores in accordance with demands sent in by wireless from the relief teams in each camp.

Liberator squadrons with experience of special duty (clandestine) operations were to be used for the long-range tasks, since many of the camps were likely to be difficult to find. The short-range tasks were to be carried out by Thunderbolt, Dakota and Lysander squadrons as operationally convenient. The squadrons covering Malaya and Sumatra were to work from airfields in Ceylon and the Cocos Islands, those covering western Siam from airfields around Rangoon, and those covering eastern Siam and French Indo-China from airfields around Jessore (the original base for special-duty squadrons some sixty miles north-east of Calcutta).

When the Japanese delegates signed the preliminary surrender document in Rangoon on the 28th August,<sup>1</sup> Mountbatten gave the order for the R.A.P.W.I. operation to begin. The leaflet-dropping sorties began that morning and continued for three days. Although the weather at times made conditions and the location of camps difficult, operation 'Birdcage' had been successfully completed on the 31st by which time 150 tons of leaflets had been dropped in fifty-eight sorties. While the leaflets were being dropped, operation 'Mastiff' began in the nearer and safer areas, i.e. Burma, Siam and northern Malaya,<sup>2</sup> and by the 5th September extensive areas in Malaya (including Singapore), Siam, French Indo-China, Sumatra and Java had been covered.<sup>3</sup> The first team into Java was parachuted on the 7th September. The situation varied considerably in each area: difficulties arose in the Netherlands East Indies but in Malaya, Siam and French Indo-China all went in general according to plan. The control teams, with the help of Force 136 and 'E' parties,<sup>4</sup> quickly made contact with the senior Allied officer in each camp, ensured that the prisoners and internees remained where they were, carried out medical examinations, treatment and documentation, checked on numbers and passed the requirements of each camp by wireless to the appropriate R.A.P.W.I. control centre. By mid-September the movement of prisoners and internees from camps to suitable concentration areas from which they could be evacuated by sea or air had made good progress. In Java, where the first Force 136/Mastiff group arrived on the 8th September, a serious situation arose owing to the hostility of the Indonesians which endangered the lives of prisoners and internees in camps in the centre of the country.<sup>5</sup> A naval force consisting of the cruiser *Cumberland*, some

<sup>1</sup> See pages 237-8.

<sup>2</sup> Aircraft were able to land in Siam and the first prisoners-of-war and internees to be recovered were flown from Siam to Rangoon on the 28th August.

<sup>3</sup> The first 'Mastiff' team to be dropped was on Singapore Island on the 30th August.

<sup>4</sup> After the capitulation three 'E' parties were sent to Siam and five more to French Indo-China. Four more Force 136 groups arrived in Sumatra in early September.

<sup>5</sup> See Chapters XXVIII and XXIX.

frigates and minesweepers was therefore sent to Batavia, where it arrived on the 15th September. Contact was quickly established with the Japanese who were ordered to move troops into Batavia to take control until the arrival of Allied troops, and a R.A.P.W.I. control staff was landed with orders to gain touch, assisted by Japanese troops, with camps in the centre of Java.

On the 15th September Lady Louis Mountbatten, in her capacity as Superintendent-in-Chief, Nursing Corps and Divisions, St. John Ambulance Brigade, and General Thompson flew to Sumatra where they found conditions so bad that Thompson flew back to Singapore and arranged for the immediate evacuation of the prisoners by landing ships and craft, by an R.A.A.F. squadron specially sent from Australia and by aircraft which had brought in supplies.

An excellent impression of the state of affairs in progress in some of the areas where prisoners were recovered is given in a report written at the end of September by Lady Mountbatten, who began touring Siam, Malaya, French Indo-China, Sumatra and Java (and later Borneo, Morotai, Manila and Hong Kong) as soon as the R.A.P.W.I. operation was under way:

'... On the whole things went extraordinarily well, and the recovery and repatriation of prisoners of war and civil internees was most successful and speedy, considering the gigantic areas over which they were spread and the endless problems involved, not the least of them the fact that in many places, for instance Sumatra, we had to do the whole of the evacuation of the prisoners of war before we had one single allied soldier landed, or even the Navy lying off... Luckily, somehow it worked, and there is no doubt that had the war gone on a few more weeks there would have been no prisoners of war in these areas left alive at all. They were absolutely at their last gasp in the Netherlands East Indies areas, and the tragedy is that so many did die in the last weeks, before the Surrender, and even after...'

I went to a large number of camps in Siam, where the death roll in 1942/1943, during the building of the railway into Burma, has been appallingly high... but the men who came through were in amazingly good spirits, however ill and emaciated they might be. This really applied to every single camp I have seen, and the brave spirits and real "guts" have been unbelievable during all these ghastly years... No praise can be too high for what the doctors, surgeons and R.A.M.C. Orderlies have done in the camps... even though they had absolutely no medical supplies, drugs or equipment. The way they improvised... was quite staggering, extracting drugs from herbs and plants, making surgical and medical equipment out of old bits of tin, glass and bamboo, and setting up, in many camps, entire workshops which really turned out usable stuff.

I visited camps both in Bangkok and remote parts of Siam generally conducted by the Japanese who were the only people who knew the locations and roads, and the surprise of the prisoners of war at seeing,

out of the blue, the first white woman for 3½ years, and she stepping out of a Jeep which most of them had never even heard of, and certainly never seen, was truly amazing . . .

I spent nearly a week in Sumatra, living in various buildings cheek by jowl with the heavily besworded and be-armed Japanese officers . . . The Japanese . . . did what we told them, and we succeeded in doing all the evacuation of British, Australian and Indian prisoners of war from Central and Southern Sumatra by river boat up to the coasts where we got L.S.T. and L.C.I. from Singapore to come and fetch them, and a large number also we evacuated by Dakota aircraft from hastily improvised airstrips. The fact that most of the coasts round Sumatra and Java were mined also added to our worries . . .<sup>1</sup>

By the end of September some 53,700 prisoners and internees had been evacuated from South-East Asia to India, Australia and Great Britain and the total reached some 71,000 at the end of October. Of this number the great majority were moved by sea from Singapore, only some 3,000 being flown out. The number recovered and evacuated by S.E.A.C., as reported in May 1946, amounted to 80,419 prisoners and 16,156 internees, making a grand total of 96,575; but, owing to political difficulties in Java, it was estimated on the 1st June 1946 that there were still some 30,000 Dutch internees in the interior of that country.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> For further details of the rescue of prisoners-of-war and internees in Java see Chapters XXVIII and XXIX. See also Appendix 30.



## CHAPTER XXIV

# THE JAPANESE SURRENDER AND RESTORATION OF CIVIL POWER IN BURMA

(September 1945—April 1946)

*See Maps 1, 12 and 16 and Sketches 2 and 13*

IN Burma in the second week in August there were no Japanese other than stragglers west of the Sittang, and the remnants of *Burma Area Army* were withdrawing southwards through the mountains east of the Sittang, harassed by detachments operating along the Kalaw and Mawchi roads. The bulk of 12th Army troops were under command of IV Corps, which was disposed along the Toungoo–Rangoon road with a force engaged with the Japanese in the Shwegyin area (north-east of Pegu) where the main Japanese escape route to the south ran along the east bank of the Sittang.<sup>1</sup>

Having been warned on the 11th of the possible imminent surrender of Japan, Stopford (12th Army) held a conference in Rangoon on the 12th to discuss the measures required to deal with the surrender of *Burma Area Army*. Next day he recommended to A.L.F.S.E.A. that, since communication and maintenance difficulties would prevent 12th Army from advancing into Tenasserim unless it were given additional air support (which he knew was not available) and naval support (including minesweepers), the Japanese should be ordered to dump their arms under guard east of the Sittang and move to concentration areas west of the river.

On the 15th a brief message from A.L.F.S.E.A. ordered the cessation of hostilities provided it would not endanger Allied forces, and at 3.55 p.m. on the same day 12th Army sent out the following orders in clear to its formations:

You will suspend offensive operations forthwith insofar as is consistent with safety of all Allied forces in your area. You will ensure that P.B.F.,<sup>2</sup> and all clandestine forces with whom you are in touch observe this order. Since orders may not reach all enemy units for some time no military precautions will be relaxed at any time. Own troops will stand fast in

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<sup>1</sup> See Chapter IV and Map 1, facing page 1.

<sup>2</sup> Patriotic Burmese Forces (formerly Burma National Army); see Chapter V.

present locations until further orders. You will accept all surrenders and notify this H.Q. forthwith in the case of Majors and upwards. Primary object early interrogation will be to determine location and strengths of main enemy bodies, H.Q.s and food supplies. You will ensure orders to own troops on dealing with Japanese property and equipment ensure strictest discipline over safeguarding such articles. No action other than the above will be taken until further orders.

A.L.F.S.E.A. also told Stopford that they could not take on the extra commitment of feeding the Japanese if they were brought west of the Sittang. It was therefore essential that they should remain on their own supply system east of the river and that a general standstill was to be ordered. The forces which capitulated were to be classified as 'Japanese surrendered personnel' (J.S.P.) and not prisoners-of-war so that their maintenance and discipline would remain the responsibility of their own officers. They added that a plan was under examination to move a brigade group to Moulmein by sea after 5th Division had left for Singapore,<sup>1</sup> to ensure law and order in Tenasserim in case the Japanese pulled out.

Stopford made further representations on the 15th and 16th urging that Japanese forces should be brought west of the Sittang to prevent them living on an already ravaged countryside, and that, if in the meantime the Japanese withdrew on their own accord from Burma, Civil Affairs officers with police and military backing should be flown into Tenasserim quickly to prevent dacoity such as had occurred in the Irrawaddy delta and was still going on. A.L.F.S.E.A. replied on the 19th that their orders must stand and said that, since surrender orders from Tokyo could not reach *Headquarters Burma Area Army* before the 22nd and outlying formations before the 30th, it would be some time before any surrenders could be expected. Until Japanese reactions to the surrender orders were known, clandestine forces were to avoid contact with them and not disclose their own locations.

The first sign of surrender came on the 22nd August when, about a mile south-west of Nyaungkashe, a patrol of 6/15th Punjab encountered eight Japanese who surrendered and said that a Japanese officer would be at Posabe on the 23rd to arrange further surrenders.<sup>2</sup> The intelligence officer of 63rd Brigade kept the appointment and arranged for representatives of the local Japanese commander to meet representatives from IV Corps at a given rendezvous near Abya on the 24th. A Japanese captain and lieutenant turned up on the stated day, and a parley took place at headquarters of 1/10th Gurkhas in Abya which lasted for an hour and three-quarters. The Japanese began by saying that they had received a cease-fire order the previous

<sup>1</sup> For the dispositions of 12th Army on the 18th August see Sketch 13, facing page 264.

<sup>2</sup> See Sketch 2, facing page 48.



day which would be strictly obeyed, but that they could not surrender until they had received explicit orders to do so from their own high command. Their attitude was correct and their main anxiety was to learn what would happen to them after the surrender. They were told that this would be made known to them after the 26th August, when the Chief of Staff of *Southern Army* was being flown to Rangoon to receive the orders of the Supreme Commander,<sup>1</sup> that meanwhile the fighting at Shwegyin must cease and that the officer of Force 136 held by them in that area must be released at once,<sup>2</sup> that they must lift all mines and booby traps west of the Sittang and that they would be required to withdraw all troops to the east bank of the Sittang by the 29th August. The Japanese officers could not or would not disclose the strength and disposition of forces in the area. They said that, although there was little dysentery and no cholera, they were suffering seriously from malaria, beri-beri and footrot, that supplies were getting low since no trains were running to Mokpalin, that the road from there to Kyaikto was too deep in mud to take heavy traffic, and that there were no Allied prisoners-of-war or internees in their area. A further meeting at Abya was arranged for the 26th and they were told that a more senior officer must lead their next delegation.

At the meeting on the 26th the Japanese delegation consisted of two lieutenant-colonels, one each from *Headquarters Burma Area Army* and *28th Army*, and a major from *28th Army* with interpreters, a recorder and flag bearers. The IV Corps representatives were Brigadier M. R. Smeeton, the commander of 63rd Brigade, and a lieutenant-colonel (G.S.O.I) from corps headquarters. The Japanese agreed to withdraw to the east bank of the Sittang and not to destroy any equipment, buildings or stores, but again repeated that they could not surrender without orders from higher command. They expressed Kimura's regret over the detention of the Force 136 officer and said that, although efforts were being made to release him, lack of communications was making it difficult to find out where he was.<sup>3</sup> They asked to be allowed to move the remnants of *28th Army*, about 3,000 to 4,000 strong, south from the Shwegyin and Kyaukkyi areas to Mokpalin where they could be more easily fed, but permission was refused, since such a move might have led to clashes with Burmese guerrillas, and orders regarding their surrender were expected from Rangoon shortly. They also asked to be allowed to send a party to contact stragglers in the Pegu Yomas, and were told that they would have to send a deputation to discuss this. The delegates were also informed that after the withdrawal to the east bank

<sup>1</sup> See page 237.

<sup>2</sup> On the 16th this officer had gone to parley with some Japanese who had refused to let him go.

<sup>3</sup> He was released on the 27th August.

of the Sittang their boats could continue to use the river, that no aircraft was to fly without permission and special markings, and that Allied aircraft, which would be carrying out reconnaissance flights as necessary, were not to be molested in any way. They were urged to see that the Mokpalin-Kyaikto road was quickly repaired and were assured that Allied aircraft would not interfere with those working on it.

Apart from a few minor clashes with guerrillas, which may not have been the fault of the Japanese, these terms were well observed and by the end of August, although there was still no sign of a general surrender, all Japanese forces except stragglers were east of the Sittang and air reconnaissance showed little movement of troops in that area. On the 1st September, however, Force 136 reported that there were 1,500 Japanese in Mawchi who, although low in morale, had no intention of surrendering and were in telephonic communication with Siam. This led to the suspicion, later confirmed, that they were moving east into Siam.<sup>1</sup>

By the beginning of September affairs in Burma were temporarily in a state of suspended animation, which continued until the orders of the Japanese high command had percolated through to their widely scattered forces east of the Sittang and until transport could be made available to move 17th Division into Tenasserim.

It will be remembered that for various reasons the process of disbanding the P.B.F. and enrolling its members in the new Burma Army had come to a standstill by late August.<sup>2</sup> To discuss the problem Mountbatten, at the request of the Burmese, held a meeting in Kandy on the 6th September, which was attended by Slim, Stopford, selected Civil Affairs officers and political advisers, Mr. Tom Driberg M.P., Aung San, seven members of the P.B.F., Than Tun and three members of the self-styled Supreme Council of the A.F.P.F.L., one of whom represented the Karen Hills area and one Arakan.

Mountbatten told the meeting that, since extravagant claims had been made by the P.B.F. about their own achievements against the Japanese, he felt it necessary that the achievement of all the peoples of Burma should be put into a proper perspective. He therefore asked Slim to outline the events of the previous four years. Slim pointed out that the main force which had liberated Burma was British/Indian, assisted by some Chinese divisions, an American brigade and

<sup>1</sup> It was reported on the 16th September that some 3,000 sick and wounded of 56th Division had been evacuated across the Salween from Kemapyu (see Sketch 2, facing page 48) to Chiengmai (see Map 12, facing page 306).

<sup>2</sup> See pages 55-56.

American air and administrative units. Nevertheless the people of Burma had given help in those areas where it was possible: the regular Burma Navy and part of the Burma Army, as well as many Burmans who had joined 'V' Force and the Burma Intelligence Corps, had fought the Japanese throughout the war, and Kachin, Chin and Arakanese levies had given their aid unstintingly since 1942. The Karens had throughout remained loyal and under British officers had organized a force of some 12,000 men who, armed and fed by air, had fought with distinction under the direction of 14th Army.<sup>1</sup> The B.N.A. (P.B.F.) had on the other hand been formed under Japanese auspices and had joined the Allies only in March 1945.<sup>2</sup> When he had met Aung San on the 16th May,<sup>3</sup> he had been told that the strength of the B.N.A. was some 7,000 men; as far as he knew these had co-operated with the British forces loyally since the end of March and had killed many Japanese, but the B.N.A. had not been taken into account in any of the British operations, although the British had been glad to have had its co-operation.

When the discussion turned to the enrolment of the P.B.F. into the regular Burma Army, Aung San complained that the Supreme Commander's directions had been carried out in an arbitrary way: individuals had been recruited instead of eligible portions of the P.B.F. being incorporated. He warned that, unless such arrangements were superseded by ones which reasonably satisfied P.B.F. aspirations, they would lead to widespread misunderstanding and dissatisfaction. Mountbatten explained to him that the new regular Burma Army with a ceiling of 15,000 men would be a national army and not an army supporting any particular section of the Burmese people or any particular party, and, despite Aung San's statement about the incorporation of portions of the P.B.F. into the Burma Army, said in winding up the meeting that it seemed to him that there was no point of principle on which they differed: what needed clarification was only points of detail and the means of implementing what had already been agreed. Afterwards Mountbatten saw Aung San privately and 'gave him to understand that he was not prepared to consider Aung San's new suggestion of re-enlistment by battalions, although he was fully prepared to have the difficulties and misunderstandings cleared up'.<sup>4</sup>

That afternoon Stopford held a meeting to discuss details for the recruitment of P.B.F. into the regular Burma Army. With Aung San's concurrence it was agreed that, out of the ceiling of 15,000 for the regular Burma Army, the ceiling for the P.B.F. would be 5,200

<sup>1</sup> In operation 'Character'; see Volume IV.

<sup>2</sup> See Volume IV, pages 333-4 and 337.

<sup>3</sup> See page 51.

<sup>4</sup> See Donnison, page 363.

on the understanding that Aung San retained the right to make representation at a later date for the employment of any suitable surplus men serving on the 15th August who had not been absorbed in the ceiling figure. It was also agreed that a joint board would be set up in Rangoon on the 15th September, composed of representatives of 12th Army, the P.B.F. and the Inspector-General of the Burma Army, to deal by mutual agreement with points of detail during the period of the amalgamation. Mountbatten held a final meeting on the 7th September at which all these recommendations were accepted.

The plan to disband the P.B.F. and absorb individuals from it into the regular Burma Army involved the appointment of two Deputy Inspectors-General under a British Inspector-General. One of these appointments was offered on the 7th September to Aung San with the rank of Brigadier (Governor's Commission). It was, however, made clear that he would have to leave the army if he decided to enter politics. Aung San refused the offer on the 25th saying that, after discussing the matter with the A.F.P.F.L. and P.B.F., he had decided to leave the army and take up a political career. In the first week of October 12th Army reported that the disbandment of the P.B.F. was proceeding satisfactorily, but it gradually became clear that comparatively few of those graded as suitable were offering themselves for re-enrolment.<sup>1</sup>

On the 6th September Stopford ordered Kimura (*Burma Area Army*) to send his Chief of Staff to Rangoon on the 10th to receive detailed orders for the surrender of Japanese forces in Burma. During the second week of September a brigade of 17th Division crossed the Sittang to occupy the Mokpalin area, and detachments, escorting Civil Affairs and R.A.P.W.I. officials, were sent to Mergui and Tavoy. Surrenders of small numbers of Japanese began along the whole front from Bawlake to Mokpalin and, on the 10th as ordered, Kimura's Chief of Staff, Major-General J. Ichida, landed with a delegation at Mingaladon airfield. On the 13th September, the day after the surrender of *Southern Army* at Singapore,<sup>2</sup> Ichida signed the instrument of surrender of all forces under command of *Burma Area Army* at Government House, Rangoon.

On the 20th Stopford ordered 17th Division (Crowther) to occupy Tenasserim, which extended from Toungoo on the Sittang to Victoria Point on the west coast of the Kra Isthmus, a distance of 600 miles. The division was at this time in the Pegu-Sittang bridge

<sup>1</sup> By the 10th November all but 830 out of a total of 8,383 had been examined and interviewed. Gradings were: 4,220 suitable for the Burma Army, 1,078 to be examined again after 2 months leave, 2,255 unsuitable. By March 1946 only 2,000 had asked for enrolment, of whom 1,700 were accepted.

<sup>2</sup> See pages 271-3.

area under command of IV Corps and the occupation involved sending detachments by air, sea and road to key points. It was important that early control should be gained of the Moulmein area where dacoity was increasing, but minefields prevented a direct approach to Moulmein and Amherst by sea. The 1st Sikh Light Infantry and 45th Beach Group were therefore ordered on the 20th to move by sea, and land on the coast south of Amherst. Next day it was decided to fly 1/7th Gurkhas into Moulmein and the Japanese were authorized to move reinforcements there to restore order pending its arrival. The Sikhs and the beach group arrived in the Amherst area between the 25th and 29th September and 17th Division's main headquarters arrived at Moulmein from Pegu on the 15th October.

On the 30th September IV Corps Headquarters closed and the dispersal of the staff and corps began, thus inaugurating the first major step in the reduction of 12th Army and the establishment of Burma Command. The first week of October was eventful. The 1/7th Gurkhas arrived at Moulmein and, far to the north, 22nd (E.A.) Brigade began to take over Japanese dumps of arms and equipment on the Mawchi road. Surrendered Japanese were set to work to repair the Sittang ferry and work the quarries there for road metal. Crowther was ordered to send detachments by sea to occupy Tavoy and Victoria Point,<sup>1</sup> and, on the 4th, Tactical Headquarters 48th Brigade (17th Division) moved to Moulmein and the Japanese at Amherst surrendered. On the 5th concentration of 33rd Army was completed at Thaton and disarming began, and next day 19th Division reported that the Toungoo-Mawchi road was open and that it had reoccupied the Karen Hills area.

On the 10th, with the arrival of Advanced Headquarters 17th Division at Moulmein, Kimura and *Burma Area Army Headquarters* came under direct control of 17th Division, and by the 15th the number of surrendered Japanese had risen to 50,000.<sup>2</sup>

On the 16th October at 10.30 a.m. Sir Reginald Dorman-Smith returned to Rangoon and Civil Government was restored throughout Burma, except for the Karen Hills area and Tenasserim (other than the Toungoo civil district). This meant that police now took over responsibility for law and order, the search for arms and the suppression of dacoity, and only at the request of the Governor was there to be any military intervention. The responsibility of the G.O.C.-in-C. Burma Command, which 12th Army was to become, was defined as the protection of Burma, disarming of Japanese forces, evacuation of Allied prisoners and internees, arrest and trial of war criminals and the command, training and discipline of the new

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<sup>1</sup> See Map 16, facing page 600.

<sup>2</sup> For dispositions of Japanese forces in Burma on the 18th August see Sketch 13, facing page 264.

Burma Army. Operationally the G.O.C.-in-C was to be prepared to mount operations outside Burma as ordered and assist in the preservation of internal security if required to do so by the Governor.

In areas vacated by the Japanese and left unoccupied, even for a short time, dacoity quickly broke out. In the Irrawaddy delta, with its swamps and network of waterways, flights in strength by the R.A.F. were temporarily effective but eventually it was found necessary to send detachments from South Burma District to occupy the troubled localities. In Tavoy the first task of 17th Division's detachments was to round up dacoits which they succeeded in doing by the 20th October and confidence was restored. In conjunction with the reoccupation of Tenasserim minesweepers set to work to clear the whole coast of the extensive minefields laid by the East Indies Fleet, the R.A.F. and the Japanese.

On the 24th October at a ceremony at Judson College in Rangoon General Kimura surrendered his sword to Stopford, while Lieut.-General Sakurai, commander of *28th Army*, his Chief of Staff, Major-General Ichida, and the senior naval officer surrendered theirs to senior officers of 12th Army staff and the senior naval officer, Rangoon. The next day Lieut.-General Honda (*33rd Army*) surrendered to Major-General Crowther (17th Division) at Thaton, and by the 6th November the surrender of troops of *Burma Area Army* was complete. In all 70,447 soldiers, 1,365 sailors and 133 airmen had been disarmed. The rest of *Burma Area Army* crossed into Siam and surrendered there.<sup>1</sup> The main concentration areas were: *33rd Army* (19,695) at Thaton; *28th Army* (9,099) just north of Martaban; stragglers from the Pegu Yomas and those who surrendered west of the Sittang (10,330) at Pegu; *Headquarters Burma Area Army*, *24th I.M.B.* and miscellaneous units (14,818) in the Moulmein area; and garrison and line of communication troops (6,091) at Thanbyuzayat near Amherst. There were smaller concentrations varying from about 2,000 down to a few hundred at Mergui, Toungoo, Mokpalin and Kawkareik, and 443 members of the *Kempei Tai* and suspected war criminals were in various jails, mostly in Rangoon and Moulmein.

By the beginning of November increasing lawlessness and the suspicion that there were considerable stocks of concealed firearms in the country began to cause some anxiety. Nationalist propaganda and an exaggerated idea of the part played by the P.B.F. in the defeat of the Japanese, when considered against Burma's historical background of violence, made internal trouble likely and even open rebellion possible. Fortunately there were many, among them men

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<sup>1</sup> *Headquarters 15th Army, 15th, 33rd, 53rd, and 56th Divisions and 72nd I.M.B.*; see pages 292 and 295-6.

of influence, who believed that any form of rebellion could only result in putting back independence for a long time. The most powerful political organization was the Anti-Fascist Peoples' Freedom League and few doubted that either it or Aung San could start a general revolt at any moment. Both, however, for the moment at least, were disposed to co-operate with the Government in spite of the fact that the Governor had refused to accept the A.F.P.F.L.'s pretensions to provide nominees for the Governor's council.

The general situation made it quite evident that it was necessary to keep 12th Army in existence until the post-war Burma Army was firmly established and trained. Apart from the units of the new Burma Army being raised or in training, 12th Army had three divisions, two independent infantry brigades and a tank brigade available for operations in Burma or on its frontiers, in particular on the frontier with China where bands of deserters were roaming the countryside and Chinese regular forces were deploying ostensibly to round them up.

There was, however, little military activity during November other than the move of 82nd (W.A.) Division from Arakan by way of the Taungup-Prome road to occupy the Irrawaddy valley and delta from Prome southwards, with its main task the suppression of dacoity. The bad state of the road and unseasonable rains made it necessary for the division to move in small convoys and the move took nearly two months.<sup>1</sup> In early January 1946 12th Army was disposed with 82nd (W.A.) Division in the Irrawaddy valley (where it relieved the South Burma District detachments), 19th Division in the Sittang valley, 17th Division in Tenasserim, the Lushai Brigade on the Mawchi road and in the Karen Hills and 22nd (E.A.) Brigade in the Rangoon area. Administration was the responsibility of North Burma Area with headquarters at Meiktila, South Burma District with headquarters at Rangoon and 551 Sub-Area with headquarters at Akyab, each of which had a certain number of British and Indian unbrigaded battalions under command as well as units of the new Burma Army in process of raising and training.<sup>2</sup>

December followed the pattern of November as far as 12th Army was concerned. There were occasional outbreaks of dacoity, and a comparatively large raid on a police post believed to be the work of former members of the P.B.F. who had absconded with their arms while the force was being disbanded. By the end of the month, however, the situation was such that the reduction of the garrison in Burma could be contemplated. Stopford therefore gave instructions

<sup>1</sup> The 12th Army war diary for November records that on the Taungup-Prome road 'serious trouble was experienced with tigers'. It would appear that tigers, like dacoits, took charge as the armed forces withdrew.

<sup>2</sup> See the outline order of battle of 12th Army, Appendix 29.

on the 27th for Headquarters 12th Army to become Headquarters Burma Command on the 1st January 1946, and for the reorganization of administrative areas and sub-areas. On the day that Burma Command came into being, the Civil Government resumed control in Tenasserim and the Karen Hills area and there were adjustments in the military administrative areas, South Burma District becoming South Burma Area and extending its boundary to include Tenasserim.

To reduce the garrison of Burma, excluding the new Burma Army, to a division of four brigades, Stopford proposed on the 9th January 1946 that 82nd (W.A.) Division, 22nd (E.A.) Brigade, 1st Indian Armoured Brigade (late 255th Indian Tank Brigade) and the Lushai Brigade should be returned to India as shipping became available and, in order to comply with India's request for specific battalions to be returned, that 17th and 19th Divisions should be amalgamated to form one four-brigade division. On the 16th January General Headquarters, India, notified their agreement with these proposals and on the 21st A.L.F.S.E.A. ordered Burma Command to begin the amalgamation of 17th and 19th Divisions, the former, with four brigades, remaining in Burma and the latter with two infantry brigades returning to India together with 1st Armoured and the Lushai Brigades. The unbrigaded 2nd Indian Field Artillery Regiment, 5/10th Baluch Regiment, 1/3rd Gurkhas and 1st Sikh Light Infantry were also to return to India, and non-divisional troops were to be evacuated at the rate of not fewer than 10,000 a month.

Early in January trouble flared up in the north on the Chinese border, where bands of Chinese deserters were still roaming the countryside and Chinese regular forces had established some posts inside Burma on the pretext of rounding up deserters. Representations to the British Military Mission in Chungking had little effect and the matter had to be taken up by the Government of Burma through diplomatic channels. On the 21st January serious trouble broke out in Myitkyina and police and a platoon of Kachin Rifles had to open fire on rioting Chinese, of whom eleven were killed and 500 rounded up, including fifty-one deserters from the Chinese Army.<sup>1</sup>

Throughout January the destruction of dumps of surrendered Japanese warlike stores and measures to curb Chinese infiltration were the main operational activities. East of the Sittang, particularly along the Toungoo-Mawchi-Kemapyu-Chiangmai (Siam) road, demolitions were carried out under the supervision of the Lushai Brigade commander.<sup>2</sup> This advance through the Karen Hills into Siam led to two discoveries: that there were unsundered Japanese

<sup>1</sup> See Map 16, facing page 600.

<sup>2</sup> For Chiangmai see Map 12, facing page 306.



in north-west Siam, and that there was a rice famine in the district. The Japanese were ordered to concentrate at Kum Yuam, on the road some twenty miles inside Siam, where they were employed in making an airstrip and disarmed before being marched back to Toungoo. The rice famine was dealt with by dropping food supplies from the 28th January to the 15th February.

Farther north in the Kengtung Civil District there was an influx of Chinese 'immigrants' with which the 'V' Force detachment and its small escort of Assam Rifles known as Kenforce could not deal. Reinforced by a company of 4/6th Gurkhas and two sections of Burma Signals, Kenforce established its headquarters at Kengtung and this, together with the round-up of Chinese at Myitkyina, ensured a short period of comparative peace.

On the 30th January Stopford left Burma to become commander of the Allied Forces Netherlands East Indies, and was succeeded by Lieut.-General H. R. Briggs,<sup>1</sup> whose first action was to begin intensive operations to clear the Burma border of Chinese infiltrators. In spite of the round-up at Myitkyina, there were believed to be still about 700 Chinese in the Bhamo-Myitkyina area, and another 800, many of them armed deserters, in the Wa States between the Salween and the China border.<sup>2</sup> To deal with the latter, who were taking advantage of inter-tribal feuds to join in attacks on villages which they plundered and laid waste, three columns supplied by air, one of two companies of 2nd Burma Regiment, one of about 170 armed police and a third of 400 local guerrillas accompanied by eighty armed police, began a sweep of the troubled area on the 16th February. Some Wa tribes actively assisted the Chinese but final success was achieved on the 4th March, when about 700 dacoits fled across the border into China, and within a fortnight most of the hitherto recalcitrant Wa chiefs and headmen had taken the oath of allegiance to the Burma Government.

Chinese infiltration continued in the Myitkyina and Kengtung areas, and a serious situation developed on the 16th February when a force of 375 Chinese regular troops dug in astride the Ledo Road near a Burma police post on the east bank of the Irrawaddy opposite Myitkyina. The commander of the force, on being told to withdraw across the border, said he was there on orders of the Chinese Government to arrest deserters and refused to move. The matter was referred to the Governor (who referred it to London) and Briggs reinforced the Myitkyina area with two battalions of Indian infantry, a field battery Royal Artillery and a partly-trained battalion of the Burma Army. On the 1st March he reported to the Governor that he had

<sup>1</sup> Briggs had commanded 5th Indian Division in Arakan and on the Imphal plain in 1944 (see Volume III) and then a District in India.

<sup>2</sup> See Map 16, facing page 600.

formed the impression that the real object of the infiltration was to emphasize Chinese aspirations and might be intended to test the Burma Government's reaction. The local Burmese, he added, were showing signs of being disheartened and he urged early resolute action and the delivery of an ultimatum. He considered the force in the Myitkyina area adequate to back an ultimatum although he might have to ask for air supply at the expense of supply-drops of rice to famine areas. In the Kengtung area, where infiltration was slight, word was received in mid-February from the commander of the Chinese 93rd Division that he proposed to move units of his division from Indo-China across the Kengtung salient to Yunnan.

The British Ambassador in Chungking presented a note to the Chinese Government on the 22nd February strongly protesting about the incursion of troops into the Myitkyina area and requesting their immediate withdrawal. He was told that the issue of such orders would take time and General Carton de Wiart, who had also asked for the troops to be withdrawn, was therefore instructed on the 6th March to seek an interview with Chiang Kai-shek. Two days later the British Military Attaché in Chungking reported that Carton de Wiart had received written assurance from the Generalissimo that orders had been issued for the Chinese troops in the Myitkyina area to be withdrawn. This eased the somewhat tense situation, and the Burma Government agreed to the passage of 93rd Division across Kengtung as soon as all Chinese had withdrawn from the Myitkyina area. By the 19th March the withdrawal was complete and three battalions and an artillery regiment, which had been standing by at short notice to move to any threatened area, stood down. Kenforce, however, remained at Kengtung until the end of April to supervise the passage, in small parties, of 93rd Chinese Division across the salient.

The unsettled situation in north Burma had not been allowed to interfere with the backloading of troops to India, and during the second half of February 1st Indian Armoured Brigade, four British battalions, five Indian battalions and an Indian artillery regiment together with a large number of administrative units left Burma, a few of the last named for Hong Kong but the majority for India.<sup>1</sup> On the 6th March, in view of the coming departure of Headquarters 19th Division to India,<sup>2</sup> 17th Division was ordered to take control in north Burma and on the 9th March its tactical headquarters moved from Moulmein to Maymyo (on the Burma Road north-east of Mandalay), where 64th Brigade Headquarters had arrived four days

<sup>1</sup> Of the infantry and artillery units five were from 17th and 19th Divisions in furtherance of their amalgamation, and one from the Lushai Brigade; the rest were unbrigaded units.

<sup>2</sup> It moved on the 13th April.

previously with 2nd Worcestershire Regiment and taken over operational control. From then on 17th Division was also operationally responsible for Burma east of the Pegu Yomas and 82nd (W.A.) Division for Burma west of them. The Africans were to remain in the Irrawaddy delta area until their repatriation could be undertaken.

On the 31st March Burma Command issued an order giving the dispositions which the Army in Burma was to take up as circumstances permitted. The headquarters of Burma Command and South Burma Area were to be at Rangoon, that of North Burma Area at Mandalay, and that of 17th Division at Meiktila, with its four brigades centred on Maymyo, Kalaw, Pegu and the Rangoon-Mingaladon-Hmawbi area. The eleven existing battalions of the new Burma Army were to be stationed at ten cities and towns throughout Burma, with two battalions in Rangoon and one in each of the others. Artillery Headquarters and a School of Artillery were to be at Meiktila and the Engineer centre at Maymyo, where an officers' training school was to be set up. Details were issued next day of the movement from May to September of specialist and administrative units out of Burma,<sup>1</sup> the grand total of personnel to be moved amounting to over 53,000, somewhat greater than the target of 10,000 monthly.<sup>2</sup>

No Japanese had as yet been repatriated which meant that at the beginning of April there were still over 71,000 in Burma, about half of whom Burma Command wished to retain as a labour force. On the 18th April Mountbatten told the Chiefs of Staff that he proposed to keep 50,000 in Burma until the end of 1946, and repatriate the 20,000 surplus by the 15th May as part of the overall plan to repatriate 590,000 from S.E.A.C. in American and Japanese shipping before the end of June.<sup>3</sup>

On the 2nd April 64th and 98th Brigades of 19th Division passed to 17th Division, making it up to four brigades. Headquarters 19th Division and 99th Brigade (late of 17th Division) left for India during the third week in April and at the same time the first battalion of 82nd (W.A.) Division to move left for West Africa. The move of 22nd (E.A.) Brigade, which had begun on the 4th March, was completed on the 16th April with the departure of brigade headquarters for Mombasa, and from then, apart from the new Burma Army and administrative and technical units being phased out, the garrison of Burma consisted of 17th and 82nd (W.A.) Divisions and an armoured car regiment (8th Light Cavalry).<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Except for engineer and pioneer groups and battalions and general hospitals, all were small units, mainly supply, transport and ordnance.

<sup>2</sup> See page 260.

<sup>3</sup> See Appendix 27.

<sup>4</sup> The main body of the West African division began to leave for Africa on the 3rd July, and its move was completed in the third week of August.

During the first half of April hardly a day passed without a report of a dacoity, especially in the Irrawaddy valley. Many of the incidents were small but at times whole villages were plundered, river steamers attacked, and in a 100-man attack on a police post a large sum of money and about eighty firearms, including sixteen automatics, were lost. Nevertheless, on the 19th April the Government of Burma felt the situation sufficiently stable to declare the end of the emergency. In theory anyhow Burma had achieved internal as well as external peace.

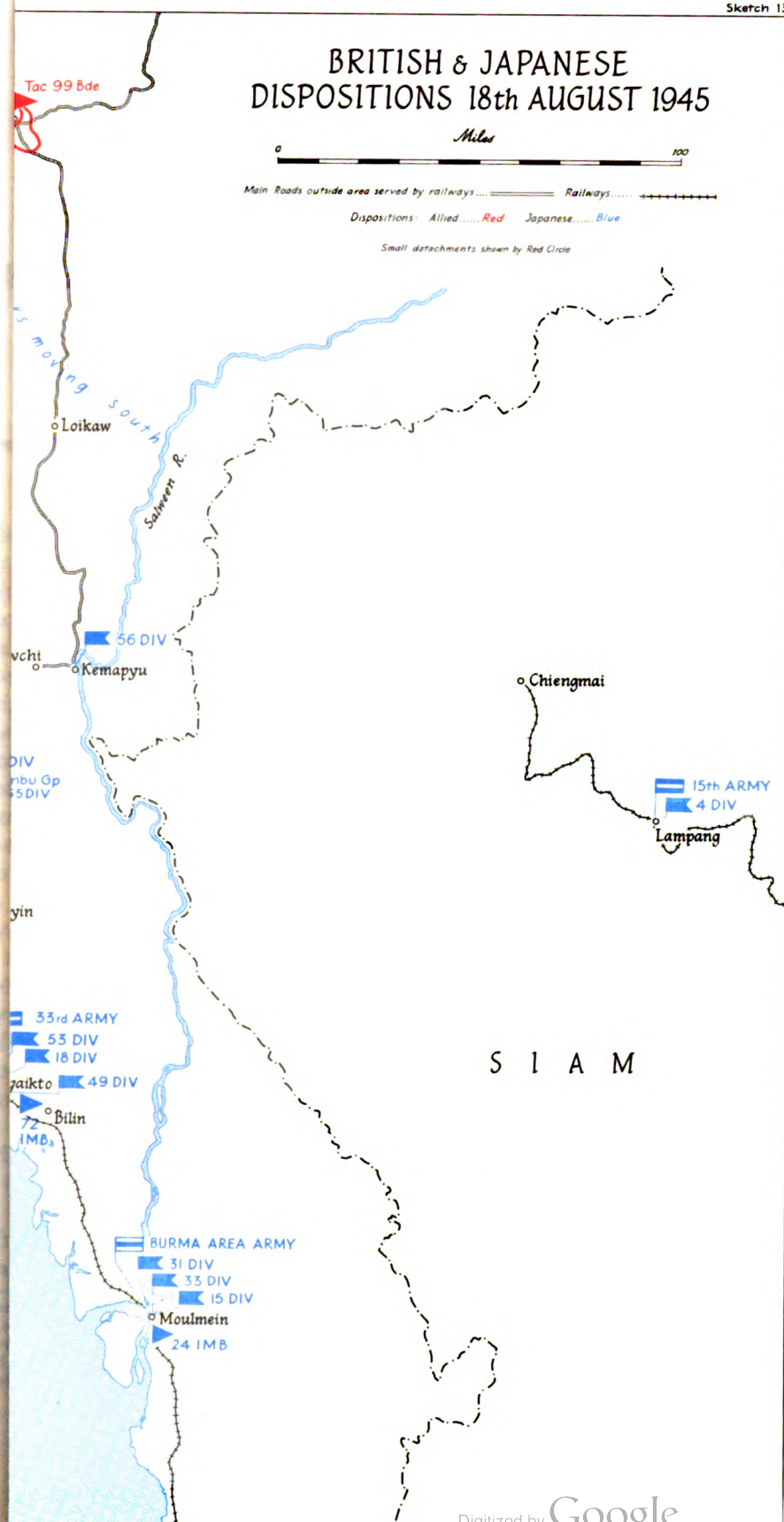
# BRITISH & JAPANESE DISPOSITIONS 18th AUGUST 1945

Miles  
0 100

Main Roads outside area served by railways..... Railways.....

Dispositions: Allied.....Red Japanese.....Blue

Small detachments shown by Red Circle





## CHAPTER XXV

# THE REOCCUPATION OF MALAYA (September 1945—April 1946)

*See Maps 2, 11 and 16*

THE rapid occupation of Singapore depended on the clearance of a channel through minefields in the Strait of Malacca for the passage of the convoys and their naval escorts, which in turn depended on the occupation of Penang and the subsequent negotiations there with the Japanese who were to hand over charts of their minefields. Part of the East Indies Fleet, under Admiral Walker in the *Nelson*, and the minesweepers had already sailed from Ceylon when MacArthur's order was received that no landings in occupied territory were to be made until the surrender document had been signed, and with the postponement of the Penang operation (planned for the 21st August) they had had to anchor off the Great Nicobar Islands and the west coast of Sumatra.<sup>1</sup>

Since the preliminary surrender documents which the Japanese were to sign in Rangoon on the 28th August allowed minesweeping and the use of Japanese coastal waters, Walker was ordered on the 27th to set sail again.<sup>2</sup> At noon on the 28th the *Nelson*, accompanied by the cruiser *Ceylon*, the escort carriers *Hunter* and *Attacker*, three destroyers and two L.S.I. (L)s carrying the Royal Marines landing party, arrived off Penang, and Commodore Poland and the small force of Royal Marines in the cruiser *London*, accompanied by one destroyer, arrived off Sabang.<sup>3</sup> Senior Japanese officers came aboard the *Nelson* and *London*, signed undertakings that no attacks would be made on the fleets and gave details of all minefields on the Malayan and Sumatran coasts, in the Strait of Malacca and at Singapore, and on the 30th minesweeping began so that the two ports could be entered as soon as the main surrender document had been signed at Tokyo on the 2nd September.

The Commander-in-Chief, East Indies Fleet (Admiral Power) sailed from Colombo on the 27th August in the cruiser *Cleopatra* and, after calling in at Sabang on the 29th, arrived at Penang on the 1st

<sup>1</sup> See pages 233-4 and 236.

<sup>2</sup> Because of the difficulty of maintaining the fleet during its period of enforced idleness at sea, seven ships of Walker's force (the cruiser *Nigeria*, the escort carriers *Stalker* and *Shah*, and four destroyers) had returned to Ceylon for refuelling; see page 236.

<sup>3</sup> See Map 16, facing page 600.

September. On the 2nd Rear-Admiral Uzumi (wearing the British D.S.C. and Allied Victory Medal for his part as an ally in the 1914-18 war) came aboard the *Nelson* and signed the terms for the occupation of Penang. Next morning the Royal Marines detachment landed and occupied the island,<sup>1</sup> removing all Japanese to the mainland, and on the same day 152 and 155 (Spitfire) Squadrons and 84 and 100 (Mosquito) Squadrons flew in from Rangoon, the first stage of their move to Singapore.

On the 31st August Vice-Admiral S. Hirose went aboard the *London* to receive orders from Poland about the surrender of Sabang and the evacuation of its garrison to the Sumatran mainland. The Royal Marines party occupied the port on the 2nd September and next day the White Ensign and the Dutch national flag were ceremonially hoisted.

While these events were taking place the force for the occupation of Singapore was moving through the Strait of Malacca. Joined by Power in the *Cleopatra*, the 6th, 7th and 37th Minesweeping Flotillas swept a channel through the Japanese minefields at first light on the 2nd September, and on the 3rd the *Cleopatra*, accompanied by H.M.I.S. *Bengal* and the 6th and 7th Minesweeping Flotillas, arrived at Singapore. Next day Rear-Admiral C. S. Holland, flying his flag in the cruiser *Sussex*, a destroyer and the headquarters ship of Rear-Admiral J. A. V. Morse, Flag Officer designate Malaya (H.M.S. *Kedah*), arrived escorting the convoys carrying 5th Division and XV Corps Headquarters from Rangoon and 3 Commando Brigade from Bombay. The convoy carrying the commando brigade was swept through the Singapore Straits on the 6th and then sailed on to Hong Kong.

At 6.5 p.m. on the 4th the Japanese delegates, Lieut.-General S. Itagaki and Vice-Admiral Fukudome,<sup>2</sup> were brought on board the *Sussex* and, in the presence of Christison (representing Mountbatten), signed a document surrendering Singapore and Johore and handed over charts and maps showing the position of all minefields in Malayan waters and the distribution of all Japanese forces under command of 7th Area Army and 10th Area Fleet. The delegates gave the strength of their forces in Singapore and Johore as 50,118 army and air force and 26,872 naval personnel (including the naval air arm)<sup>3</sup> and said that they were organized into four commands: western (Lieut.-General S. Tasaka), eastern (Lieut.-General S. Kinoshita),

<sup>1</sup> The two L.S.I.(L)s then sailed to Rangoon to collect units of the R.A.F. Regiment which relieved the Royal Marines in Penang on the 12th September.

<sup>2</sup> Itagaki had succeeded General Doihara as commander of 7th Area Army in mid-1945; see page 215 fn. 2.

<sup>3</sup> Headquarters 7th Area Army 1,345, 3rd Air Army 17,271, Singapore Communication Unit 5,915, Singapore Defence Corps 6,015, miscellaneous units under command of 7th Area Army 10,205, and 46th Division 9,367. Navy: 1,342 officers, 14,037 ratings and 11,493 civilians.



Johore (Lieut.-General S. Kokobu) and naval dockyard (Vice-Admiral Fukudome). They also said that all Allied prisoners-of-war and internees were in camps under control of their own officers. Christison then issued the Japanese with orders for the handing over and evacuation of Singapore Island, and for the surrender of all naval vessels and merchant ships to the Royal Navy.

The occupation began at 11 a.m. on the 5th when the first troops of 5th Division (Mansergh) and No. 2 R.A.P.W.I. Control Staff were disembarked. Owing to the dilapidated state of the docks the first convoy was not cleared till the 8th, but by then the whole island had been occupied by 5th Division, whose headquarters had been established in the city, and 161st Brigade, less a battalion, was *en route* to Johore Bahru on the mainland.<sup>1</sup> The two Spitfire and two Mosquito squadrons which had reached Penang on the 3rd flew on the 6th to Tengah and Seletar airfields on Singapore Island. Headquarters XV Corps disembarked on the 9th and moved into Fort Canning, which had been the headquarters of the Singapore garrison up to 1942.

While Advanced Headquarters XV Corps and 5th Division were moving to and occupying Singapore Island, the 'Zipper' convoys had set out from various ports in India for their landing beaches in the Port Swettenham-Port Dickson area.<sup>2</sup> During the voyage the formations were given detailed orders regarding their areas of occupation and the procedure to be adopted towards Japanese who surrendered. The landings were to be carried out as rehearsed, except that there was to be no covering fire and a Japanese envoy would be at the Morib rest house with an officer of Force 136 at 6.30 a.m. to meet the commander of 25th Division (Major-General G. N. Wood) and the Brigadier General Staff of XXXIV Corps. The first landings were to be made on the 9th September by 25th Division on the Morib beaches,<sup>3</sup> eighteen miles south of Port Swettenham, and by 37th Brigade of 23rd Division on the beaches west of Sepang, eight miles north-west of Port Dickson. Their immediate objectives were Kelanang airfield (on which 11 and 17 Spitfire Squadrons R.A.F. were to be based)<sup>4</sup> and the Sepang road junction respectively, both of which were a few miles inland from the beaches. After occupying the road junction 37th Brigade was to move south to Port Dickson where the rest of 23rd Division (Major-General D. C.

<sup>1</sup> See Map 11, facing page 282.

<sup>2</sup> See Chapter VII, Appendices 5, 6 and 7 and Map 2, facing page 63.

<sup>3</sup> No. 1 R.A.P.W.I. Control Staff was to land with 25th Division.

<sup>4</sup> The Spitfires were carried in the general purpose carrier *Trumpeter* and were to fly off when they reached the assault area. Their pilots had therefore practised taking off from land on a space similar to the area of the carrier's deck; see pages 81-82.

Hawthorn) was to land over the beaches south of the town on the 12th.

Escorted by the battleships *Nelson* and *Richelieu*, the cruisers *Nigeria*, *Cleopatra* and *Ceylon*, a carrier force consisting of the cruiser *Royalist* and six escort carriers (*Hunter*, *Stalker*, *Archer*, *Khedive*, *Emperor* and *Pursuer*), with a screen of fifteen destroyers, the D-day convoys arrived off their respective beaches at daylight on the 9th, and the first flights of landing craft moved into their appointed beaches on time. For a short while all went well, but what followed is best described in the words of 25th Division's war diary:

'9th Sep. Morib Beach . . . Although the leading troops were well to time in reaching their initial bounds and progressed extremely well inland it was very early evident that the discharge of vehicles over the Morib beaches was a vastly more difficult operation than had been envisaged and that the discharge programme would never be adhered to. The first flight of L.S.T.s came right into the beach and discharged their vehicles reasonably well. The L.C.M.s, however, were late in grounding, missed the best state of the tide and of the first 20 vehicles out none reached the beach across the 100 yds. muddy water gap without assistance and only about 2 without assistance from recovery vehicles and D.U.K.W.s. At the end of the first day about 50 vehicles were drowned and the first flight of L.S.T.s only had been off-loaded. Div. H.Q. was particularly unlucky in that only one of its vehicles—a jeep—was off-loaded on D-day. Further factors contributed to increase the difficulties in the beach area. In the first place, although it was realized that the country was much intersected by drainage ditches and that all roads were bounded by these ditches, the impracticability of getting vehicles off the road had not been fully appreciated. Thus the area selected off the road for de-waterproofing was in fact quite inaccessible to vehicles, being separated from the road by a broad boggy ditch and in addition a water pipe-line raised a foot off the ground. All vehicles therefore which crossed the beach queued up along the only road for de-waterproofing, causing inevitable congestion. An already difficult problem of traffic congestion was further aggravated by the fact that not only was it impossible to get off the road but in some places the verge was so soggy that vehicles and tanks running into it at once got bogged further blocking the road.'

The infantry, however, was able to move and by 4.30 p.m. Port Swettenham and Klang had been occupied by troops moving by way of Telok Datok, and Kelanang airfield had been handed over by a party of 100 Japanese which had been guarding it. After an uncomfortable night on the beach at Morib divisional headquarters, without any vehicles or equipment, moved to Klang on the 10th.

The Advanced Headquarters of 224 Group R.A.F. went ashore with 25th Division and its account of what happened paints an even worse picture than that of the divisional war diary:

'Conditions on the beaches were chaotic, vehicles drowned in scores as there were no decent exits from the beaches, and roads became choked

with ditched tanks which tore up the road surfaces and grass verges.  
 . . . A lack of vehicles ashore made movement of stores an impossible undertaking.'

The airfield at least was found to be in good condition and the fly-off of the Spitfires from the *Trumpeter*, a somewhat hazardous proceeding, began at 3 p.m. The diary of 11 Squadron comments that 'all aircraft took off successfully in spite of the lack of wind over the flight deck', but 17 Squadron's chronicler is more graphic:

'Came the dawn of the 9th and with some trepidation we waited for the word to take off, unfortunately operation 'Zipper' seemed to come slightly 'Unzipped' and we were informed that take off was postponed until the following day . . . At 1400 hours over the Tannoy came the summons "all pilots report to the briefing room". Here we were briefed and told that we were taking off in the afternoon . . . When we landed at Kelanang, in the opinion of all the pilots deck take-offs were "a piece of cake".'

By nightfall fifteen Spitfires had landed at Kelanang, and on the 10th Advanced Headquarters 224 Group opened at the airfield and took control of land-based air operations. The same day 656 Air O.P. Squadron was landed.

Meanwhile on the 9th, twenty miles to the south-east, 37th Brigade of 23rd Division had landed north of Port Dickson, and had quickly reached the Sepang road junction, but, as at Morib, the beach proved unsuitable for unloading vehicles from L.S.T.s and at 12.30 p.m. brigade headquarters stopped the attempt to get vehicles ashore. On the 10th Port Dickson was occupied and Hawthorn, the divisional commander, landed and met representatives from Force 136. On the 11th Mountbatten, Slim (A.L.F.S.E.A.) and Roberts (XXXIV Corps) visited 25th Division at Klang before it moved inland to Kuala Lumpur, into which XXXIV Corps planned a ceremonial entry on the 13th.<sup>1</sup> Reconnaissance of the beaches south of Port Dickson disclosed that one about a mile north of Cape Rachado was suitable for landing men and vehicles, and the leading troops of the rest of 23rd Division began to land there on the 12th.

To the Royal Navy the Morib beaches afforded 'a convincing example of the most disadvantageous discharge conditions', and were summed up in one word - 'vile'. The beach gradient was so slight that L.C.T.s could dry out only during the spring tides, the transverse and lateral runnels criss-crossing the beaches damaged craft and facilitated neaping and in most places only a foot of soft sand covered muddy sub-soil. A sand bar, running parallel to the beaches a mile off-shore, presented an obstacle over which even minor landing craft could not pass at low water. To overcome these

<sup>1</sup> Since looting had broken out in Kuala Lumpur 25th Division sent in patrols on the 12th to restore order.

problems the American 'transfer system' (used in the Pacific where landings were often made over coral reefs divided by a deep lagoon from the beaches) had to be adopted: supplies were cleared from storeships by L.C.M.s, which then transferred them to L.V.T.s plying on independent courses up to the shore and over the beaches; troops were transferred first from personnel ships to L.C.I.(L)s, augmented by L.C.G.(L)s and L.C.T.(R)s, and then to L.C.A.s which took them ashore; and motor vehicles were landed by L.C.T.s, which then had to wait for the tide to ebb so that they could dry out. A combination of gales and neap tides accentuated the difficulties, and on the 19th the Senior Officer, Force 'W' Build-Up Group, reported that four L.C.T.s and sixteen L.C.M.s had been neaped in a common graveyard for five or six days, but were now refloated. The Morib beaches were closed just before midnight on the 25th September, by which time 44,474 troops, 4,305 vehicles and 11,671 tons of stores had been discharged across them, for the total loss of six landing craft of various kinds.<sup>1</sup>

The Port Dickson beaches presented the navy with no comparable problem since, although beach exits and laterals were disappointing and occasional coral outcrops presented off-shore dangers, the beach gradients and the beaches themselves were almost ideal.<sup>2</sup> By the time they were closed on the 28th September, 19,364 troops, 3,032 vehicles and 14,000 tons of stores had been landed over them.

Despite the chaos on the beaches there is little doubt that, had it been necessary to take Malaya by force of arms, operation 'Zipper' would eventually have achieved its object. The total Japanese forces in northern Malaya seem to have numbered about 26,000, and those in Singapore and Johore about 77,000, including naval, air, *I.N.A.* and administrative troops.<sup>3</sup> They had no air support and were short of munitions and supplies. There would undoubtedly have been severe fighting in Johore and Singapore Island but it could not have lasted long. It is, however, equally certain that, had the Japanese offered any resistance to the landings on the 9th September at Morib and the Sepang beaches north-west of Port Dickson, the invasion forces would have been very roughly handled and at least pinned to the beaches for some time. It is even possible, in view of the chaos depicted and the fact that there were some 6,000 Japanese only about thirty miles away at Kuala Lumpur, that the troops landed on the Morib beaches might have had to be withdrawn. Although it

<sup>1</sup> These figures should be compared with those in Appendix 7 (less those applicable to 5th Division) which give the planned build-up across the beaches up to and including the D+8 convoy, viz. 97,506 troops, 9,157 vehicles and 81,910 tons of stores.

<sup>2</sup> On the 19th it was reported that only one vessel had been neaped at the Port Dickson beaches: an L.S.T. which, beaching smartly at 12 knots in the first L.S.T. assault wave on the 12th, had disappeared into the jungle from which it emerged seven days later, "a small village [having] sprung up under its bows".

<sup>3</sup> See page 266.

was realized that the information about the beaches might not be accurate, a risk was accepted that might have proved unjustifiable had the Japanese opposed the D-day landings with even a few battalions. There would in any case have had to be a quick and sound revision of the plan when it turned out that there was no possibility of the follow-up division being able to land at Morib as planned. Only good generalship could have avoided the delay that would have given the Japanese time to concentrate their available forces to oppose a break-out from the beachheads.

On the 12th September, at a ceremony held in the Municipal Buildings of Singapore City, Admiral Mountbatten accepted the surrender of all the Japanese forces in South-East Asia. A picture of King George VI and the Royal Arms, which had been found hidden in the museum, had been replaced in the Council chambers and the flags of all the Allies had been hung in the hall. Local Chinese guerrillas under their British officers were drawn up in the vestibule, and at each of the eight main pillars stood an armed guard representing the Allied nations. A British airman stood at the door. In the middle of the Council chamber were two long tables six feet apart, one for the Allied delegates and one for the Japanese. In the centre of the former was a raised dais for the Supreme Commander.

Mountbatten, accompanied by the Deputy Supreme Commander (Wheeler), was driven to the ceremony in an open car by a recently released prisoner-of-war through streets lined by sailors and Marines from the East Indies Fleet and was received at the Municipal Buildings by his three Commanders-in-Chief and all the high-ranking Allied officers in Singapore. He then inspected the four guards of honour drawn up in front of the Municipal buildings and mounted by the Royal Navy, the Royal Air Force, Australian paratroops and the Indian Army, while the massed bands of the fleet played 'Rule, Britannia!' and the Royal Artillery fired a seventeen-gun salute.

Admiral Power, General Slim and Air Chief Marshal Park, General Wheeler (representing the U.S.A.), General Leclerc (representing France), Brigadier K. S. Thimayya (representing India), Air Vice-Marshal A. T. Cole (representing Australia), Major-General Feng Yee (representing China), Colonel D. C. Boorman van Vreedon (representing the Netherlands) and Major-General W. R. C. Penney (Director of Intelligence) took their place at the Allied table. Behind them sat the senior naval, military and air force commanders, senior officers of Supreme Headquarters, Generals Carton de Wiart and Gairdner (the representatives of the Prime Minister and Mountbatten in Chungking and at General MacArthur's headquarters respectively), and Sir Archibald Rowlands (representing the

Government of India). In the body of the chamber, behind the table reserved for the Japanese delegates, were some 400 spectators, including released prisoners-of-war and officers of the three Services. Photographers and film teams were on each side and the press filled the galleries. When all there were in position, the Japanese delegates – General Itagaki (*7th Area Army*), General Kimura (*Burma Area Army*), Lieut.-General A. Nakamura (*18th Area Army*), Lieut.-General H. Kinoshita (*3rd Air Army*), Vice-Admiral Fukudome (*1st Southern Expeditionary Fleet*), Vice-Admiral Shibata (*2nd Southern Expeditionary Fleet*) and Lieut.-General Numata (Chief of Staff to Field-Marshal Terauchi, Commander-in-Chief *Southern Army*) entered in silence and took their places. Behind each was an armed officer of the appropriate service as his escort.

The whole assembly rose and Mountbatten, followed by four A.D.C.s representing the three Services and the Indian Army, entered the chamber and moved to the dais, from where he addressed the assembly:

‘I have come here today to receive the formal surrender of all the Japanese forces within the South-East Asia Command. I have received the following telegram from the Supreme Commander of the Japanese forces concerned, Field-Marshal Count Terauchi:

‘The most important occasion of the formal surrender signing at Singapore draws near, the significance of which is no less great to me than to your Excellency. It is extremely regretful that my ill health prevents me from attending and signing it personally, and that I am unable to pay homage to your Excellency. I hereby notify your Excellency that I have fully empowered General Itagaki, the highest senior general in Japanese armies, and send him on my behalf.’

On hearing of Field-Marshal Terauchi’s illness, I sent my own doctor, Surgeon Captain Birt, Royal Navy, to examine him, and he certifies that the Field-Marshal is suffering from the effects of a stroke. In the circumstances I have decided to accept the surrender from General Itagaki today, but I have warned the Field-Marshal that I shall expect him to make his personal surrender to me as soon as he is fit enough to do so.<sup>1</sup>

In addition to our Naval, Military and Air Forces which we have present in Singapore today, a large fleet is anchored off Port Swettenham and Port Dickson, and a large force started disembarking from them at daylight on the 9th September. When I visited the beaches yesterday, men were landing in an endless stream. As I speak there are 100,000 men ashore. This invasion would have taken place on 9th September whether the Japanese had resisted or not. I wish to make this plain; the surrender today is no negotiated surrender. The Japanese are submitting to superior force, now massed here.’

<sup>1</sup> Mountbatten received the personal surrender of Terauchi in Saigon on the 30th November (see page 304). Terauchi surrendered his two swords: a short sword forged in the 16th century, which Mountbatten later presented to King George VI, and a long sword forged in the 13th century.

He then called upon General Itagaki to produce his credentials and read them and the Instrument of Surrender to the assembly.<sup>1</sup> Itagaki, followed by Mountbatten, then signed eleven copies of the Instrument of Surrender, one each for the British, American, Chinese, French, Dutch, Australian, Indian and Japanese Governments, and one each for King George VI, the Supreme Commander and S.E.A.C. records.

After everyone had left the chamber and taken up positions on the terrace outside the Municipal Buildings and the steps leading down from it, Mountbatten moved to the top of the steps and read an Order of the Day (which was read simultaneously to all formations in S.E.A.C.). A Union Jack which had been kept concealed in Changi gaol was hoisted at the saluting base to the strains of the National Anthem, and the ceremony ended with the playing of the National Anthems of all the Allies.

After the surrender ceremony the reoccupation of Malaya proceeded apace. By the 15th September 161st Brigade of 5th Division in Johore Bahru was deploying two battalions northwards to Mersing and Kluang and with its third battalion was holding the naval base area, a second brigade was in the Changi area and the third north of Singapore city. The city, in which there had been some looting, but not by the Japanese whose behaviour was described by Mansergh as 'most correct', was being controlled by the divisional troops of 5th Division. By this time all the Japanese army and air force personnel on Singapore Island, except for some 7,900 (of whom 4,000 were in hospital), had been moved to concentration areas on the mainland in Johore and the remainder, together with all the naval and civilian personnel (except for about 1,000 men left for work in the docks), were being evacuated to north Johore by the Royal Navy. The Japanese estimated that they had supplies for all their troops in the area for three months, but they had little transport and what they had was of poor quality. Approximately 2,500 *I.N.A.* had been disarmed and placed under guard, and all non-British European civilians, other than Germans, had been placed under house arrest, the Germans being sent to prisoner-of-war camps. Japanese, Formosan and Korean civilians had been collected in separate areas, and security and war criminal suspects had been lodged in the civil jail. By the 16th September 18,600 of the 39,000 Allied prisoners and internees found in Singapore and on the mainland had been evacuated by sea and air, and arrangements were in hand to despatch the remainder at the rate of about 2,000 a day.

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<sup>1</sup> For the Instrument of Surrender see Appendix 20.

To the north the ceremonial entry into Kuala Lumpur took place on the 13th after Lieut.-General T. Ishiguro (*29th Army*) had formally surrendered all Japanese forces in Malaya to Lieut.-General Roberts (XXXIV Corps). On the 14th the Japanese forces in the Kuala Lumpur area, over 6,000 strong, paraded under Colonel Aoki and formally surrendered their arms. There were further surrenders at Ipoh on the 16th of a unit with twenty-two tanks and at Kuala Kangsar on the 18th of one with nineteen armoured cars. On the 18th Lieut.-General Nomura, Governor of Perak, and Major-General Oda, commanding the troops in Perak, also formally surrendered with 4,500 men at Bidor.<sup>1</sup>

Meanwhile 23rd Division had taken over the Seremban-Cape Rachado-Port Dickson area, and sent columns south and east to disarm Japanese detachments, take over security measures and gain touch with 5th Division on the northern border of Johore State. Since banditry and fighting between the Chinese and Malays broke out as Japanese troops concentrated for surrender, patrols were sent and flag marches made through the troubled areas in co-operation with Force 136 in an effort to restore confidence and goodwill: none could have foreseen at that time that it was to be more than a dozen years before that was to happen. Nevertheless the reoccupation of Malaya and the surrender of Japanese forces went on with so little trouble that on the 25th September Christison was able to report that the occupation of Malaya was complete.

The occupation forces did not, however, enter the two large states of eastern Malaya, Kelantan (except for Kota Bharu) and Trengganu, which were sparsely populated, nearly devoid of communications and densely forested, and had therefore no Japanese forces permanently located in them. Even in the more developed state of Pahang the occupation forces deployed only along the roads from Raub to Kuantan and to Kuala Lipis.

Since it was required in Java 23rd Division's stay in Malaya was short-lived, and its departure during the last week of September necessitated 25th Division extending its boundary south from Kuala Lumpur and 5th Division from Singapore extending north to link up by mid-October along the north-western boundary of Johore with Malacca and Negri Sembilan. The 5th Parachute Brigade took over Singapore Island from a brigade of 5th Division, which then joined its division in Johore.<sup>2</sup> The garrison of Malaya having been reduced to 5th and 25th Divisions and 5th Parachute Brigade, Slim instructed 14th Army on the 21st September to disband XXXIV Corps Headquarters, prepare XV Corps Headquarters to move elsewhere (its

<sup>1</sup> See Map 2, facing page 63.

<sup>2</sup> The 5th Parachute Brigade, which had been training in India to take part in 'Zipper', landed at Morib on the 17th September but re-embarked the next day for Singapore where it came under command of XV Corps.



destination was Java) and reduce 14th Army Headquarters to command status. The number of air squadrons in Malaya was increased during September to thirteen squadrons and detachments from three other squadrons, and on the 1st October 224 Group R.A.F. became Air Headquarters R.A.F. Malaya.<sup>1</sup>

A matter causing concern to S.E.A.C. at this time was how to reduce the huge number of Japanese surrendered personnel who had to be housed and fed until they could be repatriated. In October 1945 the S.E.A.C. Joint Planning Staff estimated, on figures supplied by the Japanese, that these totalled 680,870 men of whom 125,686 were in Malaya. Since S.E.A.C. had barely enough shipping to move and maintain its own troops, it was evident that their repatriation would have to be done in Japanese ships. It was calculated that, with the shipping that Terauchi could produce, including captured Allied ships, all of which were being demanded back by their original owners, repatriation would take seven years and Malaya was very low on the priority list. Priorities were based on two factors: one was the quick clearance of areas such as French Indo-China and Java for political reasons or because of difficulties in accommodation, and the other was the reduction of the population in areas where food was deficient. Malaya was last in the order of priority in the second category.

Since it was a place where they could be economically administered and from which they could be easily repatriated when shipping became available, it was decided on the 6th October that Japanese forces in Malaya, the Andaman and Nicobar Islands and Sumatra were to be collected on Rempang Island in the Rhio Archipelago at the eastern end of the Strait of Malacca as soon as its 400 or so mainly Dutch inhabitants had been brought to the mainland.<sup>2</sup> By that date 116th Brigade (Brigadier J. A. Salomons), which had been detailed by A.L.F.S.E.A. to reoccupy the Andaman and Nicobar Islands from India, was at sea approaching Port Blair, where it landed without incident on the 7th and took the formal surrender of the Japanese on the 9th October. Allied prisoners and internees were immediately shipped to India.<sup>3</sup> The only difficulties encountered were the clearing of mines (which the navy had to undertake with extemporised equipment and captured Japanese ships), a spell of stormy weather which held up the despatch of troops to the Nicobars until the 17th October, and the need to reinstate hospital and other essential services which, as usual, had been neglected by the

<sup>1</sup> For the outline order of battle of R.A.F. Malaya on the 1st October see Appendix 21.

<sup>2</sup> See Sketch 17, facing page 353.

<sup>3</sup> The Indian sloop *Narbada* and a 'mercy' ship had arrived at Port Blair on the 26th September with supplies and medical stores.

Japanese. By the end of October disarmament was complete; 18,846 Japanese were awaiting evacuation and 186 (later reduced to 112) suspected war criminals were in custody. Evacuation in small captured Japanese steamships to Rempang Island began on the 24th November and was completed by the end of December 1945. On the 6th February 1946 the Government of India resumed control of the Andaman and Nicobar Islands and 116th Brigade came under the control of Eastern Command, India.

Evacuation of Japanese by coastal shipping from Malaya began on the 17th October 1945. By the end of the first week in December some 45,000 had been moved to Rempang Island and about 15,000 retained as labourers in Malaya. At this stage, however, steadily increasing demands for labour began to slow down the evacuation and by the 22nd December it had practically ceased, except for the unfit and sick. At the end of 1945 there were still 40,806 surrendered personnel (excluding war criminals and civilians) in Malaya.

Big changes in the garrison and command structure in Malaya took place in the last three months of 1945. In the second week of October Headquarters XV Corps moved to Java, and in the last week Headquarters 5th Indian Division (Mansergh) and two brigades also moved to Java. On the 24th November its third (161st) brigade followed. The first brigade (4th) of 2nd British Division (Major-General C. G. G. Nicholson), which was to replace 5th Division in Malaya, arrived from India on the 15th November. The first step towards making Malaya the control centre and base of operations in South-East Asia was taken on the 5th November when headquarters of both S.E.A.C. and A.L.F.S.E.A. moved from Ceylon to Singapore.<sup>1</sup> On the 1st November 14th Army (Dempsey) ceased to exist and its headquarters, on a reduced establishment, became Malaya Command located at Kuala Lumpur. On the 8th December Lieut.-General Sir Frank Messervy relieved Dempsey,<sup>2</sup> who became Commander-in-Chief A.L.F.S.E.A. in succession to Slim. Slim then returned to England to re-establish the Imperial Defence College which had been closed during the war. On the 18th 5th Parachute Brigade left Singapore for Java,<sup>3</sup> and was replaced next day by 89th Brigade of 7th Indian Division from Siam. On the 23rd Headquarters 2nd Division and 6th Brigade arrived from India.<sup>4</sup>

With the retention of increased numbers of Japanese as labour to help set up S.E.A.C. and A.L.F.S.E.A. Headquarters and build up Singapore as the maintenance base for S.E.A.C.,<sup>5</sup> it became necessary

<sup>1</sup> See Chapter XXXI.

<sup>2</sup> Messervy had been knighted on the 5th July for services in command of IV Corps during the reconquest of Burma.

<sup>3</sup> See page 339.

<sup>4</sup> The 4th and 6th Brigades of 2nd Division remained in Malaya; 5th Brigade went from India to Japan.

<sup>5</sup> See Chapter XXXI.

to reorganize the Japanese command structure in Malaya. At the end of January 1946, when the handover of French Indo-China to the French took place, *Headquarters Southern Army* was moved from Saigon to Malaya. Lieut.-General Itagaki was appointed Terauchi's deputy and his *7th Area Army Headquarters* at Rengam took over the dual role of commanding all Japanese surrendered personnel in the A.L.F.S.E.A. area and of providing a headquarters for the newly-formed *Japanese Malayan Mainland Army*, *Singapore Force* and *Rhio Army* set up for the control of the Japanese in Malaya and the nearby islands. Each of the *7th Area Army* subordinate headquarters was linked with a formation of Malaya Command from which it received its orders.<sup>1</sup>

Operationally there was little for the British/Indian forces to do once the country had been occupied by the end of September. Initially resistance forces were somewhat troublesome and there was a considerable amount of piracy along the coast but both were dealt with by small land and naval operations. At the end of 1945 and early in 1946 there was bitter fighting between Chinese and Malayan former resistance forces, but no British or Indian troops were involved. By February this died down and its place was taken by political strikes and demonstrations and a gradual increase of armed robbery on the Malaya-Siam border. The story of the strikes appears later in this chapter: the border bandits were dealt with by 7th Division which carried out a three-brigade sweep of the area – a foretaste of the anti-guerrilla operations that were not to come to an end until July 1960.<sup>2</sup>

The problem of re-establishing civil administration in Malaya differed considerably from that in Burma and the Netherlands East Indies, for throughout their occupation the Japanese had not given any definite promises of independence to the Malayan people, and during the three weeks which elapsed between the surrender and the arrival of British troops the Japanese made no attempt to support or set up any Malayan independence régime, but withdrew their troops into the towns where they issued proclamations against looting and did their best to maintain law and order. There is little doubt, however, that a new degree of political consciousness had developed during the Japanese occupation and that a political spirit unknown in the years of colonial rule before 1942 existed. With the withdrawal of the Japanese forces into the towns much of the interior of the country came under the domination of resistance forces and guerrillas. Although the task of establishing firstly a military

<sup>1</sup> See Appendix 22.

<sup>2</sup> Headquarters 7th Division, 33rd and 89th Brigades arrived in Malaya from Siam (see Chapter XXVII) during February. The 74th Brigade of 25th Division came under command.

administration and later a civil government was likely to be far easier than in Burma, there was clearly going to be difficulty in gaining control of the resistance fighters and other politically-minded factions.

Before the war the organization of the Government in the peninsula had been cumbersome and complicated.<sup>1</sup> When planning for the reoccupation, the Colonial Office, in co-operation with the War Office, drew up a new administrative organization and decided to form a Malayan Union, which would include both the Federated and Unfederated Malay States and the Settlements of Penang, Province Wellesley and Malacca, with a strong central authority under a governor and with local authorities representative as far as possible of the principal communities (Malays, Chinese, Indians, etc.) and a separate Crown Colony under its own governor consisting of Singapore Island. This necessitated the surrender by the Sultans of the Malay States of some of their sovereign authority and the negotiation of fresh treaties with them, which could be done only after the reoccupation had been completed.

The Civil Affairs organization was therefore designed to meet these proposed conditions. Under the Chief Civil Affairs Officer (Major-General H. R. Hone, an officer of the Colonial Service) there were to be two Deputy Chief Civil Affairs Officers, one for the Malayan Union (the Mainland Division) and one for Singapore Island. The Mainland Division was sub-divided into nine regional groups corresponding roughly to the eight Malay states (Perlis and Kedah being treated as one and Malacca considered to be part of Negri Sembilan) and Penang with Province Wellesley. These nine regional groups, each under a senior Civil Affairs officer, were subdivided into districts as necessary.

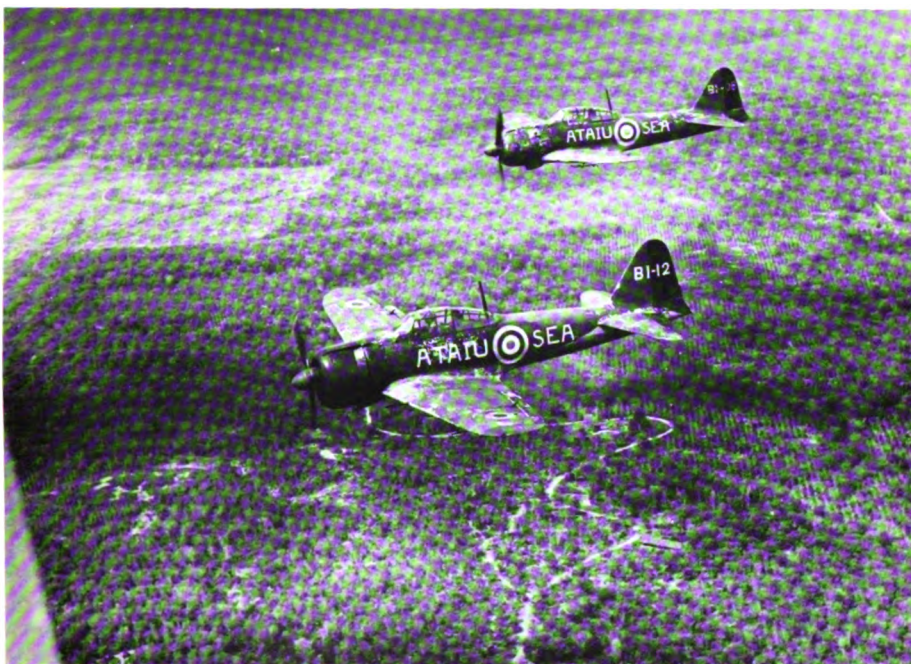
On the 15th August the Supreme Commander issued a proclamation establishing Military Administration throughout Malaya and delegated his powers and responsibilities to Dempsey (14th Army) as General Officer Commanding (designate) Military Forces, Malaya. Civil Affairs detachments were landed with the occupying forces at Penang, Morib and Singapore, and the proclamation establishing Military Administration was publicly posted on the 5th September by Hone who had landed with 5th Division at Singapore. During September the Mainland and Singapore Divisions were set up and senior Civil Affairs officers took control at the capitals of the nine new regions which were to form the Malayan Union, and on Singapore Island. They then began the task of setting up a Military Administration which could be passed to the civil authorities as soon as law and order had been established and the Japanese troops

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<sup>1</sup> See Volume I, page 157.



18. Admiral Lord Louis Mountbatten reading his Order of the Day after the Surrender Ceremony at Singapore. On his right: General Sir William Slim and Admiral Sir Arthur Power; on his left: Lieut.-General R. A. Wheeler and Air Chief Marshal Sir Keith Park.



19. Captured Japanese Zero fighter aircraft over Malaya.





20. Disarmament parade at Kuala Lumpur.



21. Major-General D. D. Gracey and General P. Leclerc.

22. Admiral Lord Louis Mountbatten and Major-General G. C. Evans with the King of Siam.



23. Rear-Admiral C. H. J. Harcourt.





rounded up, disarmed and removed. On the 1st October Dempsey delegated his authority for Military Administration to Hone, and a civil affairs chain of command, separate from the military, was set up. This established two largely independent administrations, one for the Malayan Union and one for Singapore, both subject to Hone's general executive control, and was a first step towards the return of Malaya to civil government.<sup>1</sup>

The country had been thoroughly neglected in every way during the Japanese occupation. Roads were badly in need of repair and many bridges, destroyed in the 1942 campaign or by bombing, had not been rebuilt. Electrical installations, water supply and drainage systems were in many cases unusable. Clothing and all consumer goods and especially rice (which was the staple diet of the population) were in very short supply; hospitals were in most cases short of bedding and other essential items, in particular drugs, and the general standard of health among the population was low. Postal services had ceased and the increased cost of living due to the inflation of Japanese currency had undermined the wages structure.

A resistance organization in Malaya mainly composed of Chinese had been established under the name of Dalforce in 1942 before the fall of Singapore and had fought with courage and determination to the end, suffering heavy casualties.<sup>2</sup> The remnants of this force, who had escaped capture and subsequent execution by the Japanese, became the nucleus of the resistance movement in Malaya together with Force 136 'stay behind' groups. The resistance groups were controlled by the Chinese Malayan Communist Party, which the Japanese failed to stamp out, through two organizations which became known as the Malayan People's Anti-Japanese Army (M.P.A.J.A.), comparable in some ways with the B.N.A. in Burma though it at no time fought alongside the Japanese, and the Malayan People's Anti-Japanese Union (M.P.A.J.U.), comparable to the A.F.O. in Burma. Throughout the Japanese occupation the M.P.A.J.A. had been fostered by Force 136 and in 1945 was well supplied with arms. It numbered some 7,000, mainly Chinese youths and girls, and enjoyed a considerable measure of popular support.

In the early days of the reoccupation the resistance forces helped in some instances to maintain law and order. Unfortunately, before the military administration could be established, some of them took the law in their own hands and in many places had seized police stations, disarmed and displaced the Malay police detachments and begun to terrorize the surrounding country. The seizure of authority

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<sup>1</sup> For details of the activities of the Military Administration in Malaya see Donnison, Chapters VIII and IX.

<sup>2</sup> For Dalforce see Volume I, pages 364 and 371.

by the Chinese guerrillas provoked widespread attacks by Malays on Chinese and this led to inter-racial bitterness.

The immediate problem facing the Military Administration was to gain control of the M.P.A.J.A. guerrillas and to re-establish the authority of the police force, whose morale was very low since it had been neglected to such an extent by the Japanese that it was largely untrained, had practically no equipment or transport or uniforms, and its pay was so far in arrears that its members had been driven by necessity to corruption. It had in places been used by the Japanese to suppress the activities of the M.P.A.J.A. and thus it also bore the stigma of being pro-Japanese.

Plans were quickly put into force to bring the guerrillas under military control with pay, clothing and rations, and a scheme was instituted to pay a lump sum to those willing to hand in their arms and accept disbandment. In November arrangements were made to concentrate guerrillas in a number of centres, where ceremonial parades were held at which British campaign ribbons were issued, arms handed in and gratuities paid out. By December some 6,000 men had been disbanded and some 5,500 weapons handed in. The framework of the M.P.A.J.A. organization however remained, as did the Central Executive of the Malayan Communist Party, and was to cause much trouble to both the Military Administration and the civil Government in the future. The police force was first purged of pro-Japanese members and of unsuitable men recruited during the occupation, and then steps were taken to recruit and train a disciplined force. Recruiting began in December and public confidence in the police force soon revived.

Steps were also taken to restore communications and the postal services, and efforts were made to recreate friendly relations between the Malays and Chinese and instil a sense of civic responsibility, but racial antagonisms continued for some time. The import of rice and consumer goods was handicapped by the lack of shipping available to S.E.A.C., so the improvement in the Malayan economy was slower than had been hoped. As a result discontent with conditions grew and this led to sporadic strikes, mainly in Singapore Island, with demands for higher wages and better conditions. These strikes, which from October 1945 onwards became more frequent, were largely engineered by the Malayan Communist Party through the General Labour Union and culminated in a general strike on the 29th January 1946 and a mass rally and demonstration on the 15th February, the anniversary of the surrender of Singapore to the Japanese, to remind the people of the British defeat in 1942. By this time, however, the police force had been reconstituted and firm action by the force, the arrest of many of the leaders and the eventual deportation of ten alien (non-Malayan born) Chinese Communists,

who were behind the organization of the strikes, soon brought them to an end.<sup>1</sup>

Inter-racial clashes and labour troubles became less frequent after the breaking of the general strike and the demonstration, and a situation was soon reached when Mountbatten was in a position to recommend the restoration of civil Government in both the Malayan Union and Singapore. The Military Administration came to an end on the 1st April 1946 and Mountbatten handed over the responsibilities involved to Sir Edward Gent, who was sworn in as Governor of the Malayan Union, and to Mr. F. C. Gimson as Governor of Singapore.<sup>2</sup>

Since India base was closed on the 1st April and Singapore became the main base for S.E.A.C., Mountbatten had to retain certain overriding powers to enable him to control the base area. A Board of Control under civilian chairmanship, but with representatives of all three Services, was therefore set up to provide machinery to reserve the necessary powers to the Supreme Commander. Its decisions were, however, subject to the right of the Supreme Commander to demand amendments on the grounds of military necessity.

After the re-establishment of civil Government on the 1st April the military forces in the Malayan Union and Singapore under Malaya Command consisted of Singapore District, 2nd Division (less one brigade), 7th Division, 5th Parachute Brigade (returned from Java on relief by Dutch troops) and a few non-divisional fighting units. The total strength, including coast defence units and the Malay Regiment, was about 103,000, of which some 25,000 were British troops.

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<sup>1</sup> For fuller details see Donnison, Chapter XX.

<sup>2</sup> Gimson had re-established British rule in Hong Kong after the Japanese surrender; see pages 284-5.



# KRA ISTHMUS and MALAYA

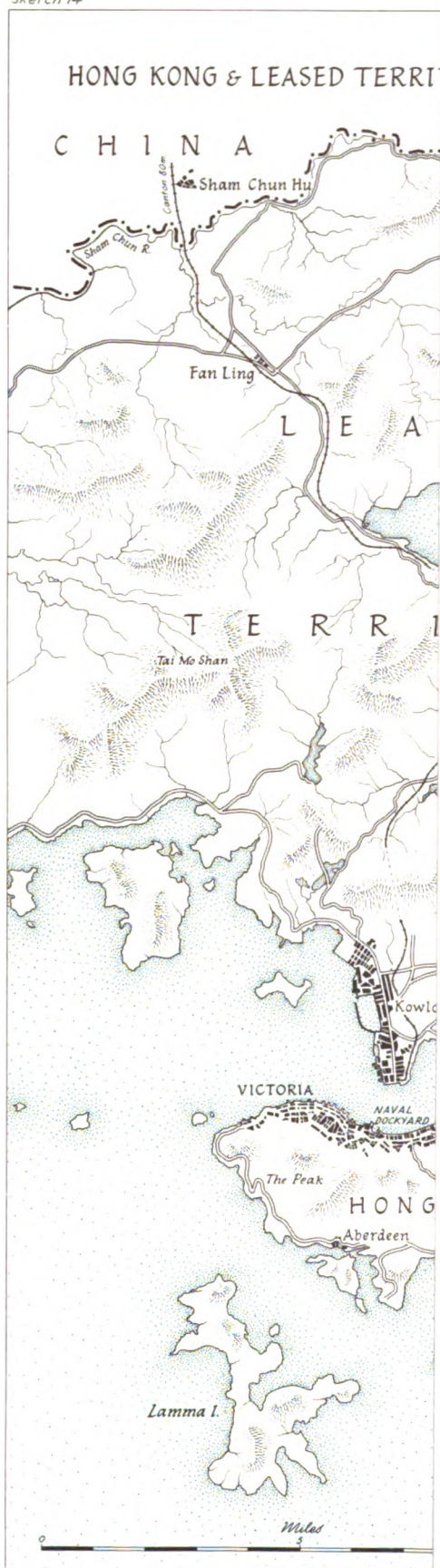


GULF  
OF  
SIAM











## CHAPTER XXVI

# THE REOCCUPATION OF HONG KONG

(August 1945—May 1946)

*See Map 16 and Sketch 14*

WHEN it became evident that the end of the war was imminent, plans were hurriedly made for units of the British Pacific Fleet to move to Hong Kong and proclaim the establishment of military administration pending the restoration of civil government, since the British Government considered it essential that the Japanese there should surrender to the British rather than to Chinese or American forces from the mainland of China. On the 14th August the British Ambassador in Chungking was asked to inform the Chinese of these arrangements to reoccupy Hong Kong and restore its British administration. Chiang Kai-shek protested that they were not in accordance with the General Order issued by the President of the United States on behalf of the Allied Powers to General MacArthur, by which he himself was to accept the surrender of all Japanese forces within China (excluding Manchuria), Formosa and French Indo-China north of latitude 16° North; Hong Kong was part of the China Theatre and not part of the area where the Japanese were to surrender to Mountbatten as Supreme Commander, South-East Asia.<sup>1</sup> After some negotiation, Chiang Kai-shek agreed on the 27th to Rear-Admiral C. H. J. Harcourt (Flag Officer 11th Aircraft Carrier Squadron, British Pacific Fleet) accepting the surrender of the Japanese forces in Hong Kong on behalf of both the British Government and himself as Supreme Commander, China Theatre.

Harcourt was given a task force consisting of the aircraft carriers *Indomitable* and *Venerable*, the cruisers *Swiftsure* and *Euryalus*, the Canadian anti-aircraft ship *Prince Robert*, the submarine depot ship *Maidstone* with eight submarines, four destroyers and six Australian minesweepers, all of which were concentrated at Subic Bay in Luzon.<sup>2</sup> He was also allotted an R.A.F. construction unit (3,000 strong) which, when the war ended, was on its way across the Pacific

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<sup>1</sup> See Appendix 18.

<sup>2</sup> See Map 16, facing page 600.

to Okinawa to construct airfields for British long-range bombers and had reached Manus in the Admiralty Islands.<sup>1</sup> Harcourt sailed from Subic Bay on the 27th August and on the 30th he received his directive as Commander-in-Chief, Hong Kong and head of the Military Administration which he was to set up pending the arrival from the United Kingdom of the Chief Civil Affairs Officer (Brigadier D. M. MacDougall) and a civil affairs staff.<sup>2</sup> For operational purposes he was to come under the direct control of the Chiefs of Staff, and for military administration of the Colony under the War Office. The maintenance of the naval task force was to be the responsibility of the British Pacific Fleet, and that of army and R.A.F. units the responsibility of S.E.A.C.

Instructions had meanwhile been sent from London on the 11th August to the British Ambassador in Chungking asking him, if it were possible, to tell Mr. Gimson (Colonial Secretary in the pre-war Hong Kong Government) that, if he was released from internment on the Japanese surrender and had the opportunity,<sup>3</sup> he should assume the administration of the government of Hong Kong until the arrival of Admiral Harcourt.

Gimson, who had always foreseen that he might have to take charge of the Colony when the Japanese surrendered, had written a report on conditions in Hong Kong after its surrender which he had managed to get delivered to London by the hand of the former Canadian Government Trade Commissioner, who was included in the diplomatic party which was exchanged for Japanese diplomats at Lourenço Marques in Portuguese East Africa in 1942. In this report Gimson said, 'I am endeavouring to line up a number of men loyal to the best interests of the Empire as a nucleus to start reconstruction as soon as the war is over'. During his internment he formed a team of internees who had served in the Colony to act as a nucleus of a civil administration. On the 16th August he was told by the Japanese that, in order to avoid continued loss of life, the Emperor had been graciously pleased to accept the terms of surrender offered by the Allies. Brushing aside protests by Japanese officers, Gimson and the internees he had recruited left Stanley Camp on the 19th, and set up a provisional government on the island (but not in the Leased Territories outside Kowloon) as nearly as possible on the lines of the pre-war civil administration, ordering the Japanese to

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<sup>1</sup> See page 224.

<sup>2</sup> Part of the staff was in the United Kingdom and part in Australia.

<sup>3</sup> Many British, American and Dutch civilians were rounded up in January 1942 but the Japanese did not at first intern Gimson and his staff, the Attorney-General, Head of the Sanitation Department and employees of the Hong Kong and Shanghai Bank but kept them at work under their direction. Gimson and the Attorney-General and their staffs were interned in Stanley Camp in March 1942; the remaining British civilians were interned in July 1942 when the Japanese took over the entire administration of the Colony.

obey any instructions and regulations it proclaimed.<sup>1</sup> The message from the British Ambassador at Chungking giving his administration official authority reached him on the 23rd through clandestine channels.

Gimson found that, although property had been looted and public services had been badly neglected, damage from bombing had been slight, that the railway to Canton could be operated although there was a shortage of rolling stock and locomotives, and that the port was workable although it had suffered from neglect and deterioration. Weak though they were from prolonged malnutrition, Gimson's team, assisted by some 250 members of the former police force and by doctors, nurses and technicians from among the prisoners-of-war and internees, began their task of maintaining law and order and of rehabilitating, despite lack of materials, the neglected public services. There is no doubt that this quick assumption of authority prevented wholesale and wanton looting such as occurred in Singapore between the Japanese surrender and the arrival of British forces, and speeded up the return of the island to orderly government. On the 28th communications had been sufficiently restored to enable Gimson to broadcast to the world that British administration had been re-established in the Colony.

On the 29th August Harcourt with his task force arrived off Hong Kong where he was joined by another task force consisting of the battleship *Anson* and two destroyers under command of Rear-Admiral C. S. Daniel, who had been instructed to place himself under Harcourt's orders. Harcourt then sent a message by wireless to the Japanese commander in Hong Kong informing him that a British aircraft would be landing on Kai Tak airfield at a specified time, and that a Japanese officer should be ready on the airfield to be flown back to the *Indomitable* to receive instructions about the entry of the British Fleet into the harbour. When Gimson, whose staff had seen the arrival of the British Fleet on the horizon, asked his Japanese liaison officer if any message had been received from the British ships, he learnt that the Japanese, on the grounds that they had no authority to negotiate, proposed to reply that the despatch of an aircraft would serve no purpose. Gimson insisted that their reply should state that the aircraft would be met and would return to the carrier with Gimson's personal representative and a Japanese officer. After some hesitation the Japanese sent the messages as directed. Gimson asked Commander D. H. S. Craven R.N. (the pre-war Naval Staff Officer, Operations, at Hong Kong) to undertake the

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<sup>1</sup> See Sketch 14, facing page 283.

journey so that he could tell Harcourt about conditions in Hong Kong, especially the severe shortage of rice and fuel, and warn him of the danger from Japanese suicide craft located at Lamma Island. An Avenger aircraft escorted by Hellcats flew from the *Indomitable* to Kai Tak airfield on the 29th, but on landing burst a tyre. Another Avenger was sent with a spare wheel, and that afternoon Craven and a Japanese representative of the Foreign Relations Department (dressed in an officer's uniform complete with Samurai sword) arrived on the carrier. When he had given information on the location of the minefields and received detailed instructions on what was required of the Japanese commander in Hong Kong, the Japanese representative left to return to the Colony, but by this time the weather had closed in and the aircraft, unable to find Kai Tak or the *Indomitable*, had to make a forced landing in Chinese territory, fortunately with little damage. Chinese who arrived to investigate wanted to kill the Japanese, but the crew insisted he was their prisoner and managed to save his life.

On the morning of the 30th Craven was flown back to Kai Tak with instructions from Harcourt on what he required of the Japanese in preparation for his arrival in the harbour that day, and another aircraft was sent to rescue the Japanese envoy and return him to the Colony. After reporting to Gimson, Craven told the senior Japanese naval officer in Hong Kong that he was to move all Japanese naval officers and ratings from the dockyard area within four hours, an order which the Japanese accepted with bad grace. Preceded by the minesweepers and the destroyer *Kempenfelt* and accompanied by the cruiser *Euryalus*, the *Prince Robert*, the destroyer *Tuscan* and two submarines, Harcourt, who had shifted his flag to the cruiser *Swiftsure* in order to minimize the risk from mines, entered the harbour about midday on the 30th. Landing parties of naval ratings and Marines then occupied the dockyard and removed from it all the remaining Japanese personnel. While the fleet was entering the harbour three of the large number of Japanese suicide craft anchored off Lamma Island left their moorings, but they were immediately attacked and sunk or dispersed by aircraft. The rest of the craft were then bombed and those not sunk beached themselves. The remainder of the fleet entered the harbour before dark. With the exception of some sniping in Victoria, the Japanese offered no resistance and the occupation of the island was completed on the 1st September, all Japanese troops and naval ratings having been moved to the mainland.

Captain J. A. S. Eccles of the *Indomitable*, an interpreter in Japanese, began the task of establishing the military administration to replace the nucleus civil administration, but on the 1st September Gimson proposed that his administration should continue to function and be reinforced by civil affairs officers sent from the United Kingdom.

Gimson's proposal was referred to London, but the War Office insisted that the military administration was to be set up as planned, and the Colonial Office that Gimson and all members of his administration should be relieved as soon as possible and returned to the United Kingdom on leave, a sensible move since, having done an excellent job, they were in no physical condition to carry on much longer.<sup>1</sup> On the 7th Brigadier MacDougall reached Hong Kong with some of his staff, relieved Captain Eccles and continued the task of setting up the military administration and taking over from Gimson's staff so that they could be repatriated. As in the case of Singapore, the main problem faced by the military administration in Hong Kong was the provision of fuel and food. Supplies were taken over from the Japanese, purchased from China and supplemented by the cargoes of the few ships which could be spared for the carriage of supplies to Hong Kong. Nevertheless, although food and fuel were short for a considerable period, there was no acute distress.

The 3,000 R.A.F. technicians arrived from Manus on the 4th September and set to work to help restore the public services throughout the island. On the 11th the convoy carrying 3 Commando Brigade, No. 4 R.A.P.W.I. Control Staff and 132 (Spitfire) Squadron R.A.F. (aboard the carrier *Smiter*) reached the island,<sup>2</sup> and next day Major-General F. W. Festing, who had accompanied the commando brigade, took over the responsibility for both the military administration and the maintenance of law and order from Harcourt. For some time, however, naval shore parties and Marines co-operated with the commandos. The official surrender of the Japanese forces in the Colony took place at Government House on the 16th September when Major-General Okada and Vice-Admiral Fujita signed for the Japanese and then surrendered their swords to Harcourt. Admiral Fraser, the Commander-in-Chief, British Pacific Fleet, who had arrived in the *Duke of York* on the 14th, witnessed the ceremony, as did officers representing Canada, the United States and China.

Repatriation of the 2,770 Allied prisoners-of-war and internees found in the Colony began on the 6th September when the first ship left for Manila, and by the 4th October all but 673, who elected to stay on or were repatriated later, had left, the sick travelling on board the hospital ship *Oxfordshire*. Some 700 British, Dutch and Indian prisoners found on Hainan Island were evacuated to Hong Kong.<sup>3</sup>

The Japanese garrison of Hong Kong appears to have been an independent mixed brigade some 7,000 strong. The total number of

<sup>1</sup> Gimson was later appointed Governor of Singapore; see page 281.

<sup>2</sup> It had passed through the Strait of Malacca with the convoy carrying 5th Division to Singapore; see page 266.

<sup>3</sup> See Map 16, facing page 600.

Japanese who surrendered in the Colony was 21,065, made up of 6,589 army and 4,574 naval personnel fit for duty, 5,966 civilians, 3,826 hospital patients of all categories and 110 suspected war criminals. Their repatriation began on the 19th December when 1,070 servicemen, 230 sick and 500 civilians sailed for Japan. To reinforce 3 Commando Brigade, which had not enough men to occupy the island and the Leased Territories and deal with the evacuation of Chinese forces (who at times caused trouble) as well as the large number of Japanese, advanced parties of 150th Indian Infantry Brigade arrived in Hong Kong in the middle of December 1945 and the whole brigade was concentrated there by the end of January 1946.<sup>1</sup>

As a first step towards returning the Colony to civil government the directive given to Admiral Harcourt on the 30th August authorizing him to set up the military administration was amended on the 17th October so that the Chief Civil Affairs Officer became responsible to the Colonial Office for general rehabilitation over and above that required by the military authorities, while remaining responsible to Festing for local administration and law and order.

The final handover to civil government was delayed by the need to move Chinese troops through Kowloon to ports in north China,<sup>2</sup> and to allow Sir Mark Young, who had been Governor of the Colony when it surrendered in 1941, a prolonged period of rest and recuperation after his years of internment. On the 1st May 1946 he was proclaimed Governor of Hong Kong and the military administration came to an end.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> The 150th Indian Infantry Brigade consisted of Jodhpur Infantry, Travancore Infantry and 1st Jaipur Infantry, all Indian State Forces battalions.

<sup>2</sup> See pages 431-2.

<sup>3</sup> For details of the activities of the military administration see Donnison, Chapter XI.

## CHAPTER XXVII

# THE OCCUPATION OF SIAM AND FRENCH INDO-CHINA (September 1945—May 1946)

*See Map 12 and Sketch 15*

WHEN Japan surrendered, Great Britain was nominally at war with Siam but the United States, which had ignored Siam's declaration of war delivered (without the knowledge of the Regent) to both countries on the 25th January 1942, was not. As a preliminary to the invasion of Malaya in December 1941, the Japanese had occupied French Indo-China under the terms of an agreement they had extorted from the Vichy French Government in July 1941.<sup>1</sup>

Although Great Britain was technically at war with Siam, Force 136 (in collaboration with the American O.S.S.) had for some time been in touch with the Regent who had secretly raised a guerrilla force and had offered to place it at Mountbatten's disposal. Arms and ammunition for this force had been supplied by S.E.A.C. through Force 136 before the war ended. As soon as the Japanese surrendered, the Siamese Government which had declared war on the Allies was overthrown and on the 16th August 1945 the declaration of war was withdrawn. Mountbatten then decided that the time had come to enter into direct negotiation with the Regent and invited the Siamese to send a military mission to Kandy. The mission arrived on the 1st September and a week later an agreement was signed with the result that, when S.E.A.C. forces were flown into Siam early in September, they were warmly welcomed.

The King of Siam returned to his country from Switzerland on the 5th September, and the leader of the Free Siam movement abroad was appointed Prime Minister. What one might call 'the war that never was' did not come to a formal end until the 1st January 1946, since Mountbatten's political adviser, Mr. M. E. Dening, who had been appointed plenipotentiary by the British Government for ending the state of war with Siam, was called away to the Netherlands East Indies to deal with the serious situation which had arisen there.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> See Gwyer, *Grand Strategy, Volume III, Part I* (H.M.S.O., 1964), pages 18 and 130.

<sup>2</sup> See Chapter XXVIII.

The situation in French Indo-China, where a powerful Communist and nationalist resistance movement existed, was very different from that which existed in Siam. French Indo-China consisted of the colony of Cochin-China and four associated protectorates, Tongking, Annam, Laos and Cambodia.<sup>1</sup> The northern half of the country had been overrun by the Japanese in 1940 and the southern half in 1941, when the Vichy French Government agreed to co-operate with them.

The three eastern states, Tongking, Annam and Cochin-China, had a population of about twenty million, of whom about a tenth were Catholics and the rest Taoists or Buddhists. Laos and Cambodia, which formed the western half of the country, were less densely populated. Laos, a wild thickly-forested mountainous country, had a primitive population of about two million, while Cambodia, low-lying and swampy, had a mixed population of about four million of Chinese, Indian and Malayan origin.

Until the 9th March 1945 the French had nominally been in control in Indo-China. On that day, under pretext of an imminent American landing in Indo-China, the Japanese delivered an ultimatum to Admiral J. Decoux, the Vichy French Governor-General, demanding that all French military and police forces were in future to take orders from the Japanese, and gave him two hours in which to reply. Decoux replied that such an order could be accepted only in the event of an American landing taking place, but this was ignored; Decoux was arrested and Japanese troops went into action against the French all over the country.<sup>2</sup> The French were quickly overwhelmed and in some areas were ruthlessly killed after surrendering. Some from Tongking managed to withdraw into China and were sent to India via Chungking, while others in Laos, with the help of the Laotians, managed to hold out in the jungle. The Japanese set up an ostensibly national government under the Emperor Bao Dai, but the local resistance movement refused to have anything to do with it.

In August 1945, when the Japanese surrendered, Tongking and Annam declared themselves a republic under the name of Vietnam. The Emperor Bao Dai of Annam abdicated and the resistance movement, known as the Vietminh (The League for the Independence of Vietnam), became the ruling party under its fiery leader, Ho Chi Minh.<sup>3</sup> The partition of French Indo-China which this declaration brought about was further stabilized by the arbitrary decision of the Potsdam Conference to allot to S.E.A.C. only that part of French

<sup>1</sup> See Map 12, facing page 306.

<sup>2</sup> See Volume IV, pages 229-30.

<sup>3</sup> The Vietminh was formed in south China in May 1941 at a meeting of Indo-China Communists under the chairmanship of Ho Chi Minh. It sent agents into Indo-China to raise guerrillas, and by 1945 had some 10,000 men under arms.



Indo-China which lay south of the 16th parallel.<sup>1</sup> The area to the north of it was left to the Chinese, which in effect meant that the Vietminh under Ho Chi Minh's leadership was in control and took the surrender of the Japanese forces in that area.

The French force which had held out in Laos re-established control without difficulty but its success was short-lived: when Chiang Kai-shek's forces arrived in north Laos in mid-September, they disarmed all French troops and moved them to India through China. The Vietminh also began to organize a movement in the southern area allotted to S.E.A.C. to resist British forces sent to round up the Japanese and French troops attempting to reoccupy the country. This was the explosive situation which existed when General Gracey with a handful of troops and the Allied Control Commission arrived in Saigon on the 13th September 1945.

The story of the uneventful occupation of Siam which follows may cause the reader to wonder why the Japanese garrison remained inactive there while *Burma Area Army* was being destroyed in Burma.

Until the end of 1944 the importance of Siam to the Japanese lay at first in its being the base of operations for the invasion of Malaya and Burma at the end of 1941, and subsequently for the building and maintenance of the railway into Burma which they hoped would enable the long sea line of communication by way of Singapore and the Strait of Malacca to be abandoned or at least reduced in importance.<sup>2</sup>

In consequence Japan had done all she could to ensure the friendship of the Siamese Government by allowing it to annex the Shan States of Kengtung and Mongpan in Burma, by forcing the Vichy Government to cede to it territory in Cambodia and Laos, and finally by 'giving' Siam the four northern states of Malaya. This munificence recoiled on Japan when it became clear that her defeat was inevitable, since Siam then realized that the possession of these territories would be embarrassing and might result in reprisals by both Britain and France. No doubt it was for this reason that, on the first opportunity, Siam secretly offered co-operation and support to Mountbatten and welcomed his clandestine forces, a policy which had the full support of the Siamese people who cordially disliked their so-called allies who had occupied the country.

When at the end of 1944 the Japanese lost the Philippines, which were the operational base for their forces defending the south-western approaches to Japan, the importance of Siam and French

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<sup>1</sup> See pages 224-5. The natural division of the country ran from north to south, not east to west.

<sup>2</sup> See Volume II, pages 427-8.

Indo-China was enhanced and they became operational areas. On the 8th December 1944 Field-Marshal Count Terauchi was ordered to reorganize the Siam garrison as a mobile army, which came into being as *39th Army*. It was immediately reinforced by *4th Division* from Sumatra (less its two battalions which had recently taken part in the Battle of Imphal),<sup>1</sup> and by two battalions of *24th I.M.B.* from Burma.

As Japanese reverses increased so did the clandestine activities of the Free Siam movement, and it was not long before the Japanese began to suspect that Siamese military and police forces were preparing to revolt, a suspicion increased by the rumoured existence of secret airfields through which Allied clandestine forces were being infiltrated and supported. Pressure on the Siamese Government to deal with these in accordance with their treaty obligations was, however, ineffective, as officials denied all knowledge of their existence. The loss of Rangoon in May 1945 and the disintegration of *Burma Area Army* brought matters to a head. An invasion of Siam by air-transported forces using the secret airfields was then expected, and reinforcements from French Indo-China were brought in. The *37th Division*, on its way from French Indo-China to Malaya, was delayed by lack of transport and the bulk of it was still in Siam in the Bangkok area when the war ended.<sup>2</sup>

On the 10th June 1945 *39th Army* began to tighten its hold on Siam. Unwanted airfields were put out of action, defences were prepared at Bangkok and Lampang and measures were taken to protect key roads. As a result Siamese military and police forces became more co-operative. In July the whole command structure was changed: *39th Army* was up-graded and became *18th Area Army* (Nakamura), and during August and September it was joined by *15th Army Headquarters* with the remnants of *15th*, *56th* and *53rd Divisions* from Burma.

An outline plan for the occupation of Siam (operation 'Bibber') and French Indo-China (operation 'Masterdom'), prepared by the S.E.A.C. Joint Planning Staff, was issued on the 31st August and in it the sequence of events was set out:

- (i) Two hospitals for R.A.P.W.I. were to be flown into Bangkok on the 3rd and 4th September.
- (ii) One infantry brigade group of 7th Division, 207 Military Mission and an R.A.F. component consisting of elements of 20 and 211 Squadrons were to be flown into

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<sup>1</sup> See Volume IV, page 451.

<sup>2</sup> See page 75.

Bangkok, the move beginning on the day 5th Division landed at Singapore.

(iii) One infantry brigade group of 20th Division, an Allied Control Commission and an R.A.F. air component consisting of elements of 28 and 684 Squadrons were to be flown into Saigon through Bangkok.

(iv) The rest of 7th Division was to be flown into Bangkok, its vehicles being moved by sea.

(v) The rest of 20th Division was to be moved to Saigon by sea.

(vi) The 26th Indian Division was to be moved to Bangkok by sea, if required.

In all, the operations involved the move of 26,684 men and 2,340 vehicles to Bangkok,<sup>1</sup> and 25,748 men and 2,400 vehicles to Saigon.<sup>2</sup>

The movement and maintenance of the forces in Siam and French Indo-China were to be the responsibility of the R.A.F. until sea communications to Bangkok and Saigon could be established. Five R.A.F. transport squadrons, each of twenty Dakotas, were allotted to the task and based on Mingaladon and Hmawbi airfields in the Rangoon area. There were, fortunately, airfields at Bangkok (Don Muang) and Saigon (Ton San Nhut) which could cope with up to 100 sorties a day, but in calculating deliveries it was estimated that until mid-November, owing to bad weather, flying would not be possible one day out of three.

The tasks of the Allied forces sent to the two countries were to an extent similar: in Siam they were there to deal with Japanese troops and rescue prisoners and internees; and in French Indo-China they were there to disarm all Japanese south of the 16th parallel and rescue prisoners and internees, while the Allied commander, Gracey, was to exercise control over *Headquarters Southern Army* in Saigon on behalf of Mountbatten, issue his orders to Terauchi and see them carried out. But there the similarity ended. Since the Siamese had agreed to place their armed forces at Mountbatten's disposal, there was no question of military occupation of their country: the S.E.A.C. forces in Siam were there merely to help a friendly country get rid of surrendered invaders and repatriate prisoners held by them. In French Indo-China, on the other hand, the S.E.A.C. forces, in addition to dealing with the Japanese and rescuing prisoners and internees, were there to keep order pending

<sup>1</sup> R.N. Port Party: 140 men and 30 vehicles; 7th Division and attached troops: 24,473 men and 1,996 vehicles; R.A.F.: 1,931 men and 303 vehicles; 207 Military Mission: 130 men and 11 vehicles; Public Relations: 10 men.

<sup>2</sup> R.N. Port Party: 140 men and 30 vehicles; 20th Division and attached troops: 22,287 men and 2,036 vehicles; one company Special Air Service 5th French Colonial Infantry Regiment: 178 men and 4 vehicles; one light commando 5th French Colonial Regiment: 623 men and 10 vehicles (from Ceylon); S.A.C.S.E.A. Control Commission: 260 men, Public Relations: 10 men; R.A.F.: 2,250 men and 320 vehicles.

the arrival of the French, but the country had declared its independence and was therefore hostile. There was no question of Allied troops being used to reconquer the country for the French, and Gracey was instructed not to occupy more of it than was necessary for his task:<sup>1</sup> the reoccupation of the whole of the country was to be carried out in a second phase of operations by French forces with their own civil affairs representatives. In these circumstances it was probable that Gracey's task would involve fighting, and in spite of every effort to avoid them clashes with Vietminh forces did occur.

Early in the morning of the 3rd September the advanced party of 7th Division (Evans) flew from Hmawbi airfield in Burma to Don Muang (Bangkok), where it was received by high-ranking Siamese officials and a guard of honour.<sup>2</sup> With the ready co-operation of the Siamese authorities R.A.P.W.I. set to work at once, while Headquarters 7th Division set up the staging post for 20th Division and the Allied Control Commission, which was to move to Saigon, and began planning for the reception of the rest of 7th Division. Two days later Lady Mountbatten and General Thompson arrived in Bangkok and set out to see conditions in the prisoner-of-war and internee camps.<sup>3</sup>

Until suitable accommodation became available in Bangkok Evans set up his headquarters at Don Muang airfield, and on the afternoon of the 3rd called a conference to be attended by representatives of *18th Area Army*. As there was no accredited representative of the Japanese Commander-in-Chief available, Evans took note of the forces controlled by *18th Area Army* and gave orders that an accredited representative of Field-Marshal Terauchi was to be attached at once to his headquarters to carry out his orders to the Japanese forces in Siam. Daily conferences were held at which Japanese representatives were given orders and produced information about the strength and distribution of their forces. On the 5th September orders were given to *18th Area Army* in the name of Mountbatten that all Japanese troops, except for those employed in maintaining essential services, were to be confined to their billets and that a report was to be prepared at once showing the numbers, types and location of all wireless sets down to regimental level and of telephone switchboards down to divisional level.

<sup>1</sup> See the Chiefs of Staff directive to Mountbatten, page 229, paragraph (c).

<sup>2</sup> The advanced party (1,250 strong) consisted of Headquarters 7th Division, 207 Military Mission (Brigadier A. T. Wilson-Brand), an infantry company from 114th Brigade, Headquarters 455 Sub-Area, a forward airfield maintenance organization (F.A.M.O.), a hospital, a field ambulance, Engineer and Signal detachments, welfare and supply units, and advanced units of Force 136, No. 5 R.A.P.W.I. Control Staff and the Red Cross. With it went 180 tons of stores, mainly for R.A.P.W.I.

<sup>3</sup> See pages 248-9.

On the 6th, 114th Brigade (in the absence of Dinwiddie temporarily commanded by Colonel Kalwant Singh) began to arrive by air and during the next three days, as its units joined it, took over the protection of Don Muang airfield and guards and duties in Bangkok. At the same time Brigadier Wilson-Brand, commander of the military mission, assisted by a major-general of the Siamese army, a representative of 18th Area Army and a staff officer from 7th Division, prepared a plan for the concentration of Japanese troops and the siting of dumps for surrendered arms and ammunition. On the 8th Evans issued detailed orders for putting it into effect.

The country was divided into eleven concentration areas,<sup>1</sup> each centred on a town containing a Japanese headquarters of some sort which was to be responsible for disarming all troops in its area, collecting them in camps and mounting guard over dumps of surrendered warlike stores pending the arrival of Siamese or Allied troops.<sup>2</sup> Disarming was to begin at once, and some 16,000 disarmed troops from Bangkok were to move immediately to the nearest concentration centres, leaving only detachments required by the local Allied commander for essential working parties. Siamese troops were to take over the barracks and billets evacuated.

It had been intended to fly in 33rd Brigade of 7th Division about the middle of September, but bad weather and heavy calls for urgent movement of supplies held up its arrival and that of 89th Brigade until well into October. Nevertheless the disarming and concentration of Japanese forces progressed steadily, and by the 1st October about 84,000 had been disarmed and some 49,000 had been moved into the concentration areas despite an acute shortage of transport, since none of 7th Division's vehicles had arrived and only Japanese transport (which was in very poor condition) was available. The military mission ensured that the Japanese handed over their arms and ammunition dumps to Siamese forces, to whom Force 136 also handed over all that it collected in outlying areas.

On the 19th September 18th Area Army submitted a detailed order of battle of Japanese forces in Siam. The major units in the country were 4th, 15th, 22nd, 33rd, 37th and 56th Divisions, 72nd Independent Mixed Brigade and 1st Air Service Corps. The 4th and 22nd Divisions had only two regiments each and the 33rd with all its ancillary units was only 6,000 strong. No figures were available for the 15th, which was probably, in view of its previous history, even weaker.<sup>3</sup> The 72nd

<sup>1</sup> The eleven concentration centres were Chiangmai, Lampang, Nakon Sawang, Kanchan Buri, Phet Buri, Ban Pong, Nakhon Pathom, Lop Buri, Sara Buri, Nakhon Nayok and Ubon. See Map 12, facing page 306.

<sup>2</sup> Guards were not to exceed two officers and thirty-two other ranks for each battalion or equivalent dump; arms were limited to one pistol per officer and one rifle for each four other ranks.

<sup>3</sup> It had been virtually destroyed at Imphal and again at Mandalay; see Volumes III and IV.

*I.M.B.* had nearly 6,000 men and *1st Air Service Corps* had over 7,000. The total strength of *18th Area Army*, excluding *15th Division* and some minor units, was given as 105,098. Apart from these 'surrendered personnel' there were about 1,100 prisoners-of-war, mainly officers and men suspected of war crimes, members of the *Kempei Tai* and *Hikari Kikan* and staffs of prisoner-of-war camps.<sup>1</sup> To take charge of these and of the *I.N.A.* and Japanese labour, a special organization was set up under Colonel Kalwant Singh.

In an operation instruction of the 28th September Allied Land Forces Siam summarised the tasks in hand, which were to ensure the security of Don Muang airfield, disarm, concentrate and hold all Japanese forces, keep a check on all surrendered arms and warlike stores, evacuate all Allied prisoners-of-war and internees and co-operate with the Siamese Government in the preservation of law and order. To implement this, 33rd Brigade, on arrival between the 10th and 23rd October, was to take over the western area comprising Nakhon Pathom, Ban Pong, and thence westwards along the railway from Bangkok to Moulmein – the notorious 'Death Railway'; 89th Brigade, on arrival between the 6th and 10th October, was to take over Bangkok and relieve 114th Brigade, which was then to take on the area north and east of Bangkok, comprising Nakhon Nayok, Sara Buri and Lop Buri; and 7th Divisional Artillery was to take over the northern area consisting of Ubon, Nakon Sawang, Lampang and Chiangmai.

These widely separated concentration areas were necessary at the outset in order to control the concentration of the many detachments of Japanese troops scattered all over Siam. By mid-November preliminary concentrations were complete and further concentration had begun of all surrendered Japanese into four areas near Bangkok, ready for repatriation when shipping became available. During this phase, which lasted into December, the only disturbances were an isolated raid by armed dacoits on a brigade workshop section at Ban Pong and some looting on the Burma-Siam railway. To deal with the security of the railway some 2,700 Japanese were rearmed and patrolled it under their own officers, the Japanese being used since it had already been decided to reduce Allied forces in Siam and hand over responsibility for Japanese forces awaiting repatriation to the Siamese Government. On the 10th December 1945 7th Division began to move to Malaya. On the 26th January 1946 Headquarters Allied Land Forces Siam was replaced by Headquarters British Troops Siam and 455 Sub-Area was abolished. By the end of the month only 114th Brigade of 7th Division with a proportion of

<sup>1</sup> The *Hikari Kikan* was the Japanese intelligence and sabotage organization, one of its tasks being the control of the *I.N.A.*

divisional troops remained in the country.<sup>1</sup> On the 19th January 1946 a British inter-Service parade and victory march was held in Bangkok, at which the King of Siam took the salute.

From January to April the concentration of surrendered Japanese troops in southern Siam and the repatriation of prisoners-of-war, internees and displaced persons continued,<sup>2</sup> and European and Indonesian Dutch who were fit for military service were trained and organized for operations in the Netherlands East Indies. In April the last brigade of 7th Division (114th) moved to Malaya and, apart from supply, transport, medical and welfare units, the only Allied troops left in Siam were 1st Queen's Royal Regiment, 13th Frontier Force Rifles M.G. Battalion and a detachment of Indian Engineers. Newly-formed Headquarters British Troops Siam (Brunskill) kept a close watch on the activities of the Indian Independence League in Siam, which was trying to form an Indian National Volunteer Force,<sup>3</sup> and on the situation on the border with French Indo-China, where the Siamese were resisting attempts by the French to reoccupy the areas ceded to Siam under orders from the Japanese in 1941.

With the release by General MacArthur of ships for the return of Japanese surrendered personnel, repatriation, excluding suspected war criminals and persons wanted for interrogation, began from Siam in May and by the end of the month over 25,000 had been evacuated, leaving 85,647 still to be dealt with. These were despatched without incident during the next few months,<sup>4</sup> and in September 1946 the last Allied troops left Siam.

When 20th Division was preparing to move from Burma to Saigon in September 1945 it was believed that there were about 71,000 Japanese in French Indo-China, including 9,000 air force, 5,000 naval and 17,000 administrative personnel. This figure, however, included 21st and 22nd Divisions, each about 13,000 strong, but the former was in north Indo-China with Headquarters 38th Army, and the latter had moved to Siam.<sup>5</sup> The 34th Independent Mixed Brigade (2,300) was in east central Indo-China with its headquarters at Turan close to the 16th parallel and it was therefore likely that some of its troops would be in the Chinese area of the country. The only

<sup>1</sup> The command of 7th Division (less 114th Brigade) in Malaya passed to Major-General O. de T. Lovett on the 7th February. Evans, who had commanded 7th Division with distinction since December 1944, handed over command in Siam to Major-General G. Brunskill on the 22nd February and went on leave to the United Kingdom.

<sup>2</sup> Displaced persons included labourers impressed for work on the Burma-Siam railway. Of the estimated total of 270,000 who worked on the railway only about 30,000 were traced and repatriated.

<sup>3</sup> Bangkok had been the headquarters of the Japanese-sponsored Free India movement.

<sup>4</sup> See Appendix 27.

<sup>5</sup> See page 295.

reliable figure, obtained later, was of the force in the Saigon-Cholon area (17,000) consisting of *Headquarters Southern Army* (1,500), *Rear Headquarters 38th Army* (500), *2nd Division* (8,000) and non-divisional troops (7,700). In addition there was *Headquarters 55th Division* with one regiment (about 1,000 strong) in Cambodia. The 9,000 air force personnel were presumably scattered all over Indo-China on its thirty-five airfields, while the naval forces were probably approximately equally divided between north and south at Hanoi and Saigon.

North of the 16th parallel the responsibility for disarming the Japanese and maintaining law and order until the arrival of the French rested with Generalissimo Chiang Kai-shek, and already a large Chinese Nationalist force was on its way to Tongking and Laos. There had for some time been disagreement between Wedemeyer (Chiang Kai-shek's adviser and Commanding-General American Forces in China) and S.E.A.C. Headquarters over clandestine operations in north Indo-China, and Wedemeyer had told S.E.A.C. at the end of August that its clandestine forces should not operate north of the 16th parallel.

In north Indo-China the Chinese, as recorded earlier, disarmed the French who had escaped destruction by the Japanese when they took over power in the country. In south Indo-China the only French force available consisted of about 1,200 armed police, who had been raised mostly from among prisoners-of-war and internees released since the Japanese surrender and were therefore inadequately trained. They were also found to be liable to cause trouble by intemperate action. The first French reinforcement was a company of 5th Colonial Regiment from Ceylon which was flown in with the leading elements of 80th Brigade of 20th Division, but the combined French and British/Indian force was still inadequate to maintain law and order and at the same time disarm the Japanese, particularly as serious trouble with armed Annamites broke out within a few days of the arrival of the Allied Control Commission. Instead of being disarmed, the Japanese in south Indo-China were therefore required to maintain law and order until the arrival of an adequate French or S.E.A.C. force.

The first move into south Indo-China took place on the 8th September when a small advanced party consisting of engineer and medical reconnaissance detachments and No. 3 R.A.P.W.I. Control Staff, complete with a pay office, landed at Tan Son Nhut airfield near Saigon. Warning of its arrival had been given and the party was met and given all the necessary facilities. The next day it reported that water, lighting and sanitation in Saigon were in working order, that the airfield had two landing strips – one 1,700 yards and one 1,250 yards long (in process of being extended by the



Japanese to 2,000) – and that there were standings for up to seventy Dakota aircraft.

On the 13th Gracey flew in with the Allied Control Commission (533 strong) after which the move of 80th Brigade of 20th Division began, but it was so often interrupted by bad weather that it was the 26th September before the whole brigade and 273 Spitfire Squadron was assembled.<sup>1</sup> The situation in the country was explained to Gracey by Colonel J. Cedile,<sup>2</sup> representing General Leclerc (Commander-in-Chief designate of the French Expeditionary Forces in the Far East), who told him of the abdication of the Emperor of Annam in favour of a provisional Vietnam Republican Government on the 10th August, and said that there had been a moderately serious anti-French riot on the 2nd September, since when law and order had practically ceased to exist, for the Japanese had done little to maintain it and the Annamite Government turned a blind eye to the pillaging of French property.

By the 17th attacks on French and other Europeans by Annamites had broken out on a considerable scale and Gracey decided he must intervene. He had already, early in September, sent a strongly-worded order to Terauchi reminding him of his responsibilities and requiring him to take immediate action to ensure law and order in Saigon, and to arrest and hand over to the Allied Control Commission any local inhabitants concerned in outrages, but there had been little improvement. On the 19th Gracey therefore took drastic action. He stopped the publication of Saigon papers, all of which had been stirring up trouble, and sent an officer deputation to the puppet President ordering him to stop requisitioning buildings, return some of those already requisitioned, furnish a list of Annamite Armed Police and other forces of the Vietminh with their present locations, and order them to remain where they were until further orders. With the order he sent a copy of a proclamation which he proposed to issue on the 21st. This forbade demonstrations, processions and public meetings, prohibited the carrying of arms, including sticks and staves, except by Allied troops and forces specially authorized to do so by himself, gave warning that wrongdoers would be summarily shot and extended the curfew already imposed on his instructions by the Japanese.

The immediate result of Gracey's action was a general strike of Annamite labour, but it also brought a conciliatory acknowledgement of his order and proclamation from the 'Executive Committee of the Southern Vietminh' which said that it would try to persuade the people to accept them, but asked that the Saigon Press should be allowed to renew publication subject to its censorship so that its

<sup>1</sup> Ten Mosquitos of 684 Squadron arrived in the first week of October.

<sup>2</sup> Cedile had been parachuted north of Saigon on the 22nd August.

instructions could be promulgated and order restored. Gracey sent the text of his order and proclamation to Mountbatten on the 21st, adding that, although it might appear that he had interfered in the politics of the country, his action had been taken in the interests of law and order and in close collaboration with the French authorities in Saigon. To have ordered the Japanese to round up and disarm Annamite forces would, he said, have resulted in the disappearance of wanted persons. The French had insufficient troops to do it and, had he allowed them to try, bitter fighting would have been the result.

Gracey's boldness in issuing an ultimatum with so few troops to back it up and his firmness in dealing with the Vietminh leaders achieved considerable success and kept the situation under control. He ensured that his orders would be obeyed by occupying vital installations in the city with the few troops of 80th Brigade then available, and by ordering Cedile on the 23rd to take over the administration of Saigon. The Vietminh forces retaliated by attacking the power, radio and water stations but were driven off with loss. Gracey could, however, do nothing to break the roadblocks they set up in the Saigon-Cholon area.<sup>1</sup>

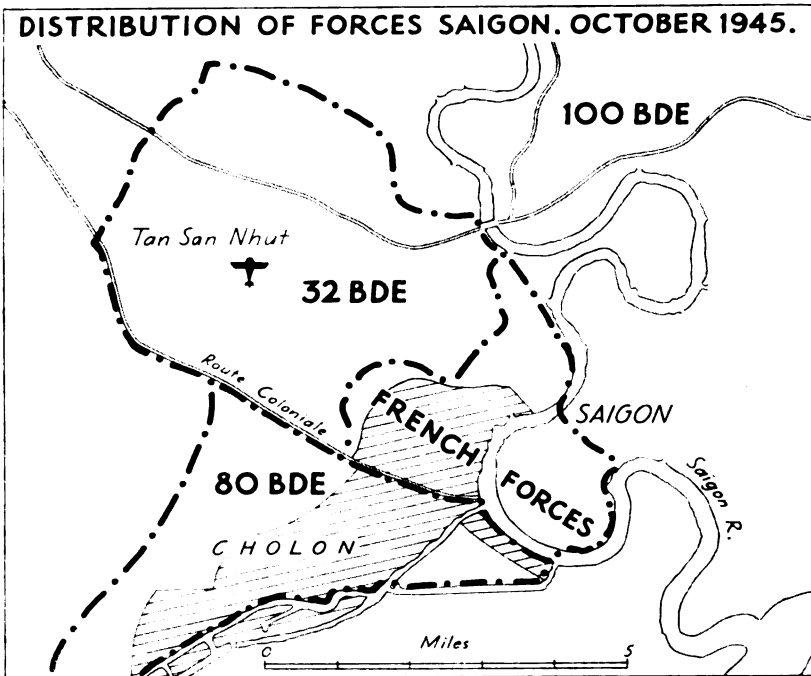
Mountbatten was quick to realise that the action taken was not only courageous but sound and, after discussion with Slim, assured Gracey of his support but told him that he was not to use his own troops outside the Saigon-Cholon area. On the 24th September he told the Chiefs of Staff that he considered Gracey's action should be supported but either that he (Mountbatten) should be authorized to retain responsibility for civil and military administration throughout south Indo-China, using a whole British/Indian division to enforce it, or that the French Government should authorize General Leclerc to reaffirm the proclamation in the name of the French Republic and take over the exercise of civil and military authority except in key areas. This, however, Leclerc was not willing to do until he had adequate forces. The nearest French reinforcements at this time were 5th Colonial Regiment (less one company) about 1,000 strong in Ceylon, and the Far Eastern Brigade, which was in Madagascar. The former was about to move to French Indo-China but Leclerc did not wish to bring in the Far Eastern Brigade until one of the two colonial divisions (3rd and 9th), earmarked for French Indo-China but still in Europe, had arrived. It was quite evident, therefore, that it would be some time before any decisive action by the French could take place.

By the 26th September the Annamites, perhaps encouraged by the failure of the Japanese to enforce law and order, had become more

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<sup>1</sup> See Sketch 15, page 301.

Sketch 15



aggressive. Abduction of French men and women, terrorism and murder were taking place without hindrance, and, on some occasions, within view of Japanese troops. Nothing was being done to prevent the establishment of roadblocks or to deal with mobs attempting to sabotage the power, water and radio stations. In consequence, armed gangs of saboteurs and rioting mobs had clashed with troops of 80th Brigade guarding vital points, who had dispersed them and inflicted severe losses.<sup>1</sup> That day Gracey sent for Terauchi and at a plenary session of the Control Commission reminded him, in the name of the Supreme Commander, of his obligations in regard to keeping law and order, ordered him to restore it immediately and to clear all roadblocks on the roads north from Saigon. He was also told to live in his headquarters at Saigon and establish a 24-hour officer liaison service at Control Commission Headquarters. Terauchi expressed his regrets and matters thereafter improved.

In reporting the situation to Mountbatten, Gracey said that he proposed to deal with it by keeping the northern approaches to Saigon clear with Japanese troops, and the roads to Cholon and the south with his own as they became available. Meanwhile he was reopening the Saigon market and urging the French to make use of Saigon Radio to broadcast the liberal policy which they had drawn

<sup>1</sup> Sixty were killed and many wounded.

up. He asked Mountbatten to accelerate the arrival of the rest of 20th Division and of good, well-commanded French forces since the situation was beyond Cedile's control. On the 29th September Mountbatten told the Chiefs of Staff that the early arrival of the French 9th Colonial Infantry Division was more important than ever. Two days later he authorized Gracey to use his Spitfires against roadblocks hampering the maintenance and movement of 20th Division (the headquarters of which left Rangoon by sea for Saigon that day) in key areas, but said that he must drop warning leaflets at least two hours beforehand on any position that was to be attacked.

Gracey, who had meanwhile been trying unsuccessfully to arrange an armistice for discussions between the French and the Vietminh, was summoned with Cedile to a conference with Mountbatten at Singapore on the 28th at which it was impressed on Cedile that negotiations with the Vietminh must take place soon. Later the same day Mountbatten, Slim and Gracey discussed the situation with the Secretary of State for War (The Rt. Hon. J. J. Lawson),<sup>1</sup> who was visiting British troops in India and S.E.A.C., and, since Gracey said he would need a whole division to carry out his tasks in the vast Saigon area, Mountbatten gave orders for the build-up of 20th Division to continue. On the 1st October the Chiefs of Staff told Mountbatten that there was little prospect of accelerating the move of French forces and that they expected 9th Colonial Division to arrive at the end of December, by which time the French would have sufficient forces of their own in the country to be able to take over responsibility for it. They therefore agreed that he should build up his force to a full division and be prepared to keep it in Indo-China until the end of the year. Since they considered that firm British control of the Saigon area might be sufficient to enable small French forces to establish law and order in other parts of the country, the primary responsibility of the British force should be to maintain that control, although assistance could be given to the French in the interior as far as was practicable without prejudicing its responsibility. The next day, with his hand strengthened by this and the fact that the whole of 80th Brigade was now in Saigon, Gracey was able to get a four-day armistice declared while discussions took place between the French and the Vietminh under his auspices. In spite of an extension until the 8th October discussions were fruitless owing to the extremist demands of the Vietminh leaders who, in any case, seemed to have no control over their own forces which were breaking the armistice whenever it suited them to do so.

The build-up of Allied forces had, however, at last begun. On the 5th October General Leclerc arrived in Saigon by air, and on the

<sup>1</sup> Mr. Lawson succeeded Sir James Grigg when the Labour Government came to power at the end of July 1945.

same day 5th Colonial Regiment completed disembarkation. Two days later Main Headquarters 20th Division and 32nd Brigade began to arrive, and were followed by 100th Brigade between the 14th and 17th, thus completing 20th Division, which also had 16th Light Cavalry (armoured cars) under command. Between the 13th and the 16th 1,328 officers and men of the French Combat Command 2nd Armoured Division arrived by sea, while 500 reinforcements for 5th Colonial Regiment and another 1,000 men of the armoured division sailed from Marseilles. The 9th Colonial Infantry Division, 14,000 strong, was due to leave Marseilles in eight ships on the 23rd October, followed by the Madagascar Brigade which, with reinforcements from France, was about 2,000 strong. There was as yet no indication when 3rd Colonial Infantry Division and a French army headquarters could be expected.

The Vietminh forces were estimated in October to consist of 5,200 moderately well-armed regulars and 12,000 guerrillas, all but 300 of the regulars and slightly less than half the guerrillas being in or near Saigon.<sup>1</sup> Their fighting value was said to be low in spite of the fanatics among them; nevertheless between the 10th and 21st October British, French and Japanese forces maintaining law and order lost twenty-three killed and forty-six wounded, many as a result of well-laid ambushes.

The arrival of British/Indian and French reinforcements made it possible to begin relieving Japanese troops so that they could be disarmed and concentrated for repatriation. It was also decided to send a small force to take charge in Cambodia, and a British officer,<sup>2</sup> with a small personal escort, was sent from Saigon to Phnom Penh (the capital) on the 9th October to take command of Allied and Japanese troops in the country, maintain law and order, ensure the stability of the Cambodian Government in accordance with a directive issued by Leclerc and disarm all Annamite troops and police in the Phnom Penh area. Two companies of French troops followed and two more were kept in readiness in Saigon to be flown in if necessary.

There was no trouble since the Cambodian Government was co-operative,<sup>3</sup> and Lieut.-General Sakuma, commanding *55th Division*, and Lieut.-General Hatori, commanding *5th Air Division*, both reported to Headquarters Allied Land Forces, Phnom Penh to receive orders. It was not long, however, before agitation began, and since it was suspected that the Prime Minister was involved Leclerc went to Phnom Penh on the 15th October and took him to Saigon under arrest. Next day the King returned from his pilgrimage, a new

<sup>1</sup> Regulars had about one rifle to two men and a fair proportion of automatics, guerrillas had one rifle to five, grenades and bows and arrows, and a few 'platoons' had an automatic.

<sup>2</sup> Lieut.-Colonel E. D. Murray, 4/10th Gurkha Rifles.

<sup>3</sup> The King was absent on a pilgrimage and the Prime Minister was in charge.

Cabinet was formed, and on the 18th the King received officers of Headquarters Allied Land Forces, Phnom Penh at his palace.

As was to be expected, Annamite troops and police resisted disarmament and it was necessary to use Japanese troops to assist in carrying it out. Apart from this there were a few minor strikes and disturbances, but relations with the Cambodian Government remained good and the assumption of control by the French and the disarming of Japanese troops and their despatch to Saigon continued with only minor setbacks. On the 4th December Headquarters Allied Land Forces, Phnom Penh closed and became a liaison mission to the French.

In the Saigon area by the end of October 20th Division was disposed with 100th Brigade north of Saigon, 32nd Brigade in Saigon and the 80th in Cholon, and operations were in progress, against Annamite opposition, to clear the roads east and south from Saigon. French troops began to take over from Japanese and British/Indian forces early in November, and the disarmament and concentration of Japanese surrendered personnel and the internment of Japanese civilians began. On the 23rd they began to take over Saigon from 32nd Brigade (which was under orders from A.L.F.S.E.A. to relieve Australian troops in Borneo), and two days later to relieve 80th Brigade in Cholon (which was due to follow the 32nd).<sup>1</sup> From that day all operations in and south of Saigon became a French responsibility under the overall command of S.E.A.C. North of Saigon 100th Brigade remained responsible for clearing roadblocks and mopping up Vietminh forces. Opposition was sporadic but at times sharp, with casualties on both sides, those of 20th Division amounting to twenty-six and those of the Vietminh to fifty-eight killed and wounded while 400 suspected guerrillas were taken prisoner. Casualties among the rebels in the French sector were reported to be very much higher.

On the 29th November Mountbatten flew to Saigon where he received the personal surrender of Count Terauchi,<sup>2</sup> and held discussions with Gracey and the French. On the 2nd December he told the Chiefs of Staff that after the departure of 32nd Brigade the French would issue a statement about assuming responsibility for law and order, and that he proposed to close down Headquarters Allied Land Forces, French Indo-China and the Control Commission when Gracey and Headquarters 20th Division left in January. They would be replaced by a military inter-Service mission which would represent S.A.C.S.E.A. and be responsible for the administration and repatriation of Japanese. He also recommended that, on the departure of Gracey, south Indo-China should cease to be part of S.E.A.C.

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<sup>1</sup> See pages 353-4.

<sup>2</sup> See page 272 fn.1.

On the 19th December the French take-over in the Saigon area was completed, and on Christmas Day 32nd Brigade Headquarters and 3/8th Gurkhas embarked for Borneo, followed by 4/2nd Gurkhas and 9/14th Punjab during the next two days. With the departure of the brigade, Mountbatten and Admiral G. T. d'Argenlieu, who had taken office as French High Commissioner in October, issued a joint statement on the 1st January 1946 that the French would henceforth assume the task of maintaining law and order in south Indo-China, except for the control and repatriation of Japanese troops.

The 80th Brigade began to move to Celebes on the 22nd January 1946 and, with the exception of two battalions which were to remain to guard the Japanese, Gracey and the rest of 20th Division left for India between the 28th January and the 7th February. Command of all French forces in the country passed to Leclerc on the 28th January, and that of the remaining British/Indian forces to the S.A.C.S.E.A. Inter-Service Mission (Brigadier M. S. K. Maunsell). At the same time *Headquarters Southern Army* was moved to Malaya.<sup>1</sup>

The Chiefs of Staff were in agreement with Mountbatten that south Indo-China should cease to be part of S.E.A.C. on the departure of General Gracey, and had sought the approval of the Combined Chiefs of Staff on the 17th December 1945. The Americans, however, wished S.E.A.C. to remain responsible for the country, and it was not until the 27th February 1946 that they agreed to a compromise whereby the French would take over control subject to Mountbatten remaining MacArthur's agent for the limited purpose of co-ordinating the disarmament and evacuation of Japanese troops. On the 8th March Leclerc agreed to assume responsibility from the 15th for the maintenance and evacuation of Japanese, subject to the condition that he would accept no financial responsibility without explicit instructions from Paris. Withdrawal of British/Indian troops was to begin on the 18th March and be completed by mid-April, the last units to leave being a dock operating company and an Indian General Hospital.

Meanwhile the French had been negotiating with Ho Chi Minh regarding the reoccupation of north Indo-China, and on the 28th February Dening reported from Saigon to the Foreign Office and to S.E.A.C. that a satisfactory agreement was imminent and that there was likely to be little opposition to French troops entering that part of the country. Hopes of a peaceful settlement were rudely shattered, however, when a French force which tried to disembark at Haiphong (the port of Hanoi) on the 6th March came under heavy fire. It transpired that the opposition came from Chinese and not Vietminh troops, and it was not till midday that the local Chinese commander

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<sup>1</sup> See page 277.

regained control of his troops and firing stopped. By that time twenty Frenchmen had been killed. An agreement was signed that afternoon by French, Chinese and the Vietminh, and the French force disembarked at 7 a.m. on the 7th. The Chinese then refused to let them advance beyond Hanoi until agreement of the Americans had been obtained.

Following discussion with the French authorities in London, Mountbatten was told on the 11th March that he would cease to have any responsibility for the maintenance of Japanese in French Indo-China after the 31st March, on which date it was estimated there would be a stockpile in Saigon of sixty-five days' rations supplied from India for the 68,000 Japanese, including those in north Indo-China who had been disarmed by the Chinese. In addition it was expected that three million American emergency ('Pacific') rations would be available, which would bring the reserve up to about 120 days.

On the 13th March Terauchi and the few personal staff officers left with him in Saigon were moved to Johore Bahru in Malaya. Mountbatten formally handed over south Indo-China to Admiral d'Argenlieu in Saigon on the 15th March, and at the end of the month the last two battalions of British/Indian infantry and the last detachment of the R.A.F. left for India. On the 28th March the Combined Chiefs of Staff decided that the French military commander in south Indo-China should become MacArthur's agent for the repatriation of Japanese, and in consequence S.E.A.C. ceased to have any responsibility whatever in French Indo-China from midnight on the 13th May 1946.

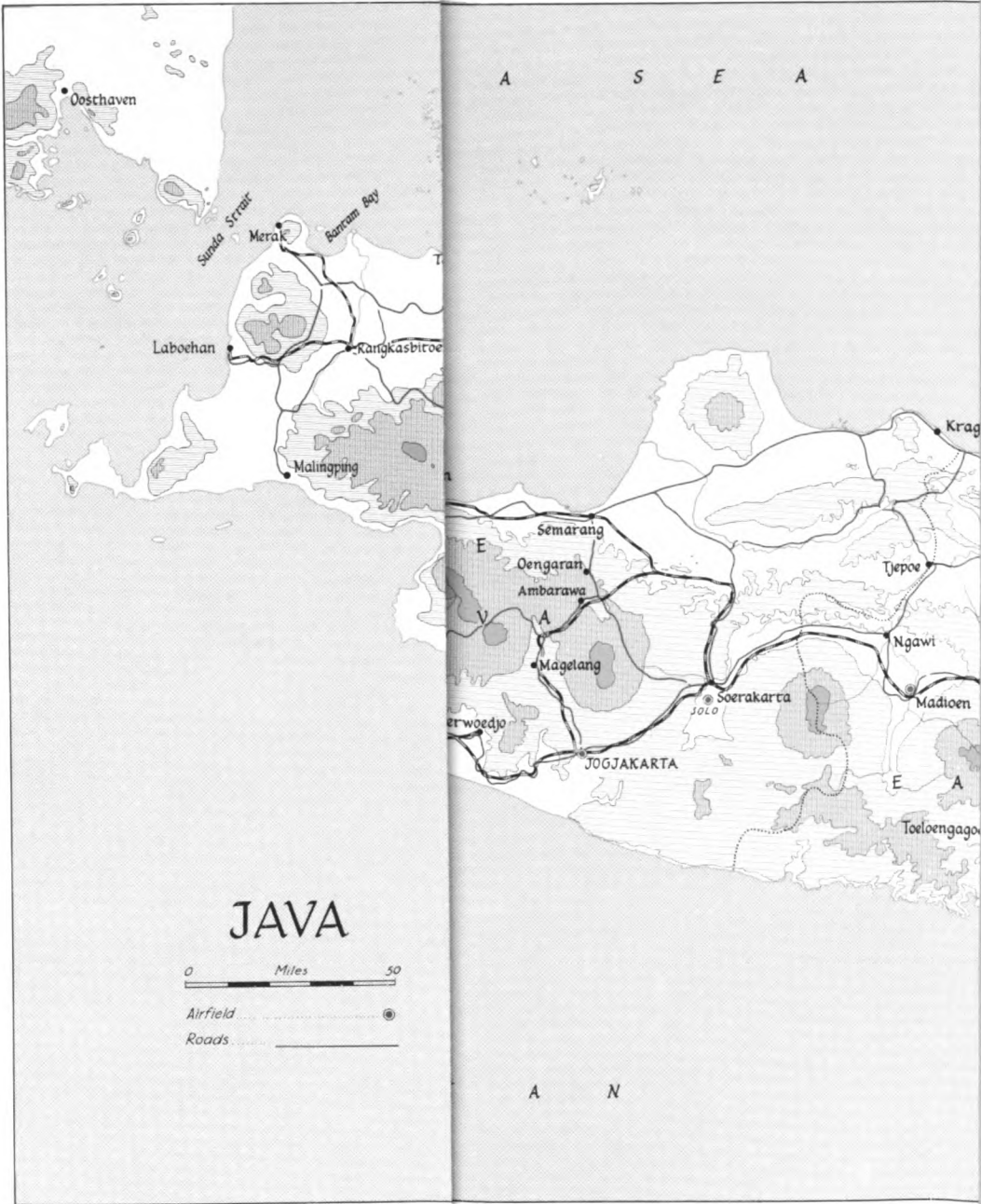








Map 13



CHAPTER XXVIII

THE NETHERLANDS EAST INDIES

Java

(September—October 1945)

*See Maps 2, 13 and 16 and Sketch 16*

THE Netherlands East Indies (now Indonesia) comprised the large islands of Sumatra, Java, Dutch Borneo, Celebes, fifteen minor islands, including Madoera (Madura), the Moluccas and Bali, and a vast number of smaller islands. By far the most populous island was Java, with 60 million inhabitants in 1945. In comparison Sumatra, twice as large, had only nine million and Celebes a mere four-and-half million.<sup>1</sup> The islands became Dutch colonies in the seventeenth century, and the Japanese overran them during the first three months of 1942.<sup>2</sup>

Of all the territories which S.E.A.C. had to reoccupy after the war, the one which presented the greatest problem and the only one in which there was heavy fighting was Java. This is surprising when one considers that it was perhaps the most prosperous and highly-developed territory in the South-West Pacific and its people were believed to be contented and peace-loving. They proved to be fanatical opponents and capable of fearful atrocities, as often as not against women and children. The apparent metamorphosis came about during the war years, and a brief account of the events of those years and of the rise of a fanatical nationalism, of which for some reason Allied and Dutch Intelligence remained unaware, will enable the reader to appreciate the difficulties facing Mountbatten, his commanders and troops in their thankless and often dangerous task.

When the Japanese captured the Netherlands East Indies they were determined to keep a firm grip on the islands, since they represented their richest prize in terms of material resources. They offered Indonesians participation in local government, set out to inculcate hatred of the Dutch and held out vague hopes of independence after the end of the war. The territory was to form part of the Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere, closely bound to Japan economically and

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<sup>1</sup> See Map 16, facing page 600.

<sup>2</sup> See Volume I.

militarily. The Japanese Foreign Office and the Army agreed in principle that a nominally independent Indonesian Federation was desirable but, while the Foreign Office wished independence to be promised at once, *Imperial General Headquarters* wished to defer it, although the military commanders in Java wanted to encourage the nationalists. The Japanese Navy assumed responsibility for Borneo, Celebes and the Lesser Soenda Islands and remained opposed to independence until the last months of the war. Any idea of an Indonesian state comprising all the Indonesian islands was further discouraged after the occupation by setting up a military administration in Java (with its headquarters at Batavia, renamed Jakarta) and placing Sumatra under the military administration of Malaya.<sup>1</sup>

In Java all Dutch officials were interned and replaced by Japanese, and Javanese and other native inhabitants in government service were mostly confined to subordinate positions, Japanese advisers being attached to the few who held senior posts. Since the Japanese officials were ignorant of the East Indies and often proved incompetent and venal, efforts to portray Japan as the protector and leader of Asia were largely nullified,<sup>2</sup> and their Indonesian subordinates, through their knowledge of the country, its language and people, gradually came to acquire a good deal of power.

Early in 1942 the Japanese recalled two of the three leaders of the Indonesian nationalist movement who had been banished by the Dutch between 1932 and 1934. The two recalled were Dr. A. Soekarno, who had founded the movement in the early 1920s, and Mr. M. Hatta, who had been the leader of the youth groups and chairman of the Indonesian National Education party. Both were known to be anti-Dutch and declared themselves in sympathy with the ideals of the Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere. The third, Dr. S. Shahrir, who was anti-Japanese, did not return until 1945 when he became Prime Minister of the Republican Government.

Soekarno was not immediately allowed to revive his nationalist party nor fly the Indonesian flag, but in December 1942 he was given permission to form a broad nationalist movement known as '*Poetera*', whose aims were to eliminate western influence, encourage support for the Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere and collaborate with the Japanese military authorities in the war effort.<sup>3</sup> Chinese and Eurasians were not allowed to belong to it. The Japanese Navy did not agree to any such organization being set up in the islands under its control.

<sup>1</sup> Sumatra became a separate military organization with its own military administration in late 1943.

<sup>2</sup> A movement known as the A.A.A. from its slogan, 'Japan the Saviour of Asia, Japan the Leader of Asia, Japan the Light of Asia', was inaugurated in March 1942.

<sup>3</sup> The movement was abolished in the second half of 1943 on the grounds that it had failed to persuade the Indonesian people to co-operate with the Japanese.

A further step, which did not go as far as a declaration of future independence, was taken in May 1943 when it was decided in Tokyo to treat Indonesia as Japanese territory but to allow the inhabitants some voice in the administration. In August a Central Advisory Council was set up in Batavia with regional councils elsewhere with strictly limited powers, but a promise of more in return for collaboration.<sup>1</sup> From August the Japanese began to form volunteer defence battalions in Java, being careful at first to issue arms only during drill periods. Schools were reopened, Japanese and Indonesian became the official languages and the Dutch language was forbidden.

In 1944, when the tide of war had turned against Japan, the Army withdrew its opposition to the immediate grant of independence provided such a step would secure the full co-operation of the people of Indonesia, but the Navy remained obdurate. A compromise was agreed in September 1944 by which the East Indies were to be granted independence at some future date, although some immediate concessions were to be made in Java, and *7th Area Army* in Singapore was instructed to organize celebrations of the promise of independence. At the same time the Japanese Army was to encourage Indonesian co-operation in defensive measures and implant the idea that Japan and Java were one and inseparable. A close watch was, however, to be kept on officers of the volunteer defence units to see that they did not begin to think of themselves as an independent army.

During the latter part of 1944 and early 1945 the Japanese carried out a purge in Java of Indonesian officials considered insufficiently enthusiastic in their support of Japan or too easy going in carrying out their duties, and replaced them by younger men who were determined, ruthless and often dedicated nationalists. It was these men who led the bitter resistance to the Allied forces sent to the Netherlands East Indies to rescue internees and disarm and repatriate Japanese armed forces.

The islands controlled by the Japanese Navy were at first not affected by these changes, but the loss of the Philippines and the Japanese defeat in the battle of Leyte Gulf isolated Borneo, Celebes and the Lesser Soenda Islands from Java. This led to the Navy modifying its opposition to independence, and in February 1945 it established an advisory council and appointed more Indonesians to administrative posts.

The *7th Area Army* (Itagaki) held a conference at Singapore in April and May 1945 at which the representative from Java stressed that the Javanese would not co-operate unless independence were

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<sup>1</sup> The first session of the Central Advisory Council was convened in mid-October 1943.



given. Itagaki therefore set up a committee (which included Indonesians) at the end of May to report on the principles which should be included in the constitution of an independent East Indies. The resolutions adopted by the committee and forwarded to Terauchi declared the firm opposition of the Indonesian people to a mandate which, it was alleged, the Allies were planning for all Asia, and their determination to fight to the death for their independence at the side of the Japanese. Within six weeks of this, Australian troops had landed in Borneo and the Americans had not only overcome Japanese resistance in all the islands forming the Philippine archipelago but had captured Okinawa,<sup>1</sup> thus rendering the proceedings of the committee obsolete.

In mid-July the Supreme Council for the Direction of the War in Tokyo decided that the East Indies should be given independence as soon as possible. Details were to be worked out by *Headquarters Southern Army* at Saigon, who first considered that independence should be granted in mid-1946 and then in the spring but, at the beginning of August 1945, Terauchi was instructed to hasten preparations so that independence could be proclaimed in September. Terauchi therefore summoned Soekarno and other leading Indonesian nationalists to Saigon on the 11th August and informed them of the policy decided upon, which necessitated the immediate establishment of a committee for the preparation of independence, with Soekarno as chairman. Soekarno returned to Java on the 14th August and at once formed a committee of twenty-one members (thirteen from Java, three from Sumatra and five from the Outer Islands). Its first meeting was fixed for the 19th August, but on the 15th its members were told that Japan had capitulated. Although this was kept secret for some days, the Indonesian Youth Corps heard of it and pressed Soekarno and Hatta to declare independence at once. Having made the necessary alterations to the draft constitution already drawn up, Soekarno on the 17th August proclaimed the setting up of the Indonesian Republic.

In the weeks which followed the capitulation the Japanese did not honour their obligations under the preliminary surrender agreement signed at Rangoon and the documents signed at Tokyo and Singapore, for they not only failed to maintain law and order but handed over public services and quantities of arms to the Indonesians.

When the whole of the Netherlands East Indies became the responsibility of S.E.A.C. in August 1945, Indonesian affairs had, unknown to the Allies, reached a state which practically precluded

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<sup>1</sup> See Chapters XII and XIII.



any hope of the peaceful reoccupation of the country. Mountbatten later wrote:

'Having taken over the N.E.I. from the South-West Pacific Area without any Intelligence reports, I had been given no hint of the political situation which had arisen in Java. It was known, of course, that an Indonesian Independence Movement had been in existence before the war; and that it had been supported by prominent intellectuals, some of whom had suffered banishment for their participation in nationalist propaganda—but no information had been made available to me as to the fate of this movement under the Japanese occupation. Dr. H. J. Van Mook, Lieut.-Governor-General of the N.E.I.,<sup>1</sup> who had come to Kandy on the 1st September, had given me no reason to suppose that the reoccupation of Java would present any operational problem, beyond that of rounding up the Japanese.'<sup>2</sup>

The Netherlands authorities had, in fact, no idea what the situation really was. A leaflet had been prepared for dropping on Java instructing the inhabitants to obey neither the self-styled Indonesian Republic nor the Japanese, but Van Mook told Mountbatten that it was a mistranslation and it was not used. Mountbatten instead sent a message to Terauchi on the 5th September that he understood that he (Terauchi) had declared a Republic in Indonesia under Soekarno, that this was a violation of the Rangoon Agreement and that he must cancel it and resume responsibility for civil government. Mountbatten added that he held Terauchi personally responsible for the maintenance of law and order and proper care of prisoners-of-war and internees in South-East Asia, and that he was to deal at once with lawlessness in Sumatra.

The Dutch liaison officer of the Netherlands Staff Section attached to S.E.A.C. Headquarters told Christison (Commander designate of Allied Forces, Netherlands East Indies) in Singapore that there were in Batavia eight to fourteen independent companies of the Royal Netherlands Indian Army (K.N.I.L.),<sup>3</sup> all prisoners-of-war, and that more would be available later from prison camps in Borneo and Singapore. No European troops were available, but the liaison officer thought that none would be needed since any little trouble there might be could be dealt with by the K.N.I.L. It proved, however, to be of little use since its troops were in bad physical condition and had no ancillary services. When the Dutch found that instead of a welcome for them there was widespread hostility, they hoped that

<sup>1</sup> Van Mook was head of the Netherlands East Indies Provisional Government in Australia.

<sup>2</sup> The Japanese garrison of Java in 1945 consisted of *16th Army Headquarters* with a number of garrison units, but no divisional organization; see Appendix 10.

<sup>3</sup> Koninklijk Nederlands Indische Leger. Many were Ambonese and Menadonese from Amboina and north Celebes who were Christians and received extra pay for 'foreign service' in Java and Sumatra. They remained loyal to the Dutch and because of this they were disliked by Javanese and Sumatran extremists. They were therefore interned when the Japanese dispersed the K.N.I.L.

S.E.A.C. forces would be used to assist in the reoccupation of the country. But the British Government, in process of implementing a policy of self-government in India and Burma, could hardly allow its forces to be used to regain colonies for other nations,<sup>1</sup> and the Government of India had made it clear that Indian units, which formed the bulk of S.E.A.C. forces, were not to be used for such purposes.

In the event the occupation of Sumatra and the Outer Islands presented no difficulty,<sup>2</sup> but in Java the Japanese had trained Indonesian forces and armed them with material surrendered by the Dutch in 1942 and with arms handed over by Japanese units which had gone into voluntary internment. They had also indoctrinated the Indonesian youth organizations with hatred of Europeans in general, and of the Dutch in particular. The information Christison gathered after his arrival in Batavia (which proved fairly accurate) was that the Indonesian forces were organized in seven divisions, each with a region for operations; that one of these located in east Java was Japanese-trained and equipped with artillery and tanks;<sup>3</sup> that three others were organized formations equipped only with small arms and a few supporting weapons; and that the remaining three were of negligible value as fighting formations, although capable of guerrilla activity.<sup>4</sup>

The situation facing the Allied command in Java was militarily and politically one of great difficulty. Although the Republic's influence at this time hardly extended beyond Java and a small area in Sumatra, the possession of broadcasting stations handed over by the Japanese enhanced its status and enabled it to broadcast propaganda to the world, with unfortunate repercussions on the Allied forces sent to disarm the Japanese and maintain order. The Republic, owing to the failure of the Japanese to fulfil their obligation to maintain control, was the *de facto* Government and could not be ignored; it, indeed, warned Christison that any landing by Dutch troops would be met with armed resistance. To have overthrown the only existing administration at this juncture would have created chaos and jeopardized the lives of thousands of internees, who were held in camps mostly guarded by the Indonesians and looked on as hostages.<sup>5</sup>

It required only a small spark to start a large conflagration, and the understandably militant mood of the local Dutch was liable to provide it. Christison's first concern was to prevent this happening

<sup>1</sup> Donnison, pages 335, 338 and 339.

<sup>2</sup> See Chapter XXX.

<sup>3</sup> It was this division which was later to be involved in heavy fighting in Sourabaya.

<sup>4</sup> The Indonesian forces, at first known as the Army for National Peace, became the Indonesian Republican Army (Tentera Repoeblik Indonesia, or T.R.I.).

<sup>5</sup> There were over 80,000 internees in Java, of whom most were Dutch; and some 6,078 prisoners-of-war, of whom about 1,243 were British, 376 Australian, 330 Indian and 61 American. The rest were Dutch or Indonesian.

before he could get the Dutch and Indonesian authorities to meet and resolve their differences. If he were to fail, violence would be inevitable.

The first Allied landing in the Netherlands East Indies was by a small Force 136/'Mastiff' parachute group (Mosquito), dropped near Batavia on the 8th September to arrange for the reception of the R.A.P.W.I. control staff which was on its way by sea and to make contacts with internees in the Batavia area.<sup>1</sup> On the 15th September H.M.S. *Cumberland*, flying the flag of Rear-Admiral W. R. Patterson commanding 5th Cruiser Squadron, with No. 6 R.A.P.W.I. Control Staff and accompanied by a frigate and four minesweepers, arrived at Tandjoengpriok (the port of Batavia), having been met forty miles out to sea by a Japanese ship with two naval officers and an interpreter with charts of the swept channel. Another frigate, two minesweepers, four L.C.I.s and the Dutch cruiser *Tromp* arrived next day. Patterson's task was to assist Netherlands officers and authorities and the R.A.P.W.I. control staff to make early contact with Allied prisoners and internees and give them all possible assistance.

As soon as H.M.S. *Cumberland* entered the harbour, Major A. G. Greenhalgh, the leader of the Mosquito team, went on board accompanied by Lieutenant Baron Von Tuyll and Lieut.-Colonel L. Van der Post (a released British prisoner-of-war), and gave Patterson a clear but disturbing report on the military, economic and political situation. They said that roads and railways had been neglected, locomotives and rolling stock had been exported to war areas and there was a general shortage of transport of all kinds. Food supplies were just sufficient provided distribution could be improved. Internees who remained in camps could be protected, but there was reason to fear for the safety of many who had returned to their homes, since looting was on the increase and intense anti-Dutch propaganda was being disseminated in spite of the warnings issued by the Japanese Chief of Staff, Major-General M. Yamamoto, to the nationalist leaders on the need for them to restrain their hotheads. Yamamoto himself, accompanied by Rear-Admiral Maeda (the Japanese Naval Commander, Batavia) and twenty-two staff officers, arrived on board an hour later to receive orders. Later Patterson used Van der Post as an intermediary between himself and Soekarno and other nationalist leaders, and paid tribute to his services in that capacity.

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<sup>1</sup> See Map 13, facing page 307.

On the 18th Patterson reported an increase in political tension and acts of violence, and warned that the situation would get out of hand if Allied forces did not arrive soon. On the 19th therefore Slim ordered 14th Army to send Headquarters 23rd Division from Malaya to Java with two brigade groups: one, including divisional headquarters, to sail for Batavia by the 1st October, and the other to go to Sourabaya later. Three days later Slim warned Christison that he was likely to be appointed Commander Allied Land Forces in N.E.I.<sup>1</sup> and, if appointed, would be required to go to Batavia about the middle of October with a modified XV Corps Headquarters. His task would be to work in the closest touch with whatever Dutch authorities were available until they were able to take over. The forces at his disposal would probably be 23rd Division (less one brigade group) which would arrive in Java during the first half of October, a brigade group of 26th Division in Sumatra, followed by a slow build-up of the whole division, and 7th or 20th Division to take over from the Australians in Borneo.

The situation in Batavia began to deteriorate, however, and within twenty-four hours of the issue of the first order, 14th Army was told to send any battalion as soon as it could be embarked and to follow it up with whichever brigade group would be most quickly available. All moves were therefore speeded up and on the 29th September 1st Seaforth Highlanders disembarked and moved into Batavia, where for the next two days it was involved in dealing with looting and incendiarism and in dispersing rioters, four of whom were killed.

On the 28th, as a result of information given by Lady Mountbatten and two rescued prisoners-of-war, Mountbatten and Slim came to the conclusion that the situation in Java was even more serious than had been realized. Christison was therefore ordered to go to Batavia as soon as possible. His instructions from Mountbatten were that he was to fill the vacuum between the Japanese capitulation and the setting up of the Dutch civil administration, disarm the Japanese, rescue Allied prisoners and internees and maintain order in the principal cities in Java (Batavia, Semarang and Sourabaya) and in Sumatra (Padang, Medan and Palembang) until relieved by the Dutch. Before Christison left for Batavia the Secretary of State for War, Mr. Lawson, who was in Singapore at the time,<sup>2</sup> impressed on him that his troops were not to be used to help the Dutch establish colonial rule and were to fire only in self defence or to maintain law and order. He himself was to endeavour to bring the Dutch and Indonesian leaders together.

<sup>1</sup> This title was later changed to Allied Forces N.E.I. (A.F.N.E.I.), since Christison controlled both air and naval forces. See page 319 fn. 4.

<sup>2</sup> See page 302.

Christison arrived in Batavia on the 29th September to find that the Indonesian Republic under Soekarno had gained a large measure of control in Java, and was by no means the negligible force that the Dutch thought it to be. He later wrote:

'My A.D.C. and I were shot at the first night, but were told it was merely wild firing by K.N.I.L. I found Soekarno had set up his Republic and that public services were apparently functioning normally. Slogans were on the trams and hoardings, "Merdeka" (Freedom), "Death to Van Mook", etc. [and] the red and white national flags were everywhere. . . . Next day a vast crowd assembled outside my H.Q. and clamoured for a statement as to what we were doing in Java. Through reporters of local papers and news correspondents I was asked, "Why are you British here? Has Britain territorial designs in Indonesia? Are you here to crush the new Republic for the Dutch?"

I replied, "We are an allied force sent here to do three tasks. First, to take the surrender of the Japanese; second, to succour the R.A.P.W.I.; and third, to keep law and order where our forces are stationed in order to carry out these tasks. We have, of course, no territorial designs here; we are merely guests of the Dutch who have fought gallantly in Europe in the allied cause and can not be here themselves. We do not recognize any changes in sovereignty brought about as the result of [the] Japanese occupation."

I then pointed to the three flags I had set up outside my H.Q. I said, "The Netherlands flag is in the centre to show the Allies only recognize the Dutch as the sovereign power and the British and United States flags flank it, to show that ours is an Allied Mission."

Next day Radio Batavia and certain local papers distorted what I had said. They gave out that the British had come as guests of the Indonesians and many other distortions and propaganda lies . . . .

S.E.A.C. had heard Batavia radio and believing it to be in Dutch hands could not understand what had happened. S.E.A.C. and the world for some days was bombarded with propaganda . . . . I was eventually ordered to suppress it.'

Dr. C. O. Van der Plas, the Deputy Governor of the Netherlands East Indies, who had arrived at Batavia in the *Cumberland* on the 15th, decided to rebroadcast the Proclamation made by the Queen of the Netherlands on the 6th December 1942 outlining advances in self-government.<sup>1</sup> The effect, according to Christison, was electrical. The moderates assured him they would in the circumstances co-operate with the Dutch and with the Allied forces. Soekarno sent him a message that, as the Allied forces were not there to enable the Dutch to reimpose the pre-war colonialism, he would do all he could to keep the extremists under control and co-operate in the evacuation of internees.

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<sup>1</sup> See Appendix 24.

Van Mook arrived on the 7th October with members of the Netherlands Indies Civil Affairs (N.I.C.A.) organization, who unfortunately were in military uniform and armed, which created a bad impression.<sup>1</sup> Van Mook was installed in Government House, which was in keeping with the policy of acknowledging Dutch sovereignty, but did nothing to allay Indonesian fears that Allied troops were about to reimpose it by force.

Without consulting Christison or Van der Plas, the Netherlands Government immediately repudiated Van der Plas's broadcast, since they felt that it would be wrong to grant even the limited extent of self-government offered in it until the economy of Indonesia was restored, and this they did not consider the Soekarno régime could accomplish. All co-operation immediately ceased, and Soekarno told Christison that he would no longer attempt to control his extremists; indeed, not only would he oppose Dutch landings, but he would fight the British if they acted as covering troops for them.

As the Dutch did not contemplate an independent republic outside the Netherlands Empire and the Indonesian Republic considered itself fully competent to develop the country, the repudiation of the broadcast did no more than precipitate an inevitable clash. Any possibility there may have been of Indonesia agreeing to remain in a Dutch Commonwealth disappeared with the repudiation, and its immediate result was that British and Indian troops found themselves involved in fighting with Indonesian forces.

It was now quite clear that the situation as described to Mountbatten when he was made responsible for the whole of the Netherlands East Indies had been a supreme example of wishful thinking. Instead of willing co-operation by the Indonesians, there was not only an open threat of war but also a considerable Indonesian force trained and equipped by the Japanese and ready to fight anyone attempting to restore Dutch domination. On the 1st October the Chiefs of Staff warned Mountbatten that, as a result of the Radio Batavia broadcasts, the Netherlands Government were accusing Christison of making public statements inimical to Dutch interests. No public statements, the message continued, should be made without their approval. On the same day Admiral Helfrich, Commander-in-Chief, Netherlands Forces in the Far East, told Mountbatten that, according to a B.B.C. broadcast, Christison

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<sup>1</sup> Units of the N.I.C.A., formed during the war, accompanied headquarters of Australian formations going to Borneo and New Guinea and British formations to Sumatra, but not the formations sent to Java. Because of the acute hostility aroused in Java by the display and use of arms by the N.I.C.A., Christison decided that the organization must revert to civilian status. It was accordingly disbanded (except in the Outer Islands) at the end of October, and replaced by the Allied Military Administration Civil Affairs Branch.

intended holding a round-table conference with Soekarno and his Indonesian Republican Government. To this he strongly objected. Mountbatten replied that Christison had no intention of holding any conference with Soekarno himself, and pointed out that peaceful co-operation with the Burmese had been assured by negotiating with Aung San, the Japanese-trained leader of the Burma National Army, who was in a similar position to Soekarno.<sup>1</sup>

On the 5th October Mountbatten told the Chiefs of Staff that he deplored an announcement made by the Netherlands Government repudiating Van der Plas's action in meeting Indonesian leaders, including Soekarno, and that he must be given a fresh directive on the policy he should adopt in dealing with the peculiar conditions prevailing in the Netherlands East Indies. He said that the difference between maintaining law and order and repressing the Indonesian independence movement on behalf of the Netherlands Government must be clearly defined. In his opinion there were only two courses which could be followed: either to do nothing except disarm the Japanese and recover Allied prisoners and internees, or to take over responsibility for law and order in the whole of the Netherlands East Indies. To achieve the first only Batavia and Sourabaya would need to be occupied as evacuation areas and for the arrival of Dutch forces sent to maintain law and order throughout the rest of Java. The second could be achieved in two ways: either by agreement between the Dutch and Indonesians that British forces should be given a free hand to rescue prisoners and internees and disarm the Japanese, or for the Dutch to declare the Indonesian Republic illegal, which would mean resort to arms.

The success of the first course would depend on the attitude of the Dutch population, local troops and the Netherlands Government towards the Indonesians. If it failed or if the Indonesian Republic were declared illegal, he would require a corps of two divisions and an armoured brigade, a naval lift for one brigade,<sup>2</sup> four R.A.F. fighter-bomber squadrons, a Dutch flying-boat squadron and a medium-range transport squadron. He went on to describe his proposals for the build-up of the land force and to press for the early arrival of the thirteen internal security battalions that the Dutch had promised to make available.

On the 11th October he sent a further report to the Chiefs of Staff, who were still considering his request for a new directive. He told them that, as a result of a conference with Patterson, Christison, Van Mook, Van der Plas and Helfrich, he proposed to issue orders for the acceleration of the move of the rest of 23rd Division to Java and to order its commander to meet local Indonesian leaders and

<sup>1</sup> See Chapter V.

<sup>2</sup> Two L.S.I.(M)s, twenty-four L.C.T.s, twelve L.C.I.(L)s and three L.S.T.s.

make agreements to ensure the quick evacuation of internees and disarmament of Japanese. To do this the division was to occupy, in addition to Batavia, the key areas of Buitenzorg, Bandoeng, Sourabaya, Semarang and Magelang, all of which held prisoners, internees and Japanese.<sup>1</sup> In this way he hoped to ensure that Indonesians could not seize internees as hostages, while the disarming and segregation of Japanese troops would increase Allied prestige and prevent further handing over of Japanese arms to Indonesians. The only way, however, to persuade the Indonesians to attend conferences was to show them that there were sufficient troops available to enforce law and order and the handing over of internment camps. At present they did not know that he would have some Dutch forces available, and they did not believe that British forces would be used to restore order. In order to convince them therefore he would require the land, sea and air forces enumerated in his message of the 5th.

To avoid precipitating a conflict, he proposed meanwhile to hold Dutch forces back from direct contact with Indonesians and added that, unless the Netherlands Government would give Van Mook full powers to negotiate on the terms of Queen Wilhelmina's Proclamation and agree to Christison's presence at all negotiations, he (Mountbatten) would not recommend any show of force by British troops and would take no action other than the occupation of the key areas required for the evacuation of prisoners and internees and disarming Japanese troops.

Two days later, on the 13th, Mountbatten further reported that aggressive and provocative actions by the small Dutch forces already in Java had so worsened the situation that Christison had withdrawn them into reserve and had given a warning that, if more Dutch troops landed before the situation was clarified, it would lead to civil war in which British and Indian troops could not avoid becoming involved. The first convoy of four Dutch internal security battalions sailed from England the following day, but Mountbatten told the Chiefs of Staff and Christison that they would not be sent to Java until he (Christison) was ready to accept them there.<sup>2</sup>

On the 15th October the Chiefs of Staff told Mountbatten that Van Mook had been authorized to negotiate on the basis of Queen Wilhelmina's Proclamation in co-operation with Christison. He was not, however, to negotiate with Soekarno, but pressure was being brought on the Dutch Government to rescind this veto. In the meanwhile Mountbatten could send a second division to Java and, to help the move, the Commander-in-Chief, British Pacific Fleet, was being

<sup>1</sup> See Map 13, facing page 307.

<sup>2</sup> Dutch forces from Europe and the U.S.A. usually staged at Singapore where Dutch units raised in the Far East were trained.



asked to divert aircraft carriers at that time earmarked to carry reinforcements to Hong Kong. In the event of Van Mook's talks with the Indonesians failing, this reinforcement would enable Christison to warn them of the powerful force at his disposal, a force which he would use to ensure law and order. Mountbatten replied that any such threat would be premature until the force had actually landed, and it should not in any case be made unless Van Mook had been allowed to talk with Soekarno and failed to get agreement. He intended meanwhile to collect and reorganize all Dutch forces in S.E.A.C. outside the Netherlands East Indies so that they could be used in strength and effectively if negotiations finally broke down. If the Dutch continued to refuse to allow negotiations with Soekarno civil war was certain, and in that case he would let Dutch forces land in Java as soon as they arrived from Europe, without reorganization, in order to minimize the involvement of British and Indian troops.

The reinforcement he was sending to Java was an armoured brigade, which would closely follow 23rd Division, and this in turn would be followed by 5th Division from Malaya. This would mean that Malaya would be short of one division until 2nd (British) Division could be moved there from India.<sup>1</sup> The 26th Division would go to Sumatra instead of Siam as originally intended,<sup>2</sup> and Christison would then have a corps of three divisions and an armoured brigade.

On the 3rd October the rest of 1st Brigade Group (Brigadier R. C. M. King), consisting of 178th Assault Field Regiment R.A., 1/16th Punjab Regiment and 1st Patiala Infantry, joined 1st Seaforth Highlanders in Batavia. On the 6th Tactical Headquarters of XV Corps and 23rd Division arrived, followed next day by Advanced Headquarters R.A.F. Netherlands East Indies (Air Commodore C. A. Stevens) which came under command of XV Corps and set up a joint headquarters with it.<sup>3</sup> The main task of the R.A.F. was to evacuate prisoners and internees and transport and supply the ground forces, but it could be used offensively on Christison's specific orders.<sup>4</sup> The main headquarters of XV Corps and 23rd Division (Hawthorn) reached Batavia on the 10th October; that of R.A.F.N.E.I. arrived on the 17th and was closely followed by 904 Wing, which by the end of October consisted of 60 and 81 (Thunderbolt) and 31 (Dakota) Squadrons and a detachment of Mosquitos.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup> One brigade of 2nd Division was earmarked for the British occupation force for Japan.

<sup>2</sup> See page 235.

<sup>3</sup> The unusual procedure of placing an air headquarters under command of a corps was designed to meet the confused tactical situation anticipated.

<sup>4</sup> Christison became Commander Allied Forces Netherlands East Indies (A.F.N.E.I.) on the 16th October.

<sup>5</sup> For the outline order of battle of R.A.F., Netherlands East Indies see Appendix 23.

The 26th Division landed in Sumatra on the 10th October and from the 15th came under Christison's orders.<sup>1</sup>

On the 4th October the infantry battalions of 1st Brigade were made responsible for law and order in Batavia, each being allotted a sector of the city, while 178th Assault Field Regiment took over the guarding of internment camps and the airfield and provided guards in the dock area under command of the Senior Naval Officer. There was no resistance but it was soon found that the Indonesians were establishing roadblocks. By the 10th the situation had deteriorated and on that day 1st Brigade suffered its first casualties when arresting looters and stopping a shooting affray between Dutch and Indonesians. From then on clashes occurred almost daily.

On the 14th reports received at Headquarters 23rd Division indicated that Indonesian rebels were gathering in camps south of Batavia, and that Soekarno was losing control of the extremists. A pamphlet was found saying that Muslim priests had declared a holy war against Europeans, and it was ominous that on the same day Europeans were kidnapped from a train on its way to Batavia.

On the 15th and 16th, 37th Brigade (Brigadier N. Macdonald), consisting of 3/3rd, 3/5th and 3/10th Gurkhas, disembarked at Batavia. During the next two days the 3/3rd and 3/5th occupied Buitenzorg and Bandoeng without meeting opposition, but found that Indonesians had removed 105 Christian Eurasians to Depok on the railway twenty miles south of Batavia, where many had been murdered and mutilated. In the process of clearing the area, columns from 37th Brigade rescued 1,250 women and children, mostly Eurasian but including some Dutch, from three buildings where they had been herded under appalling conditions. Brigade headquarters was established at Bandoeng and on the 19th October the headquarters of the Japanese *16th Army*, its commander (Lieut.-General Y. Nagano) and his Chief of Staff (Major-General Yamamoto) were moved there from Batavia.

The third battalion of 37th Brigade, 3/10th Gurkhas, was re-embarked in H.M.S. *Glenroy* (an L.S.I.) and sent to Semarang, 250 miles east of Batavia, where fighting between Japanese and Indonesians had broken out and extremists were reported to be in control. There were several internment camps and a large number of internees in the area. At 7.45 a.m. on the 19th the 3/10th disembarked in the almost deserted harbour of Semarang. Firing could be heard in the town, and when the leading company reached the town centre it came under fire from Government buildings and suffered a few casualties. Indonesians under a white flag reported that the firing came from the Japanese. Contact was made with the Japanese commander in Semarang who offered profuse apologies, explaining that,

<sup>1</sup> See page 356.

since there had been fighting with Indonesians earlier in the morning, the garrison of the Government buildings, unaware of the arrival of Allied forces, had assumed that the troops they saw heralded a renewal of the morning's fighting. Next morning the Gurkhas took over the airfield and secured the release of Europeans in the town jail.

The situation in Semarang might have been worse but for the assistance given by Major Kido, the commander of a partially disarmed Japanese battalion in Ambarawa (in the hills twenty miles south of Semarang), to the R.A.P.W.I. organization, whose task was being severely hampered because of the extremist domination of the area. He marched on Semarang and had gained partial control there shortly before the arrival of the Gurkhas.<sup>1</sup> Since the situation at Ambarawa and Magelang deteriorated as soon as the Japanese battalion had left for Semarang, detachments of the Gurkhas were hastily sent to both places and, with the help of the Japanese battalion, were just able to hold their own in the three towns. It was clear that the Gurkha battalion was not strong enough to pacify the area, and on the 20th October the Commander Royal Artillery's Brigade Group, consisting of 6/8th Punjab Regiment (less one company but augmented by a company of 2/19th Hyderabad and two companies of 5/8th Punjab Regiment), moved from Batavia to Semarang. There it took 3/10th Gurkhas under command and ordered the whole battalion to Magelang. Since there was not enough transport, the Gurkhas had to move in small parties; little more than half the battalion had arrived when the road was cut by a series of road-blocks, and the Gurkha detachments at Magelang and Ambarawa were attacked by large forces of Indonesians plentifully supplied with ammunition and small arms. The situation was now worsening everywhere. In Batavia 1st Brigade was kept fully occupied in maintaining order in the face of looting and murders of Europeans and Japanese. In the Bandoeng/Buitenzorg area 37th Brigade, in which 3/10th Gurkhas had been replaced by 5/8th Punjab, reported increased arrivals of extremists who were terrorizing the countryside and raiding the houses of co-operators. Despite the deterioration, the concentration of Japanese, including Major-General Nakamura and Headquarters Japanese Troops in central Java, continued from west and central Java into the Batavia area. Since it transpired that the handing over of arms by many Japanese units to Indonesians in contravention of the surrender terms had been ordered by Nakamura, he was arrested in Batavia and sent to Singapore for trial by *Headquarters Southern Army* for disobedience of their orders.

<sup>1</sup> The maintenance and evacuation of prisoners and internees from the camps at Ambarawa and Magelang, 20 miles farther south, depended on the port and airfield at Semarang. The assistance given by *Kido Battalion* was no doubt the result of reports of the murder of recently interned Japanese in Semarang jail on the 14th/15th October.

On the 25th October Headquarters 49th Brigade (Brigadier A. W. S. Mallaby) arrived at Sourabaya in the frigate *Waveney*, the leading ship of the convoy carrying 49th Brigade. The first landings were not opposed but, as the leading battalions (6/5th Mahrattas and 5/6th Rajputana Rifles) moved to occupy key points in the city, armed Indonesians began to set up and occupy barricades.<sup>1</sup>

It will be seen that the Allied force in Java was now in three groups with Headquarters A.F.N.E.I. (Christison) and 23rd Division (Hawthorn) in Batavia. In the Batavia-Buitenzorg-Bandoeng area were 1st Brigade (King) and 37th Brigade (Macdonald); in the Semarang-Ambarawa-Magelang area in central Java was the C.R.A.'s Brigade Group (Brigadier R. W. B. Bethell) of two and a half battalions made up from the divisional infantry and detachments from other brigades; and at Sourabaya a further 200 miles east was 49th Brigade (Mallaby). Each group had a proportion of the divisional artillery and engineers.

It had been clear for some time that this force was inadequate and on the 17th October A.L.F.S.E.A. had given orders for 5th Division (Mansergh), less 161st Brigade, to move to Sourabaya. The 9th Brigade was relieved in Singapore by 5th Parachute Brigade and the 123rd in Negri Sembilan and Malacca by 50th Tank Brigade. The division embarked at Singapore between the 28th and 30th October, preceded by 11th (P.A.V.O.) Cavalry (light Stuart tanks) from Port Dickson and followed by 13th (D.C.O.) Lancers (medium Sherman tanks) from Bombay and Malaya in the middle of November.<sup>2</sup> The 11th Cavalry arrived at Batavia on the 27th October, where its headquarters and one squadron remained while the other two were sent on by sea to Semarang and Sourabaya respectively. Each group of the Allied force in Java had therefore an armoured element by the beginning of November.

Meanwhile 23rd Division, on orders from Christison, had taken over Radio Batavia, thus diminishing the flood of propaganda and enabling A.F.N.E.I. to broadcast instructions (although with little effect) about the maintenance of law and order and the surrender of arms.

Shortly after his arrival on the 25th at Sourabaya Mallaby made contact with Mr. Soerio, self-styled Governor of East Java, and 'General of Marines' Dr. Moestopo, but both refused to go on board the *Waveney*. Moestopo instead sent a message to Mallaby that no troops were to land without his permission, to which Mallaby

<sup>1</sup> In 1965 Christison recalled an incident that occurred soon after his arrival at Batavia when Helfrich apologized to him for an action said to have been taken by a comparatively junior Dutch officer who apparently landed on the airfield at Sourabaya and took the surrender of the Japanese troops in the town. No official record of such an action has been found but, as the Japanese laid down their arms, it would partly account for the large number of arms in possession of Indonesian extremists in Sourabaya.

<sup>2</sup> See Map 2, facing page 63.

replied that he was not prepared to take his orders and the brigade would land as planned that afternoon. This brought a deputation which was met by Colonel L. H. O. Pugh (Mallaby's second-in-command), who agreed to go to Moestopo's headquarters at the Oranje Hotel with an Indonesian escort to discuss matters.

'Every quarter of a mile the car was halted at a barricade covered by machine guns. From the shadows emerged excited Indonesians, some in uniform and others in civilian clothes, armed with rifles, swords and spears. These bore down upon the car from all sides demanding the business of the occupants, thrusting rifle muzzles in through the open windows, all talking at once, all with their fingers on the trigger. . . . There appeared to be no end to this nerve-racking performance.'<sup>1</sup>

A meeting with the Indonesian leaders was arranged for the next day. Meanwhile key points covering the port area were occupied by 49th Brigade, but the Indonesians refused to leave the Ferwerda Drawbridge, the Electric Power Station and the airfield.

At the conference on the 26th, which lasted for three and a half hours, Mallaby affirmed that the only Allied object in Sourabaya was to evacuate internees, disarm and remove Japanese troops and, if necessary, help to preserve law and order to enable this to be done. It was agreed that Indonesian regular forces would not be disarmed but that they would disarm the mob. Contact committees were set up to work with 49th Brigade Headquarters and the Port Executive. Although reasonably co-operative, the Indonesians were suspicious and very insistent that no Dutch were to be landed.

As a result of this agreement arrangements were made for the reception of internees at the Darmo Barracks and hospital at the south end of the town, and a detachment from 49th Brigade was sent there for their protection.<sup>2</sup> The remaining vital points in the town were occupied without incident during the morning of the 27th. At 11 a.m. a Dakota appeared and dropped leaflets issued by the commander of 23rd Division saying that British Military Administration would supersede the Indonesian Republican Government, that all arms were to be surrendered and that anyone bearing arms illegally would be shot. These terms, which nullified the agreement entered into with Mallaby the day before, angered the Indonesian leaders, who felt that they had been tricked, and had disastrous results. At noon Moestopo arrived with some of his staff at Mallaby's headquarters but, after a conference lasting until 3 p.m., they went away unsatisfied, for Mallaby told them he had no option but to obey orders although the leaflets had been dropped without his knowledge. Moestopo, who had agreed to broadcast a call for law

<sup>1</sup> The Journal of the Royal Artillery, October 1948: *Soerabaja (N.E.I.)—1945* by L.H. O. P[ugh].

<sup>2</sup> See Sketch 16, facing page 352.

and order and the surrender of arms, was now either unwilling to speak or was prevented from doing so, and his place was taken by an extremist who made an inflammatory appeal for resistance. There was an unnatural calm on the 29th until 4.30 p.m., when firing broke out all over the town. All 49th Brigade posts were attacked and officers and men on duty in the town had to run the gauntlet to the nearest post, some not reaching safety. A convoy of women and children on its way to Darmo was held up by barricades, and when the officer in charge went with three soldiers to move the obstructions they were shot dead. The small escort of Mahrattas fought desperately to drive back the large number of armed men who were attacking the convoy and inflicted enormous casualties, but they were finally overwhelmed and most of the internees were massacred. Pugh records in the article already quoted that one of the few survivors of the escort made his way to Darmo after dark (to which he himself had escaped with difficulty) and guided a party to where twenty women and children, the sole survivors of the 200 or more in the convoy, were hiding. A naval officer with 49th Brigade later described the situation in the town on the night of the 28th/29th October:

'Sourabaya presented a sombre picture that night. A huge warehouse, stuffed with merchandise, was in flames—fired, we believed, by extremists. Smaller fires were burning here and there in other parts of the town. Throughout the night there was the crackle of small arms and machine-gun fire and the heavier thump of mortars. In the camps and prisons in and around the town the thousands of Dutch, Eurasian and other men, women and children, whose hopes of freedom had a few hours ago been so high, waited with anxious hearts to see what the morrow would bring.'

On the evening of the 29th Soekarno, sent by Christison to stop the fighting, arrived in Sourabaya and on the morning of the 30th accompanied Hawthorn and Mallaby to a conference with the local leaders. It was agreed that firing would cease at once, captured personnel, vehicles and equipment would be returned and British/Indian forces would occupy the port, airfield and Darmo. The agreement was, however, ineffective since the extremists were by then in complete control. The Brigade Major of 49th Brigade and an officer of Force 136 attached to Soekarno's headquarters were then sent by Mallaby to Indonesian headquarters to request proper observance of the agreement, but were waylaid and captured by extremists. They were reported to be safe in the hands of the Indonesian police, but it was found later that they had been brutally murdered. Unaware of the fate of his Brigade Major, Mallaby with three other officers went that evening to meet Indonesian leaders to try and get the cease-fire enforced. They too were intercepted by a

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<sup>1</sup> Blackwood's Magazine, August 1946: *Sailor in Sourabaya* by J.H.B.

mob, and Mallaby was shot dead. One of his officers was abducted, and the other two escaped by dropping a grenade which had been overlooked by the Indonesians who had overpowered and disarmed them. In the resulting confusion they dived into the nearby Kali Mas canal and, wading and swimming, made their way down it to the dock area.

It was now clear that there was no hope of evacuating internees without fighting and that every day the danger of their being massacred would increase. Since precipitate action might have the same effect, it was a situation that required very careful handling.





CHAPTER XXIX

THE NETHERLANDS EAST INDIES

Java

(November 1945—November 1946)

*See Maps 13 and 16 and Sketch 16*

THE murder of Mallaby on the 30th October brought an already dangerous situation to a head as the news spread rapidly throughout Java. In Sourabaya a demand made on the 31st that 49th Brigade should lay down its arms showed that the Indonesians believed they had gained the upper hand.<sup>1</sup> At Magelang, 200 miles to the west, where 3/10th Gurkhas, less one company, was surrounded by a large Indonesian force supported by guns and mortars, the situation deteriorated so quickly that on the 1st November Christison authorized the first air strike. Although there was no immediate outbreak of violence in the Batavia area, tension rose sharply as terrorists increased their activities against Dutch and Eurasians outside internment camps and made determined efforts to seize the arms and equipment of isolated Japanese detachments.

There were at the same time indications of a widespread planned reorganization of Indonesian forces, and reports reached Batavia that a 'supreme' headquarters had been established at Jogjakarta.<sup>2</sup> It was fortunate indeed that 5th Division and a tank regiment had already begun to move from Singapore to Java,<sup>3</sup> for they arrived only just in time to avert what might easily have been disaster.

In reporting to Mountbatten and Slim, Christison said that the situation in Sourabaya was very serious and that the Allied troops were virtually besieged. Mountbatten passed Christison's report to the Chiefs of Staff on the 2nd November with a warning that commitments might increase considerably in the near future. Slim's immediate reaction to Christison's report was to order 14th Army to speed up the move of 5th Division to Sourabaya and to warn its commander, Mansergh, that on his arrival he was to take command of

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<sup>1</sup> See Map 13, facing page 307.

<sup>2</sup> Later reports said that the Indonesian Chief of Staff was Lieut.-General Raden Derlip, late Major, Royal Netherlands Indian Army, and a graduate of the Dutch Military Academy at Breda.

<sup>3</sup> See page 322.

the area. He added that he was asking for all available warships to be sent and would arrange for air supply (including ammunition) to be available from the 1st November.

The same day (31st October) Christison, with the approval of Mountbatten's political adviser (Denning), issued a warning to Indonesians that, unless the attacks made on British forces in contravention of the truce ceased and the perpetrators surrendered, he would bring the whole weight of his land, sea and air forces against them until they were crushed. The warning ended by appealing to Indonesians to have nothing to do with the extremists. In Sourabaya, Pugh, on whom command of 49th Brigade had devolved, had meanwhile acted on the agreement made on the 30th between Hawthorn, Mallaby, Soekarno and the local Indonesian leaders just before Mallaby was murdered,<sup>1</sup> by concentrating his force in the dock and Darmo areas. The 4/5th and 6/5th Mahrattas and 5/6th Rajputana Rifles (less two companies) were withdrawn to a shortened perimeter covering the docks and airfield, while 3rd Indian Field Regiment, 71st Indian Field Company and two companies of 5/6th Rajputana Rifles remained in the Darmo area covering the hospital and internment camps.<sup>2</sup>

In answer to Slim's request for warships, the cruiser *Sussex*, flying the flag of Admiral Patterson, and the destroyers *Caesar*, *Carron* and *Cavalier*, which had been carrying out exercises at sea, arrived off Sourabaya on the 1st November, followed on the 2nd by Admiral Martin in his flagship *Bulolo*. The same day Headquarters 9th Brigade of 5th Division (Brain), with advanced parties of 2nd West Yorkshire, 3/2nd Punjab and 1st Burma Regiment, disembarked, followed during the next two days by the rest of the brigade, less 1st Burma Regiment.<sup>3</sup> One of its two battalions took over part of the dock perimeter from 49th Brigade, while the other assisted 5th Division Headquarters, which arrived on the 3rd, to disembark and establish itself. On the evening of the 3rd 123rd Brigade of 5th Division (Brigadier H. J. Denholm-Young) also began to disembark and concentrate in the dock area in divisional reserve, and Mansergh, who had stopped off at Batavia for consultation with Christison, arrived by air. His task was to take over command of all Allied forces in Sourabaya, hold the airfield and dock area and keep the port in operation, call for the surrender and disarmament of extremists, arrange a meeting with Indonesian leaders, establish a liaison mission and set a time limit for the acceptance of the disarmament terms.

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<sup>1</sup> See page 324.

<sup>2</sup> See Sketch 16, facing page 352.

<sup>3</sup> The 1st Burma Regiment was in Sumatra; see page 357.

Affairs in Java generally and in Sourabaya in particular were by this time creating an embarrassing situation for the British Government in their relations with the Netherlands Government. Van Mook had had a meeting with Dr. Soekarno and other Indonesian leaders on the 31st October at which he had handed them for consideration, pending a final meeting to be held at a later date, the Dutch proposals for implementing Queen Wilhelmina's Proclamation. They included a proposal that all who had been guilty of crimes of violence should be brought to justice and all seized property returned to its rightful owners. The meeting had been friendly but reached no agreement. Since vigorous action was essential in view of the critical situation which had arisen in Sourabaya, Denning on the 2nd November proposed that another meeting should be held on the 5th at which Van Mook could put the final Dutch terms before the Indonesian leaders, who should be given twenty-four hours to consider them in preparation for a final meeting on the 6th.

Mountbatten told the Chiefs of Staff on the 3rd November that he agreed with Denning and would put his proposals into effect unless they decided against it. The Chiefs of Staff, however, felt that they could not make a decision until Mountbatten had sent them a full appreciation of all the factors involved, and the Defence Committee was in some doubt whether the timing proposed for the meeting would allow isolated British garrisons and internees camps to be withdrawn to more concentrated and defensible areas. Denning, however, had already decided to defer the meeting until the 8th to ensure that the military would be better able to meet possible violent Indonesian reactions.

One of the conditions which the Netherlands Government imposed, in spite of protests from Van Mook and the British authorities in S.E.A.C., was that Van Mook was to have no further dealings with Soekarno.<sup>1</sup> A further condition, agreed to by all, was that the Indonesian failure to maintain law and order made it necessary for the Allies to take over public utilities, although in doing so they would continue as far as possible to keep on the Indonesian employees concerned. Since it was possible that the Indonesian reaction to these conditions would be hostile, it was decided, after consulting Mansergh, that the final meeting should be yet again postponed to the 10th to give Mansergh time to bring internees and isolated detachments to places of safety. As will be seen the meeting did not take place.<sup>2</sup>

On the 6th November Mountbatten sent the Chiefs of Staff the detailed appreciation they had asked for, in which he concluded

<sup>1</sup> The British took the view that, if Soekarno were barred from the meeting, the Indonesians would boycott it.

<sup>2</sup> See pages 334-5.

that, if a reasonable political settlement were reached between the Dutch and Indonesian leaders, he would require a corps of three divisions and one armoured brigade in Java (i.e. one division more than in the existing plan). The only way he could find this would be to use 2nd Division,<sup>1</sup> or 20th Division when it was relieved by the French in French Indo-China. This would entail postponing the relief of Australian troops in Borneo. If, on the other hand, the Dutch/Indonesian negotiations on the 10th broke down, he would need an army of two corps (each of three divisions) with naval and full air support, including air supply. Since he could find only one of the extra four divisions required in the second case he urged, if so large a force could not be made available, that the British and Australian Governments should impose a political settlement on the Dutch and Indonesians. Meanwhile, in the event of there being no agreement, he required a directive telling him whether he was to use all necessary force to protect indefinitely the vast numbers of internees until they could be evacuated, whether he was to reinstate the Dutch at all costs and, if so, where the extra forces he needed would come from.

In their reply the Chiefs of Staff reiterated the task already given to Mountbatten, i.e. to disarm and evacuate the Japanese, ensure the safety of Allied prisoners and internees and establish secure bases through which Dutch forces could be passed. It would not, they said, be possible to provide reinforcements from outside S.E.A.C. but the British Government intended to press The Hague to secure a reasonable political settlement. There was no objection to his sending an extra division, if necessary a composite one, from his own resources to Java but it was to be done, if possible, by using shipping already at his disposal.

Mountbatten sent them his plan on the 13th November. He pointed out that the Netherlands East Indies had become a greater commitment than had ever been contemplated and the forces there had become unbalanced. He gave details of the redeployment he intended to carry out in order to reinforce Java but gave warning that, depending on the situation in the country, they might have to be considerably modified.<sup>2</sup> On the 21st November, at the request of the Chiefs of Staff, he prepared reviews of the situation for the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs and Field-Marshal Sir Henry Maitland Wilson, head of the British Joint Staff Mission in Washington. For the Secretary of State he outlined the task given him in taking over the Netherlands East Indies, and pointed out that there were 129,000 Dutch prisoners and internees in S.E.A.C. who would have to be

<sup>1</sup> The Chiefs of Staff decided to keep 2nd Division, less its brigade sent to Japan, in mobile reserve in Malaya. The division, less one brigade, arrived in Malaya in November and December; see page 276.

<sup>2</sup> Details of the redeployment are not given as they were drastically revised. For the actual redeployment see Appendix 25.

evacuated either to Europe or to other parts of the command.<sup>1</sup> In Java there were in addition 40,000 Oriental displaced persons who, with the 78,800 Dutch internees on the island, were being concentrated for protection in four main areas: Batavia, Buitenzorg, Bandoeng and Semarang. In Sourabaya, the main trouble spot, there were 16,000 (mainly Dutch) internees and prisoners-of-war, of whom 6,000 had been taken to Singapore and the rest were about to be taken to Batavia where they could be more easily protected. Indonesian forces, to whom the Japanese in central and east Java had handed over the bulk of their arms, were believed to be about 100,000 strong, a quarter of whom were well-armed and organized and the rest unorganized but equipped with small arms.<sup>2</sup> Every effort was being made to avoid involving non-combatants in the fighting, and bombing was confined to specific targets known to be strong points or Indonesian headquarters. No adequate Dutch forces were yet in sight, and their internal security battalions were neither properly equipped nor trained, and had no brigade or divisional headquarters, engineers or signals. Once the rescue of internees and disarmament of Japanese had been completed, Indian troops could no longer be used and it did not seem that the Dutch would be in a position to cope with the situation by the time that happened.

For the Chiefs of Staff and the Joint Staff Mission Mountbatten prepared a much briefer note in which he said that a situation would arise when it would be necessary to declare whether British/Indian forces would be withdrawn as soon as all internees had been evacuated and all Japanese forces disarmed, or whether Dutch sovereignty was to be restored by force. If the British/Indian forces were not going to be withdrawn, he considered that a statement to that effect should be issued at once. This particularly applied to Sourabaya where a decision would have to be made very soon. In Batavia it would be possible to hold on for a considerable time since all internees were being concentrated there and, until the Dutch were able to protect them, British/Indian forces could remain there in good faith. He ended by asking for an early and unequivocal declaration of policy.

It was typical of the confused situation in Java that within a few days of the despatch of these reviews a new complication arose, for Mountbatten had to report on the 3rd December that, if Sourabaya were evacuated early, about 147,000 friendly people (including 90,000 Chinese), a number too large to evacuate, would be left at the mercy of the extremists. Semarang could be evacuated as the

<sup>1</sup> 26,000 in places such as Singapore awaiting return to Java; 4,000 temporarily staging in Borneo; 20,200 in Sumatra; and 78,800 in Java.

<sup>2</sup> The weapons handed over were believed to be about 200 guns, 690 heavy and 700 light machine-guns, 25,000 rifles, 1,240 tommy guns, 3,360 revolvers and large quantities of ammunition.

numbers there were not too great to move. He considered that there were three courses open: he could evacuate Sourabaya and Semarang and reinforce Batavia with the troops released, or secondly, he could reinforce Batavia from Siam, evacuate Semarang and hold Sourabaya until a political settlement was arranged or until the Dutch could replace British/Indian forces, and thirdly, he could impose law and order throughout the Netherlands East Indies by force of arms, presumably assisted by the Dutch. Whatever happened, he continued, the relief of Australian troops in Borneo, Celebes and the Outer Islands would be carried out. He proposed to evacuate Palembang and Padang in Sumatra, subject to making arrangements for the protection of the oilfields from sabotage.<sup>1</sup> Pending a decision, he was in the meantime acting on the second of the alternative courses, since it would be easy to switch from it to either of the other two. He followed this up with a second report saying that neither British nor Indian troops liked the idea of fighting to reinstate the Dutch, though they were quite ready to protect women and children from extremists. The existing situation could not be allowed to continue as it would eventually affect morale.

On the 10th December Mountbatten told the Chiefs of Staff that the Batavia-Bandoeng-Buitenzorg area was the only one sufficiently free from extremist influence to be used as a concentration area for the large numbers of internees and refugees who would have to be protected while awaiting repatriation. The forces at his disposal were only just enough to secure these three towns, which could hold no more internees. So that camps could be established outside the towns he intended to reinforce the area by sending, in addition to 36th Brigade (26th Division) which was already on its way,<sup>2</sup> 5th Parachute Brigade from Malaya and 49th Brigade from Semarang, once that town had been cleared of its 35,000 internees and refugees.<sup>3</sup> These proposals were approved by the Defence Committee on the 12th December, by which time A.L.F.S.E.A. had, on the 8th, issued detailed orders for the moves necessary to provide garrisons for or reinforce areas for which S.E.A.C. was responsible.<sup>4</sup> On the 13th Mountbatten decided it would be necessary to move 161st Brigade of 5th Division as well to Batavia and replace it in Sourabaya by 1st Netherlands Marine Brigade, which had been trained in America and was then in Singapore.

An informal political conference was convened on the 17th December and presided over by Christison, with Dutch and Indo-

<sup>1</sup> See page 358.

<sup>2</sup> The 36th Brigade had remained in India when 26th Division moved to Sumatra.

<sup>3</sup> The 49th Brigade moved from Sourabaya to Semarang in late November; see page 338. Semarang was eventually handed over to the Dutch instead of being evacuated; see page 348.

<sup>4</sup> See Appendix 25.

nesian deputations led respectively by Van Mook and Shahrir, but was abandoned on the 22nd December as the Indonesians were not prepared (possibly since Soekarno was not allowed to be present) to accept responsibility for decisions on any matters discussed, particularly on the question of the return of Dutch troops. Van Mook then went to Holland for consultations. Since British and Indian troops were becoming deeply involved against the desires of their respective Governments and it was essential that the Dutch should resume responsibility at the earliest possible moment, the British Government, after discussions with the Dutch, decided on the 15th January 1946 that Sir Archibald Clark-Kerr (later Lord Inverchapel), Ambassador-Designate to the United States, should be sent on a special mission to Java with the specific task of promoting a settlement in the Netherlands East Indies, if possible before the end of March.

The arrival of naval reinforcements at Sourabaya on the 1st November 1945 had resulted in what may have been a gesture of defiance by the extremists, who began to obstruct the move of internees to the port, to raise barricades and to open sporadic and indiscriminate small-arms fire into the dock area. Nevertheless, with the help of Martin's headquarters ship and other craft which had disembarked reinforcements, 2,600 internees were got away on the 2nd to Singapore and Batavia. On the 3rd there was a standstill, but on the 4th an Indonesian contact committee, consisting of the self-styled Governor of East Java (Soerio) and other prominent Indonesians, began negotiations concerning the return of Allied personnel and materials seized in the recent outbreak. There were signs of anxiety among the members of the committee, no doubt caused by the realization that the reinforcements arriving were considerable and that it was intended to use them, if necessary, to ensure the release of internees and prisoners and to restore order. For the time being the contact committee seemed to have gained some control over the extremists, for seven British officers (of whom five were R.A.F.), a Norwegian Merchant Service officer, five British and eighty-seven Indian other ranks were released. The committee also gave the names of five British officers who had been killed, but said it could not discover the fate of two missing officers and a British and an American war correspondent who were in the hands of extremists over whom it had no control. During this brief lull some 4,000 internees, mainly Dutch women and children, were evacuated from the Darmo area to the dock and airfield area and its garrison was withdrawn.

On the 7th November Mansergh attended a meeting at the offices of the contact committee, at which he introduced himself to Soerio

and its members and explained that it was his intention to evacuate all Allied prisoners and internees and any other nationals desirous of leaving, and to disarm and evacuate Japanese troops. He pointed out that, although Soerio had adequate armed police and troops (the T.R.I.) recognized by the Allies, he had failed to stop looting and murder by armed civilians or to hand over Allied wounded, prisoners and vehicles illegally seized during the cease-fire, and that there were still Indonesian tanks and infantry on the airfield allotted to the Allies. Mansergh said that he intended to take over the airfield at 2 p.m. and would leave Pugh to discuss with Soerio arrangements for making good his unfulfilled promises. He then left the meeting.

Pugh had little difficulty in getting agreement to his proposals, but it was soon clear that the contact committee either could not or would not carry them out. Mansergh therefore wrote to Soerio and warned him that, unless looters and rioters were disarmed, he would take over Sourabaya, and suggested that Soerio should meet him at 11 a.m. on the 9th at his headquarters. In a diffusely-worded reply Soerio refused to meet Mansergh, demanded to be treated with greater respect, denied that there had been any disorders and advised him not to carry out his threat to take over the town. It was clear that nothing was to be gained by further parleys and that, unless they could be rescued quickly, the danger of a massacre of internees was now great. On the morning of the 9th an ultimatum was issued to the contact committee by letter to Soerio and by leaflets dropped on the town, which gave the Indonesians until 6 p.m. that evening to hand over hostages and illegal arms, and required the committee to meet Mansergh at his headquarters at that hour. Thereafter Allied forces would carry out a search of the town and any unauthorized person carrying arms would be liable to be sentenced to death.

Mansergh meanwhile issued orders for the occupation of the town to begin at 6 a.m. on the 10th, if the ultimatum had been ignored. The existing divisional perimeter covering the docks west of the Kali Mas canal was to be held by 49th Brigade (one battalion of which had already left to rejoin 23rd Division in the Batavia area) with a troop of 11th Cavalry under command. The perimeter east of the Kali Mas was to be held by 9th Brigade. The 123rd Brigade with 'B' Squadron 11th Cavalry (less one troop) was to carry out a phased occupation of the northern part of the town, with the first task of rescuing some 2,000 Dutch imprisoned in a building near the telephone office. Artillery support in addition to that of 3rd Field Regiment would be available from the destroyers *Caesar*, *Carron* and *Cavalier*; and twelve Mosquitos, two squadrons of Thunderbolts, and two Visual Control Posts (V.C.P.s) would be at call to give air support. Mansergh's overall intention was to safeguard (and restore



where necessary) essential services,<sup>1</sup> to enable the life of the city to function normally and to disarm any Indonesians not authorized to bear arms.

Since there was no response to Mansergh's ultimatum of the 9th the meeting between Van Mook and the Indonesian leaders proposed for the 10th did not take place.<sup>2</sup> The 123rd Brigade began its advance at 6 a.m. on the 10th against sniping and automatic fire, while east of the Kali Mas on the 9th Brigade perimeter two concrete pillboxes were destroyed by 6-pounder anti-tank guns, forty of their garrison being killed. Sourabaya Radio meanwhile poured out hysterical appeals to Indonesians to resist, to kill all prisoners, to poison all food and water, and to America, Russia and China to intervene.

A detailed account of the occupation of Sourabaya is not within the scope of this volume. It was carried out by 5th Division in small bounds against strong and sometimes fanatical opposition supported by artillery and occasionally armour. Each locality was carefully consolidated and cleared of all extremists, so that the normal life of the town in the cleared area could be resumed before the next advance was made. Casualties were heavy, particularly among Indonesian extremists who at times made suicidal attacks against troops in position. Air support was sparingly used, and only against pinpointed Indonesian centres of resistance.

By the 15th November the forward troops were on an east-west line through the Courts of Justice, with the right of 123rd Brigade in the marshalling yards to its west and its left on the Kali Mas canal. East of the canal 9th Brigade had occupied the Gas Works beside the Semampir canal and the Sidotopo marshalling yard to its north-east, from where Indonesian artillery had been active ever since the advance began. It was not until the 28th November that the forward troops reached the Wonokromo canal, thus completing the occupation of the city. Forward defended areas were established along the line of the canal from Darmo Barracks on the right to the sea, with 123rd Brigade on the right and the 9th on the left. The relief of 49th Brigade of 23rd Division by 161st Brigade of 5th Division was completed the same day. The 161st Brigade took up positions in the Grand Hotel-Courts of Justice area in reserve and 49th Brigade withdrew to the airfield, from where it was flown by degrees to Semarang to deal with the crisis there and not to Batavia as originally intended. Indonesian losses in men and materials had been very

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<sup>1</sup> Indonesians controlled the Power Station and Water Works and had cut off both services.

<sup>2</sup> See page 329.

heavy, but they were still unwilling to give up the struggle.<sup>1</sup> Although Sourabaya was quiet by day and the normal life of the city had been resumed, there was still sniping at night. Allied casualties in Java up to the 22nd November (nearly all in Sourabaya) amounted to 608, of which eleven officers and eighty-seven other ranks were killed and fourteen officers and 183 other ranks missing.

The search for arms was continued against sporadic opposition. In the first few days of December another 164 armed Indonesians were killed, eighty-two were taken prisoner and two armoured fighting vehicles, seven guns and a large number of small arms were captured. From then on matters improved, and on the 5th December 161st Brigade was moved by sea to Batavia where the situation was steadily worsening. On the 17th December Tactical Headquarters 1st Netherlands Marine Brigade arrived to prepare for the reception of the brigade. By the 22nd December 1945 comparative peace had descended on Sourabaya. There was a satisfactory response to the call for voluntary surrender of weapons, and Indonesians who had fled from their homes during the fighting were returning in increasing numbers. The fears that this might lead to an increase in sabotage and rioting proved unfounded, and by the end of the month 5th Division had extended its control to an area up to ten miles round the town. There was, however, a recrudescence of extremist activity during the second week of January 1946, and towards the end of the month extremist posters began to appear. It was suspected that arms were being smuggled into the town and there was a strong rumour that there was to be a general uprising on the 1st February. It seems probable that this was what the extremists hoped would happen but, if so, they were disappointed, for the first week of February was recorded as being the quietest since the occupation of Sourabaya.

In the Semarang area, which included Ambarawa and Magelang, the situation at the end of October 1945 gave even more cause for anxiety than that at Sourabaya for, although the forces involved were small, they were isolated, faced with overwhelmingly superior numbers and responsible for the safety of a very large number of internees. At Magelang the headquarters and three companies of 3/10th Gurkha Rifles were under attack by a large force of Indonesians, subsequently estimated at 5,000, supported by guns and mortars.<sup>2</sup> The three companies were isolated from one another and

<sup>1</sup> Their counted dead were 1,618, and their total casualties were estimated at 4,697. Their material losses were 15 A.F.V.s, 47 field guns, 36 A.A. guns, 7 anti-tank guns, 11 mortars, 75 M.M.G.s, 44 L.M.G.s, 794 rifles, 580 miscellaneous firearms, and 400 tons of ammunition.

<sup>2</sup> See pages 321. The Gurkhas' fourth company was guarding camps at Ambarawa.

their communications to Semarang were cut. The air strike ordered by Christison on the 1st November and carried out by six Thunderbolts was very successful,<sup>1</sup> enabling the three companies to regain physical contact and collect a quantity of arms from Indonesian strong points whose garrisons had fled. On the 2nd Soekarno, who had been flown by the R.A.F. to Semarang from Sourabaya after arranging the abortive cease-fire which Mallaby lost his life trying to enforce, went with the C.R.A.'s Brigade Group commander (Bethell) to Magelang. A cease-fire was arranged, and the evacuation of internees was resumed under the supervision of a joint committee consisting of five Allied and five Indonesian members. A convoy of food and ammunition arrived from Semarang escorted by tanks of 11th Cavalry, a troop of which remained to reinforce the garrison and assist in the evacuation of internees. It was agreed that when the evacuation was finished Allied troops, having completed their mission there, would withdraw by way of Ambarawa to Semarang, the concentration area for internees and disarmed Japanese in central Java. The story of Magelang from the 2nd November until the 21st, when the last batch of internees and the garrison left for Ambarawa, was one of continual violations of the cease-fire, and such treacherous acts as the shooting of two Gurkha stretcher bearers who answered an Indonesian appeal for help. In spite of the assurances of the Indonesian members of the evacuation committee that there would be no interference with the move of the garrison to Ambarawa, it had to fight its way there through a series of roadblocks and ambushes. However, treachery had been anticipated and casualties were light.<sup>2</sup> A mined bridge was discovered and most of the Indonesian ambush parties were roughly handled and one annihilated by their more experienced opponents. The battalion arrived at Ambarawa on the 22nd to find that extremists had broken into an internee camp and murdered and mutilated twenty-nine women and children by throwing grenades among them.

At Semarang, the base for Allied forces and internee camps at Magelang and Ambarawa, the Indonesian contact committee had asked Bethell to define the relationship between Allied and Indonesian forces in the light of the agreement reached at Magelang. The answer was clear: cessation of hostilities and no interference with the evacuation of internees and disarmed Japanese. For a few days nothing happened, but on the 9th November, the day of the ultimatum at Sourabaya, it became known that a broadcast had been made exhorting Indonesians at Semarang to resist Allied forces, no matter what the sacrifice. Tension began to mount, but there was no serious trouble until the 17th when Indonesians killed two British

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<sup>1</sup> See page 327.

<sup>2</sup> One killed and ten wounded.

officers and wounded another in Semarang. Bethell took immediate strong action, sending 2/19th Hyderabad Regiment with a troop of tanks of 11th Cavalry to clear the town, and called for R.A.F. support to destroy roadblocks and strong points. He followed this up by sending 6/5th Mahrattas, also supported by tanks, to clear the suburbs, and on the 21st sent a column of all arms to open the road to Ambarawa and link up with the Gurkhas withdrawing there from Magelang.

Heavy fighting broke out at Semarang on the 23rd November when a well-armed force of about 1,500 Indonesians attacked the town from the east. With the help of gunfire from warships in the Semarang anchorage the attack was repulsed with severe loss. On the same day at Ambarawa an attack on the police station and an internee camp was also defeated, and the Gurkhas, following up the retreating Indonesians, captured the jail and released internees and disarmed Japanese. That the Indonesian attacks were part of a co-ordinated plan seemed evident since, while the fighting at Semarang and Ambarawa was going on, the R.A.F. caught a convoy of troops in lorries on the way from Magelang to Ambarawa and dispersed it, setting four lorries on fire. On the 25th November Indonesian attacks were renewed, this time supported by artillery, but, after losing about 800 men in killed alone, their disheartened infantry broke contact and disappeared. Four days later artillery suddenly opened fire on the town and internee camps, and by the time the R.A.F. had located the guns and silenced them forty-seven people, including twenty soldiers, had been killed.

On the 27th 49th Brigade (now commanded by Brigadier A. de B. Morris),<sup>1</sup> less one battalion, arrived from Sourabaya by air and moved out to Oengaran, about half-way between Semarang and Ambarawa, to cover the withdrawal of internees and 3/10th Gurkhas to Semarang. On the 30th November a small column of all arms opened the road to Ambarawa against slight opposition, and the next day evacuation of internees was resumed. By the 10th December 10,077 internees, about 200 friendly Chinese and Eurasians and forty-nine lorry loads of R.A.P.W.I. stores had been moved to Semarang and during the next four days 49th Brigade also withdrew there, relieving the *ad hoc* C.R.A.'s Brigade which was then dissolved.<sup>2</sup>

To deal with extremist guerrillas and outbreaks of arson in Semarang, Morris decided to carry out a systematic sweep of the whole area as far afield as Oengaran. Operations were supported by

<sup>1</sup> Pugh had been posted to the United Kingdom.

<sup>2</sup> The 49th Brigade's order of battle in Semarang on the 15th December was 4/5th Mahrattas, 2nd Kumaon Regiment (late 2/19th Hyderabad), 3/10th Gurkhas, 'A' Squadron 11th Cavalry (light tanks), 6th Indian Field Battery, one troop 2nd Indian Anti-Tank Regiment, *Kido Battalion* and a proportion of divisional engineer, supply and workshop units.

any warships that happened to be in the anchorage,<sup>1</sup> and by the 23rd December Indonesian artillery and mortars dared to fire only during periods of mist or heavy rain and even then in very short spells, while guerrilla bands usually fled on meeting patrols.

On the 11th January 1946 the advanced party of 5th Parachute Brigade (Brigadier J. H. N. Poett) arrived from Batavia, followed during the next three days by the rest of the brigade.<sup>2</sup> Command at Semarang passed to it on the 14th, and 49th Brigade moved to Batavia by air and sea, completing the concentration of 23rd Division in that area. The stay of 5th Parachute Brigade at Semarang was short and on the whole uneventful. Life gradually returned to normal, and the Dutch even reopened their clubs. On the 22nd February A.F.N.E.I. issued a warning order that the brigade would return to Malaya on relief by Dutch troops.

In Batavia the effect of the successes claimed by the terrorists at Sourabaya and Magelang began to be felt early in November 1945. The 23rd Division had 1st Brigade (King) in Batavia and 37th Brigade (Macdonald) in Bandoeng with a detachment at Buitenzorg on the road between Batavia and Bandoeng. Shooting incidents began in Batavia on the 1st November, involving in the first instance mostly Dutch or Ambonese and Indonesians. The first serious clash with troops of 23rd Division took place on the 8th when 500 Indonesians attacked an internee camp, but they were easily driven off and left behind ten dead. Two Indian soldiers were wounded. An ominous feature of these outbreaks was that Indonesian police were found to be looting during disturbances, and it became quite clear that they were making no attempt to keep order. Later it was found necessary to disarm them. Individuals in the streets and sentries were sniped and attacked by armed gangs, vehicles were waylaid and seized and clashes with looters were frequent. Dutch Ambonese troops were so 'trigger happy' that Christison obtained Mountbatten's permission to replace them with a Dutch European battalion (trained in Malaya) which landed on the 4th January 1946, the first regular Dutch unit to arrive in the Netherlands East Indies after the war. The second major clash took place on the 24th November near Bekassi, six miles east of Batavia, when a search was being made for survivors of a crashed Dakota who had been seen from the air standing by the wreck. The search party was attacked by armed Indonesians, twenty-five of whom were killed. Later the bodies of

<sup>1</sup> Warships that visited Semarang during December and January included the *Norfolk*, *Carysfort* and *Jamaica*.

<sup>2</sup> The parachute brigade had arrived in Batavia during December from Malaya, completing concentration there on the 20th.

twenty-two soldiers were found buried in a pit near Bekassi jail: it was clear therefore that all the survivors had been murdered.

At Bandoeng there were no outbreaks until the 24th November when roadblocks appeared and attacks began on 37th Brigade and on Japanese detachments coming in to surrender, as well as on internee camps and convoys. Torrential rain and floods hindered operations but by the end of the month the northern part of the town was cleared. Buitenzorg remained quiet during November, except for attempts to seize arms from Japanese detachments assembling in the area, and an attack on a company of 5/8th Punjab withdrawing to the town from an evacuated internee camp. This uneasy peace at Buitenzorg was broken on the 1st December when a convoy a few miles south of the town was intercepted, and in the ensuing fight seventy-two Indonesians were killed. About the same time it was found necessary to bring internees and refugees from outlying areas into Bandoeng to prevent their being molested or killed by extremists. Gurkha troops of 37th Brigade covering the movement were closely followed up but, with the support of Mosquito bombers, inflicted severe losses (including forty-eight counted dead) for the loss of thirteen killed and wounded.

The interception of convoys on the Batavia-Bandoeng road had been causing concern, and, on the 8th December, 36th Brigade Headquarters with 5/9th Jats, which had arrived at Batavia from India four days previously, was sent to Buitenzorg and took command of 5/8th Punjab already there. This reinforcement was timely for on the 10th a big convoy for Bandoeng, escorted by three companies of the Jats and some armoured cars, was held up in a defile about thirty miles south-east of Buitenzorg, one officer and sixteen other ranks being killed and thirty-one wounded. There was hand-to-hand fighting before the Indonesians were driven from their positions, the Jats losing eight more killed and eleven wounded before the convoy reached Bandoeng. Indonesian losses were believed to be about 200, and twenty-five dead were picked up at the scene of the fighting in the defile. Internee camps and 36th Brigade Headquarters at Buitenzorg were also attacked at the same time by large numbers, and a troop of Stuart tanks of 13th Lancers, sent from Batavia as a reinforcement, proved invaluable in clearing communications to camps which had become isolated.<sup>1</sup> It was evident, and future operations were to confirm it, that the Indonesian extremists had realized the importance of Bandoeng as the rallying centre for internees and surrendered Japanese from the interior of west Java,

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<sup>1</sup> The armament of 13th Lancers was fifty medium (Sherman) tanks, eleven light (Stuart) tanks, three armoured cars and four D.8 bulldozers.

and that their most effective strategy would be to cut its communications to Batavia.

The severe setbacks suffered by the extremists during December 1945 had a salutary effect and there were no major clashes in January 1946. After visiting Batavia, Dempsey (A.L.F.S.E.A.) reported to Mountbatten on the 12th January that the situation was ripe for negotiations to begin, but not as yet for the entry of Dutch troops (for which the Dutch were pressing) as it might make negotiations impossible.<sup>1</sup> The various moves of British/Indian forces ordered in December 1945 were carried out without interference, other than from the sniping which was almost a normal feature of life on the outskirts of the occupied areas.<sup>2</sup> There was some half-hearted opposition to the rounding up of suspected extremists and the disarming of civilians, but at the same time local people co-operated in many areas and there was the first sign of official Indonesian co-operation when a trainload of internees from the interior arrived at Batavia on the 22nd January 1946 guarded by Indonesian Republican (T.R.I.) troops. It was nevertheless very doubtful whether the extremists had any intention of giving up the struggle, since there were reliable reports of a build-up of strength in the Bandoeng-Buitenzorg area. By the end of January, however, A.F.N.E.I. troops were in a position to deal with the situation, being well placed to collect and evacuate surrendered Japanese and displaced persons if the forthcoming negotiations succeeded, or to hit the extremists hard if they failed.

On the 1st February Christison, posted to Britain as Commander-in-Chief, Northern Command, was succeeded in command of A.F.N.E.I. by General Stopford, who had just relinquished command in Burma.<sup>3</sup> In implementing Mountbatten's directives, Christison had incurred the hostility of Helfrich and the Netherlands Government, partly no doubt as a result of distorted reports of his actions and words by Indonesian broadcasts, and partly owing to his refusal to take offensive action outside the key areas and his unwillingness to accept Dutch troops until a political settlement had been reached or until they were available in sufficient strength to take effective control. He had, however, worked in harmony throughout with Van Mook, Van der Plas and the local Dutch civilian leaders, and events in the next two months were to show the wisdom of Mountbatten's directives and the way Christison had implemented them. By the time he handed over command he had succeeded in

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<sup>1</sup> The replacement of an Ambonese battalion by the Dutch European battalion in Batavia (see page 339) seems to have passed unnoticed by the Indonesians.

<sup>2</sup> See page 332 and Appendix 25.

<sup>3</sup> See page 261.

creating a situation which for the first time made constructive negotiations possible, a situation of which Clark-Kerr, who arrived the day Christison relinquished his command, took full advantage.

In an A.F.N.E.I. operation instruction issued on the 7th February it was stated that there was little doubt that responsible Indonesian leaders wanted to come to a reasonable agreement with the Dutch, but that none of them as yet was sure enough of his ability to make the extremists conform and so would not take any constructive initiative. The situation was complicated by the fact that there were 72,500 Japanese troops in Java, Bali and Lombok,<sup>1</sup> of whom only 13,954 in the occupied areas of Java had been disarmed, and 159,303 displaced persons of all categories in Java, only about half of them in camps and all of whom had to be protected until some settlement was reached. By no means all Japanese troops were anxious to surrender to the Allies, and it was known that some had already joined the Indonesians. Any breakdown in negotiations would increase the prestige of the extremists and lead to more Japanese defections (particularly in the case of isolated detachments short of food and ammunition), and would also endanger the lives of thousands of displaced persons.

To deal with the reported build-up of extremists in the Bandoeng-Buitenzorg area the whole of 23rd Division moved there in the middle of February with a squadron of medium and one of light tanks. Divisional Headquarters with 1st and 49th Brigades concentrated at Bandoeng and 37th Brigade at Buitenzorg.<sup>2</sup> Overall control at Semarang, garrisoned by 5th Parachute Brigade, passed to 5th Division in Sourabaya, and at Batavia to Headquarters 50th Indian Tank Brigade (Brigadier R. O. Critchley), brought in from Malaya, with 161st and 36th Brigades, 6/8th Punjab (M.M.G.) and a squadron of Sherman tanks of 13th Lancers under command.

The uneasy peace in Java continued throughout February. There were no major clashes, but sniping, murder, arson, looting and kidnapping continued outside the perimeters of all occupied areas, although inside them life slowly settled to more or less normal conditions. A total of 7,272 internees and 22,000 Japanese were evacuated from Java during the month, but very few were recovered from the interior in spite of the hopes raised by the arrival recorded earlier of the trainload of internees under Indonesian escort at Batavia on the 22nd January. The main trouble spot was the Bandoeng area, the land communications to which were being raided by extremists. This might have been serious had not the R.A.F. ensured that there

<sup>1</sup> See Map 16, facing page 600.

<sup>2</sup> King was succeeded in command of 1st Brigade by Brigadier K. T. Darling on the 12th January, who in turn was succeeded by Brigadier N. D. Wingrove on the 26th February.





24. Rear-Admiral W. R. Patterson.



25. Major-General D. C. Hawthorn inspecting Jats of 36th Indian Brigade.



26. The first Three-Power Conference in Java, 17th November 1945.  
1: Dr. C. O. Van der Plas; 2: Dr. H. J. Van Mook; 3: Mr. M. E. Denning; 4: Lieut-General Sir Philip Christison; 5: Brigadier N. D. Wingrove; 6: Dr. S. Shahrir.



27. Brigadier A. W. S. Mallaby.





28. Lieut.-General Sir Miles Dempsey, Lieut.-General Sir Philip Christison and Air Commodore C. A. Stevens.



29. Major-General M. Yamamoto, Major-General Nakamura and Lieut.-General Y. Nagano leaving Batavia under escort for Singapore.



30. Lieut.-General Sir Miles Dempsey and Lieut.-General Sir Montagu Stopford.



31. Dr. H. J. Van Mook and Lieut.-General E. C. R. Mansergh.

was no shortage of supplies by landing 2,903 tons of stores there during February, about half for internees and the rest for 23rd Division.

On the 21st January Mountbatten, at their request, sent the Chiefs of Staff his views on the re-entry of Dutch troops to the Netherlands East Indies. There were, he said, two separate territorial groups to be dealt with: one comprised the islands from Borneo and Soembawa eastwards, and the other, Sumatra, Java, Bali and Lombok. In the first group (which had been occupied by the Australians) 32nd Indian Brigade had already taken over British North Borneo, the deployment of Dutch troops in their own former possessions in Borneo was almost complete and 80th Indian Brigade of 20th Division from French Indo-China was on its way to take over Makassar in Celebes.<sup>1</sup> Its arrival would complete the relief of Australian troops and bring the whole of the Netherlands East Indies under control of A.F.N.E.I., Australian troops remaining in occupation of Timor.<sup>2</sup> The second group would need all the Dutch forces trained by S.E.A.C. in Siam and Malaya as well as those already on the way out from Europe, a total of six brigade groups each about 4,000 strong. With the six brigade groups he could relieve all British/Indian troops in Java and disband H.Q. XV Corps, but this would leave no troops to be sent to Sumatra unless part of the Dutch division due from Europe in October could arrive earlier. The relief of the R.A.F. by Dutch air forces would be co-ordinated with that of ground forces. The Chiefs of Staff accepted this plan on the 1st February, the day Clark-Kerr arrived at Batavia. His informal talks, begun on the 10th with all concerned, were so successful that on the 21st he was able to recommend that the re-entry of Dutch troops into Java on a large scale could begin early in March.<sup>3</sup> The six Dutch formations at Mountbatten's disposal were 1st Netherlands Marine Brigade and five brigade groups, designated 'T', 'U', 'V', 'W' and 'X', and he proposed to begin to deploy them on the 1st March, the marine brigade in Sourabaya, 'T' Brigade Group in Semarang, 'U' and 'V' Brigade Groups in Batavia and two battalions in Bali and Lombok. The 'X' Brigade Group would later go to Sourabaya and 'W' Brigade Group to Batavia. This plan was approved by the Chiefs of Staff, subject to the proviso that none of the moves was to be made without their prior sanction.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> See page 354.

<sup>2</sup> See page 353.

<sup>3</sup> Clark-Kerr was succeeded in the role of intermediary between the Dutch and Indonesians in May by Lord Killearn, who arrived in Singapore on the 16th March to take up his appointment as Special Commissioner in South-East Asia. See pages 350 and 367.

<sup>4</sup> The proviso was made since a Dutch battalion had been landed on Bangka Island, off Sumatra, on the 11th February without the approval of the Chiefs of Staff or the Foreign Office. This had caused some political embarrassment and given rise to restlessness in Palembang and Indonesian suspicion of British intentions. See pages 359-60.

On the 3rd March, preceded by a British Mission to take the surrender of the Japanese, two battalions of Dutch troops were landed in Bali, and occupied key points on the island without any opposition, although patrol clashes with extremists soon began to occur. One of the battalions moved on to Lombok on the 27th and received a cordial reception. The landing of Dutch troops in Java, also originally planned for the 3rd March, was postponed till the 9th to allow negotiations between Van Mook and Shahrir to get well under way. It was soon evident, however, that the extremists were not prepared to accept Dutch reoccupation, and that reports of a build-up of their strength in the Buitenzorg-Bandoeng area were well founded. When fighting broke out there on a large scale, it was found that the extremists were being assisted by Indonesian Republican troops (T.R.I.) and Japanese.

The country in the Buitenzorg-Bandoeng area alternated between ricefields, flooded at the time of year in which the operation about to be described took place, and thickly-forested mountains rising to close on 10,000 feet, the slopes becoming steeper and the forest thicker as one ascended. All vehicles were virtually roadbound, and movement off the road for infantry was difficult and slow. The route followed by convoys from Buitenzorg to Bandoeng was by way of Soekaboemi, since the shorter route north of Pangrango peak, which joined the Soekaboemi route at Tjiandjoer, was too steep for loaded vehicles. The total distance was about 100 miles, half of which was through ricefields and the rest through mountains. The only danger in the rice-growing areas was from mines of which, fortunately, the Indonesians apparently had few, but the higher stretches in the mountains provided ideal country for the hit-and-run ambushes favoured by the guerrillas, and convoys had to be escorted through these areas by infantry on foot moving through the forest on each side of the road. It is notable, but not surprising, that the Indonesians were not given to destroying bridges, and only one occasion is recorded of their diverting flood waters in the rice cultivation area to wash away the road. They concentrated their main effort on a stretch of road about twenty miles long in the Soekaboemi area, and on one of ten miles in the sector between Bandoeng and the Tjitareem suspension bridge. On the 10th March a supply convoy from Buitenzorg to Bandoeng, escorted by 1st Patiala Infantry, ran into opposition some twenty miles south of Buitenzorg. It fought its way to Soekaboemi (losing eleven killed and thirty-two wounded in the process) and harboured there for the night under continuous sniping and mortar fire. The next day it moved on but, impeded by frequent roadblocks, made slow progress and got only twelve miles beyond Soekaboemi; casualties were slight, but severe losses had been inflicted on the Indonesians and its harbour for the night was not



molested. On the morning of the 11th columns moved out from Buitenzorg and Bandoeng to its assistance. The Buitenzorg column, which consisted of 'A' Squadron 13th Lancers (medium tanks) and its attendant motorized infantry company of Bombay Grenadiers, ran into mines near Soekaboemi and had to halt for the night to carry out repairs with the help of spare parts dropped by the R.A.F. The column from Bandoeng, consisting of 5/6th Rajputana Rifles, a troop of light tanks of 11th Cavalry and a troop of 25-pounder guns, had its administrative tail ambushed ninety minutes after leaving Bandoeng and suffered twenty-two casualties, both medical officers accompanying the column being wounded. At 3 p.m. the head of the column reached the suspension bridge over the Tjitaroem river, about twenty-four miles from Bandoeng, and had to clear a manned roadblock before harbouring for the night west of the bridge.

On the morning of the 12th, a day of torrential rain, there were thus three columns on the road: the squadron of 13th Lancers just west of Soekaboemi, the main convoy twelve miles east of it and the Rajputs at the suspension bridge. The convoy stood fast all day and was joined by the tanks that afternoon. The Rajput column continued its advance to meet the convoy and reached Tjiandjoer unopposed, from where a fighting patrol, accompanied by the column commander in a tank, set out to try to meet the convoy, apparently unaware that it had not moved that day and was still a long way off. The column commander's tank skidded in the mud, fell twenty feet into a ravine and had to be abandoned; some of its occupants including the column commander were badly injured, and the patrol returned without making contact. The whole column then returned, on orders from 23rd Division, to secure the suspension bridge until further orders.

At 6.15 p.m. on the 13th, Tactical Headquarters 1st Brigade, whose commander (Wingrove) had been instructed to take charge of the defence of the convoy for the rest of its journey, moved out from Bandoeng to meet it with 3/10th Gurkhas and a troop of tanks of 11th Cavalry, intending as a first step to link up with the Rajputana Rifles. Resistance was met as soon as the column reached the hills, and the infantry had to get out of their lorries and continue the advance on foot with flank guards consisting of a company on each side of the road moving by bounds. Roadblocks of large felled trees were encountered every few hundred yards, and it was 1.30 p.m. before more open country enabled the advance in motor transport to be resumed; but within half an hour the centre of the column came under fire. The area was cleared and the advance continued once again on foot, but the column had to harbour for the night at the edge of the ricefields nine miles short of the bridge.

The convoy in the meantime had made good progress and at night-fall on the 13th it had harboured four miles from the bridge and the Rajputana Rifles; all three columns were therefore able to link up early on the 14th. The convoy passed through the area protected by the Rajputana Rifles and the Gurkhas and reached Bandoeng that afternoon, encountering only minor opposition in the hills west of the town. The Rajputana Rifles remained covering the bridge; the Gurkhas and brigade headquarters followed the convoy, but the former remained out until the 15th to mop up the hill section west of the town. During its journey from Buitenzorg to Bandoeng the convoy suffered seventeen killed and eighty-eight wounded, and the total casualties of the whole operation were close on 150. Such a state of affairs could not be allowed to continue, and A.F.N.E.I. ordered 36th Brigade to leave Batavia on the 14th and establish its headquarters at Tjiandjoer. It was then to take the Rajputana Rifles under command and deploy to protect the route from Soekaboemi to the suspension bridge, both inclusive.

On the 14th March, the day the Bandoeng convoy battle ended, Mountbatten told the Chiefs of Staff that the entry of Dutch troops into Java, begun on the 9th March, would continue as fast as ships could carry them: the Dutch 1st Marine Brigade and 'X' Brigade Group were going to Sourabaya and he hoped to evacuate all British/Indian troops from there (5th Division, less one brigade, with a proportion of corps troops) by the second week in April. The Dutch 'T' Brigade Group of four battalions was going to Semarang and he proposed to remove 5th Parachute Brigade from there by the third week in April and, since all Japanese in that area had been evacuated, hand over local command to the Dutch. The remaining three Dutch brigade groups ('U', 'V' and 'W') were going to west Java from where, in addition to the two battalions already sent back to India, he proposed to evacuate 36th Brigade (26th Division) and 161st Brigade (5th Division) by mid-April. He planned to keep Headquarters XV Corps and 23rd Division in west Java until the arrival of a Dutch division from Holland in the autumn, but on this he asked for specific instructions. He also proposed to order all Japanese troops in central and east Java to march to the nearest British base, and he hoped that the Indonesians would agree to giving them free passage. He now needed a clear statement of policy on two questions which Van Mook had raised: whether, in the event of successful negotiations with the Indonesians, the British would assist the Dutch to eliminate the guerrilla bands who would undoubtedly go on fighting, and whether, if negotiations were to break down, the British would fight alongside the Dutch to clear west Java.



On the 28th March the Chiefs of Staff replied that the Netherlands Government were greatly perturbed at the proposed withdrawal of British/Indian troops, and suggested that it should be deferred for a fortnight or so. The Chiefs of Staff also felt that 5th Parachute Brigade, being the only all-British formation in Java, should be among the last to leave. To this Mountbatten demurred, pointing out that any Indian brigade evacuated instead of 5th Parachute Brigade would have to go to India and would be lost to him, whereas the 5th would go to Malaya and remain in reserve, and that any general delay in the evacuation programme would completely throw out the very carefully balanced shipping plan. Circumstances, however, forced his hand because the situation in the Batavia-Buitenzorg-Bandoeng area made it essential to defer the evacuation of 36th and 161st Brigades until late April and early May, the same time as the evacuation from Semarang and Sourabaya.

As a result of a meeting held at 10 Downing Street on the 12th April with Netherlands Ministers, at which Clark-Kerr and Van Mook were present, Mountbatten was told on the 15th that the Netherlands Government were ready to accept the substance of an Indonesian proposal for a treaty, but only in the form of an exchange of notes. The replacement of British/Indian forces by Dutch was therefore to continue, the British being prepared to provide the Dutch forces with equipment and supplies and continuing for the time being to maintain law and order in the Batavia-Buitenzorg-Bandoeng area but nowhere else.

It will be noted that Mountbatten had still received no answer to the questions he had asked on the 14th March about fighting alongside the Dutch. He therefore pressed for an answer on the 22nd April and was informed that, at the Downing Street meeting, it had, among other things, been made clear to the Dutch that it would not be possible for British/Indian troops to be used to mop up extremists outside the occupied areas or to round up Japanese who had refused to come in to surrender, although, until the Dutch division arrived from Europe, British/Indian troops would continue to hold Batavia, Buitenzorg and Bandoeng as a firm base from which Dutch troops could operate.

This decision did not, however, mean that Dutch troops had a free hand to carry out any operations they wished, since, until the Netherlands Government assumed control in Indonesia, all troops remained under command of the Supreme Allied Commander, South-East Asia and, in Java and Sumatra, under orders of the Commander-in-Chief, Allied Forces Netherlands East Indies.

On the 14th April a redistribution of 23rd Division was begun so that 36th Brigade could be released for evacuation to India in compliance with Mountbatten's plans for the rundown of British/Indian forces as the Dutch came in. A Dutch brigade was moved from Batavia to Bandoeng to relieve 1st Brigade, which then took over the Tjiandjoer area, thus releasing 36th Brigade which moved to Batavia on the 22nd April *en route* for India. The next step was the formation of the Buitenzorg Brigade under command of Bethell (C.R.A. 23rd Division) on the 27th April to relieve 37th Brigade, which in turn was to release 161st Brigade in Batavia for evacuation to India.<sup>1</sup>

On completion of these moves the garrison at Bandoeng consisted of Headquarters 23rd Division, 49th Brigade and the Dutch 'V' Brigade Group, while 1st Brigade with its headquarters at Tjiandjoer was guarding the line of communication to Buitenzorg with permanent pickets at vulnerable points on the road. The newly-formed C.R.A.'s brigade was at Buitenzorg, and 37th Brigade was in Batavia (less one of its own battalions but with 2nd Bombay Grenadiers, the motorized battalion of 50th Tank Brigade) under direct command of A.F.N.E.I., together with 'U' and 'W' Dutch Brigade Groups. The detachments of 13th Lancers were withdrawn to Batavia from Semarang and Sourabaya during April, while the tanks of 11th Cavalry were handed over to the Dutch and its personnel evacuated to India. Semarang and Sourabaya were handed over to the Dutch during April and May. The last British troops of 5th Parachute Brigade left Semarang on the 26th April, and 5th Indian Division (Divisional Headquarters with 123rd and 9th Brigades from Sourabaya and 161st Brigade from Batavia) embarked for India during April and May. Mansergh, its commander, was promoted Lieut.-General and appointed to be Commander, A.F.N.E.I. on the 19th April to succeed Stopford, who replaced Dempsey as Commander-in-Chief, A.L.F.S.E.A.<sup>2</sup> On the 1st June 1946 Mountbatten vacated the post of Supreme Allied Commander, South-East Asia, and Stopford was appointed Acting Supreme Commander in addition to his appointment as Commander-in-Chief, A.L.F.S.E.A.<sup>3</sup>

When Stopford took over from Mountbatten, all countries in S.E.A.C. were still suffering from the effect of war in spite of the vast amount which had been done to repair damage and restore economic life. Recovery was being hampered by lack of labour, political strife, strikes and lawlessness, and there was a serious shortage of food, a black market and severe inflation. All British territories in the command, except British North Borneo, Labuan and Brunei, had been

<sup>1</sup> The Buitenzorg Brigade consisted of a battalion of 37th Brigade and 5/8th and 6/8th Punjab, which were unbrigaded battalions with 23rd Division.

<sup>2</sup> Dempsey went to the Middle East as Commander-in-Chief.

<sup>3</sup> See pages 370-1.

handed over to civil administration, but the army was still having to assist in internal security as police forces were as yet inadequate and largely untrained and there was widespread banditry and political agitation.<sup>1</sup> The Netherlands East Indies was, in Stopford's words, 'in a state of uneasy quiet' while the Indonesians considered the proposals brought back by Van Mook from Holland. Minor clashes on the Allied perimeters in Java continued. All Allied prisoners-of-war and internees had been evacuated from every country except the Netherlands East Indies, where there were still large numbers in the interior (about whom there was no accurate information) and thousands of refugees whose safety could not be guaranteed.<sup>2</sup> The evacuation of surrendered Japanese was going on as fast as MacArthur could produce ships to carry them,<sup>3</sup> and the reduction of the South-East Asia garrison was going well. About 100,000 Indian troops had been repatriated and a steady stream of British troops was being sent to the United Kingdom for demobilization.

During the second half of June there was a further regrouping in west Java when 23rd Division handed over Bandoeng and the line of communication to it from Buitenzorg to 'B' Dutch Division Headquarters at Soekaboemi, and concentrated in what was known as the Batavia-Bandoeng bridgehead with 'U' Dutch Brigade and 13th Lancers (less a detachment at Bandoeng with the Dutch) under command.<sup>4</sup> It must be remembered that all Dutch forces in Indonesia were at this time still under the overall command of A.F.N.E.I. The 'uneasy quiet' which existed at the beginning of June began to break down as Dutch troops took over. Extremists attacked Bandoeng, Sourabaya and Semarang, the last-named particularly heavily and were repulsed with severe losses. Nevertheless the negotiations between Shahrir and Van Mook continued, although Shahrir would make no agreements without first consulting Soekarno who was at his 'temporary capital' Jogjakarta. A scheme to evacuate internees to Batavia by British aircraft was begun from Solo airfield near Soerakarta, where they were assembled from the interior of central and east Java by the Indonesians. It continued until the 24th July, by which time some 18,000 had been evacuated, but was then

<sup>1</sup> The French had resumed control in French Indo-China but there were still British/Indian troops in Siam (but not in occupation of the country) dealing with the great numbers of Japanese troops and labourers imported by the Japanese, all of whom had to be repatriated. See Chapter XXVII.

<sup>2</sup> The refugees were of various races but predominantly Chinese.

<sup>3</sup> See Appendix 27. Stopford was able to report the completion of evacuation of Japanese from Java (except for those temporarily retained for labour) on the 22nd June.

<sup>4</sup> 'B' Dutch Division Headquarters and 'A' Dutch Division Headquarters at Sourabaya (which was also responsible for Semarang) were set up to take charge, under the overall command of A.F.N.E.I., of the six Dutch formations arriving in Java (see page 343). 'B' Division Headquarters later moved to Batavia; see Appendix 26.

abruptly terminated as a reprisal for a Dutch naval raid in the Bali Strait carried out without the approval of General Mansergh (Commander, A.F.N.E.I.), and it was weeks before evacuations were resumed, this time by train, to Batavia. The extremists made a determined effort in the last week of June to stop the airlift by kidnapping Shahrir, two of his 'Cabinet Ministers' and the Indonesian major-general in charge of the evacuation scheme, all of whom were at the Solo airfield. Soekarno's prestige was, however, sufficient to ensure their speedy release and little harm was done.

On the 10th July the Chiefs of Staff ordered Stopford to hand over the Outer Islands to the Dutch, and from midnight on the 13th/14th July all the Netherlands East Indies, except Java, Sumatra and the Rhio Archipelago, ceased to be part of S.E.A.C.,<sup>1</sup> although the command was to remain responsible for delivering supplies in bulk to Bangka, Billiton, Bali and Lombok until either the Dutch could undertake to deliver supplies themselves or the 31st December, whichever was earlier.<sup>2</sup>

On the 14th August joint planning with the Dutch for the final withdrawal of British/Indian forces from Java began. It had already been made clear to the Dutch that all British/Indian forces would be evacuated by the 30th November, whether they had been relieved by Dutch forces or not. In Java it was planned to withdraw 23rd Division in four stages, with the reserve brigade (49th) being clear by the 15th October, the Buitenzorg Brigade by the 5th November, Headquarters 23rd Division and 1st Brigade by the 20th and the Batavia garrison (37th Brigade) by the 30th. The R.A.F. was to leave in three phases: 31 (Transport) Squadron by the 15th October, 60 Squadron and 656 Air O.P. Squadron by the 15th November and the rest by the 30th. All British/Indian forces in Sumatra were also to be clear by the 30th November. These dates were closely adhered to except for 49th Brigade which left on the 10th September, over a month before the planned date. Rear Headquarters XV Corps (A.F.N.E.I.) left Batavia on the 29th November, and the next day South-East Asia Command ceased to exist and was replaced by a British Defence Committee.<sup>3</sup>

Negotiations for a political settlement with the Indonesian Republic, in which Lord Killearn acted as intermediary,<sup>4</sup> began after the arrival of a Dutch Commission-General from Holland on the 17th September. On the 15th November the Agreement of Linggadjati, in which the Republic of Indonesia gained *de facto* recognition, was initialled at Batavia. Although it did nothing to lessen

<sup>1</sup> See page 355.

<sup>2</sup> See Map 16, facing page 600. These four islands were close either to Sumatra or Java.

<sup>3</sup> See Chapter XXXI.

<sup>4</sup> See page 343 fn.3.

extremist activity, the agreement went a long way towards satisfying Indonesian aspirations and seemed then to hold out some prospect of peaceful co-operation between them and the Dutch. By outlining a political settlement it enabled the inevitable withdrawal of British/Indian forces to be carried out by the 30th November without worsening the military situation, and without the levelling of any charge of forsaking the Dutch. Whatever has been said or happened since, it was quite clear at the time that there was appreciation among both the Dutch and the Indonesians of the way in which British/Indian forces had carried out the difficult task which had cost them 2,136 casualties.<sup>1</sup> In his final message to them Van Mook said, 'You came to save and stayed to protect; your departure, coinciding with the dawn of peace in this country, leaves us with feelings of gratitude and regret and with the memory of an arduous task well done'. Dr. Shahrir, in his farewell address, said, 'Under all circumstances, even in unfriendly contact or in conflict with us we learnt to appreciate and admire you . . . your politeness, your kindness and your dignified self-restraint. Long after you have left, when the wounds caused by war and revolution have been healed, I think this final impression of your Army will be the lasting memory for our people of your stay in our country.' The forces in South-East Asia Command could hardly have earned a finer epitaph.

<sup>1</sup> Casualties to the 9th November 1946 were:

	<i>Killed</i>			<i>Wounded</i>			<i>Missing</i>		
	Army	R.N.	R.A.F.	Army	R.N.	R.A.F.	Army	R.N.	R.A.F.
British Officers	28	—	10	63	—	2	6	2	—
Viceroy's Commissioned Officers	13	—	—	44	—	—	3	—	—
British Other Ranks	22	—	12	62	—	20	14	4	1
Indian Other Ranks	537	—	—	1251	—	—	297	—	—
Totals	600	—	22	1420	—	22	320	6	1

The discrepancy of 255 between the figure in the text and this table presumably represents missing recovered between the 9th and 30th November, or confirmed deserters. Indian troops, particularly Mohammedans, were subjected to continuous propaganda by Indonesian Mohammedans.

Dutch casualties, including Ambonese and other local forces, during the same period were given as 187 killed, 564 wounded and 22 missing.

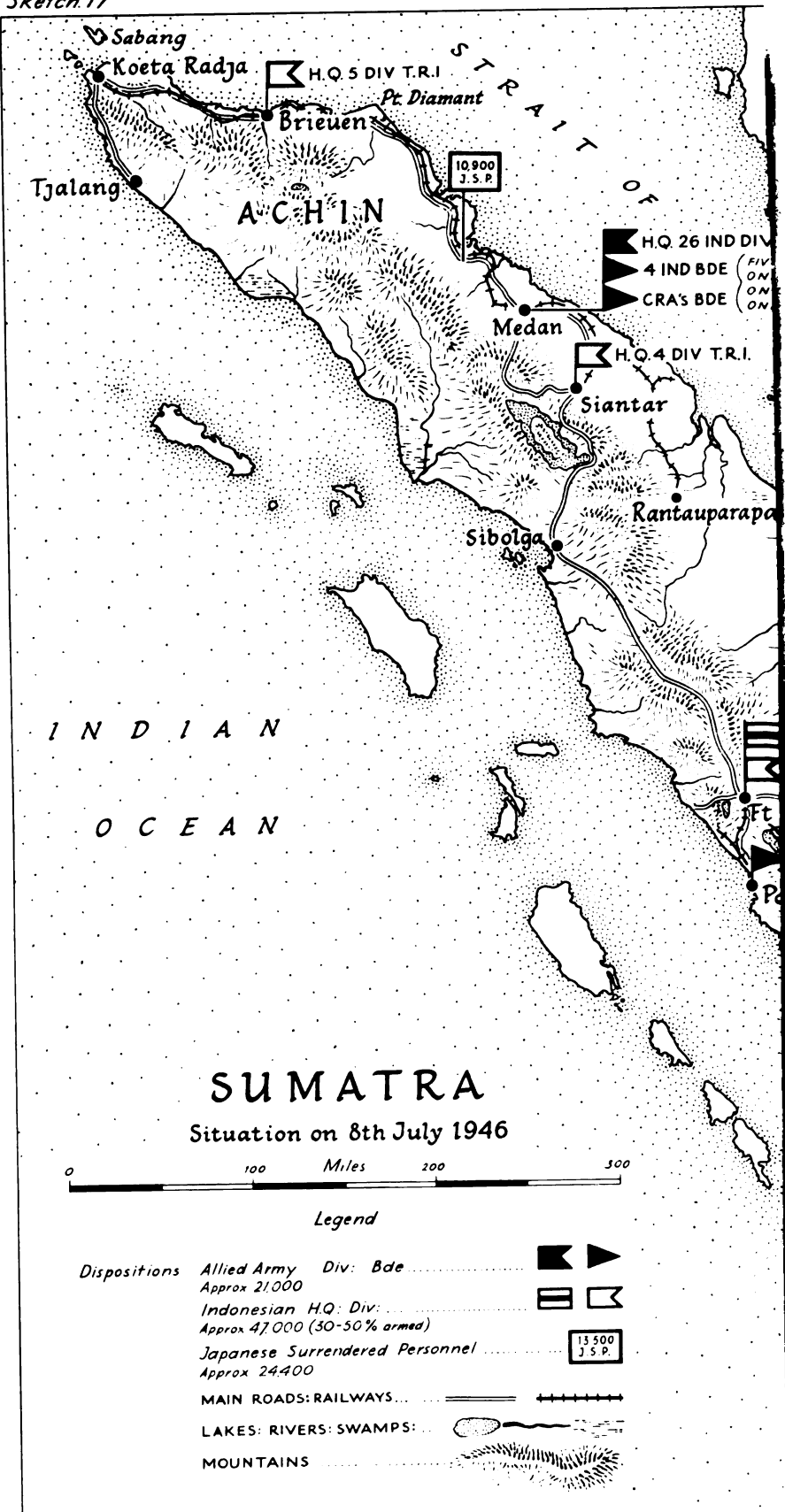












## CHAPTER XXX

# THE NETHERLANDS EAST INDIES

## The Outer Islands and Sumatra

(September 1945—November 1946)

*See Map 16 and Sketch 17*

**W**HAT became known, for the sake of convenience, as the Outer Islands comprised the whole of the Netherlands East Indies except Java, Sumatra (including Bangka and Billiton) and the Rhio Archipelago; in other words Borneo (the northern part of which was British), Celebes and western New Guinea, the many islands lying between Celebes and New Guinea and the chain running eastwards from Java, with the exception of Bali and Lombok which had been taken over during the operations in Java.<sup>1</sup> During the war the islands had been the responsibility of the Japanese Navy which, unlike the Japanese Army in Java, had not encouraged nationalism.<sup>2</sup> Parts of Dutch New Guinea and Borneo had been captured by Australian forces in the final phase of the Pacific campaign in 1945,<sup>3</sup> and the remaining Outer Islands had been occupied without opposition by detachments of the Australian 7th and 9th Divisions after the Japanese surrender. When the boundaries of S.E.A.C. had been extended to include the whole of the Netherlands East Indies,<sup>4</sup> it was agreed between Mountbatten and Blamey that S.E.A.C. would eventually relieve Australian forces throughout the area except for Timor and Dutch New Guinea.<sup>5</sup>

The Indonesian nationalist movement had not affected British Borneo and was weak enough in Dutch Borneo and the other Outer Islands to make it possible for the Australians to hand over control to the Dutch, who at an early date had reconstituted some units of the Royal Netherlands Indian Army.<sup>6</sup> In consequence only two British/Indian brigades, sent from French Indo-China when the

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<sup>1</sup> See Map 16, facing page 600, and page 344.

<sup>2</sup> See page 308.

<sup>3</sup> See Chapter XIII.

<sup>4</sup> See Chapter XXI.

<sup>5</sup> See Long, page 553.

<sup>6</sup> The Dutch forces in the Outer Islands consisted of four European and one Papuan battalion and five European and thirty-five Indonesian independent companies, grouped under six headquarters spread throughout the islands. See Appendix 26.

French relieved 20th Division there, were needed to relieve the Australians. The 32nd Brigade (Woodford) began to leave Saigon by sea for British Borneo on Christmas Day 1945; its headquarters and 3/8th Gurkhas landed at Labuan on the 29th December, 4/2nd Gurkhas landed at Jesselton in British North Borneo on the 1st January 1946 and 9/14th Punjab landed at Kuching in Sarawak on the 3rd. The 80th Brigade (Taunton) began its move from Saigon on the 22nd January,<sup>1</sup> and arrived at Makassar in Celebes on the 1st February.

The stay of 32nd Brigade in British Borneo was uneventful. There were no disturbances and a rapid handover to Civil Administration took place. The brigade left Borneo for India in May 1946, 3/8th Gurkhas embarking at Labuan on the 3rd and 9/14th Punjab at Kuching on the 5th. The 4/2nd Gurkhas replaced the 3/8th at Labuan and embarked from there for Madras on the 28th.

The 80th Brigade's task was to command, administer and maintain Dutch Borneo, Celebes, the Lesser Soenda Islands (excluding Lombok and Timor)<sup>2</sup> and all the Netherlands East Indies islands between Celebes and Dutch New Guinea. Its units were to remain at Makassar in mobile reserve and were not to be moved from there without reference to A.F.N.E.I., except in grave emergency. Under Taunton's overall command the Dutch forces installed by the Australians were responsible for the maintenance of law and order and rehabilitation of all the Outer Islands, any action likely to have political repercussions being referred to the Commander-in-Chief, A.F.N.E.I. (Mansergh). When 80th Brigade took over, the headquarters of N.I.C.A. moved from Morotai, which had been Australian headquarters, to Makassar alongside Taunton's headquarters.<sup>3</sup>

Japanese surrendered personnel in the Outer Islands numbered 179,454, of whom 20,580 were in British Borneo. By the time S.E.A.C. took over they had been concentrated in six areas in some of which they were self-supporting, having been allotted farming and fishing areas, but they mostly had to be fed from Australian or A.L.F.S.E.A. sources. They remained under command of the Japanese *2nd Army* which was controlled by Taunton (80th Brigade) on behalf of Mountbatten. The evacuation of Allied prisoners and internees had already been completed when 80th Brigade arrived, but the bulk of the Japanese still remained until early May when MacArthur was able to send Liberty ships for their repatriation, which was completed by the 30th June.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> See page 305. The 80th Brigade consisted of 4/17th Dogras, 1st Kumaon Regiment (late 1/19th Hyderabad) and 3/1st Gurkha Rifles.

<sup>2</sup> The Soenda Islands comprised Sumatra, Java and the 'tail' of lesser islands running eastwards.

<sup>3</sup> For the N.I.C.A., see page 316 fn.1.

<sup>4</sup> See Appendix 27.

The ending of the close supervision exercised in the Outer Islands by the large Australian force which was now withdrawn naturally encouraged Indonesian extremists to try to obtain control, but except in Celebes their efforts were negligible. Even in Celebes the outbreaks were on a small scale, the largest concentration of extremists met being about 200, armed mainly with pistols and swords, in the south-eastern peninsula on the 14th February. Two days later Dutch Indonesian troops in Menado mutinied by refusing to obey orders and, in spite of the efforts of a British mission flown there as soon as the trouble began, no settlement was reached until the 11th March. By April things had quietened down, and from then on the only trouble came from gangs of robbers and extremists which were dealt with by Dutch patrols.

On the 25th May, when the evacuation of surrendered Japanese was nearing completion, Mountbatten (just before he handed over S.E.A.C. to Stopford) recommended that the Outer Islands should be handed over to the Dutch on the 30th June. The Chiefs of Staff agreed to this in principle, but a month later Stopford suggested that the date should be midnight 7th/8th July Malaya standard time. Strong objections from the Indonesians, and the determination of the Netherlands Government not to accept any restriction on their freedom to introduce further Dutch troops, delayed a decision, but on the 9th July the Prime Minister sanctioned the handover. The Chiefs of Staff told Stopford the next day to carry it out as soon as possible, and authorized Mansergh to arrange the details with the Dutch. The transfer came into effect from midnight 13th/14th July, and 80th Brigade group left during August for India.

Stopford had advised the Chiefs of Staff on the 12th July that, as the repatriation of Japanese surrendered personnel from the Rhio Archipelago concentration areas was almost complete, it also could be handed over to the Dutch. This was not, however, found possible since the maintenance of oil storage depots manned by Indonesians caused complications. The archipelago was eventually handed over at the same time as Java and Sumatra.

At the end of the war the Japanese forces in Sumatra consisted of *25th Army*, commanded by Lieut.-General M. Tanabe, whose headquarters were at Fort de Kock in the mountains some fifty miles north of Padang, with *2nd Imperial Guards Division* in the north disposed mainly along the coast in the Medan area, *25th Independent Mixed Brigade* on the west coast north of Padang and *9th Air Division* in the south at Palembang. Its total strength was about 71,500 men, including ancillary troops and technicians in ports and oilfields.

At the beginning of September Force 136 parties on the island

began, with the help of R.A.P.W.I. parties flown in, to search out and contact prisoner-of-war and internee camps, and before the end of the month all British, Indian and Australian prisoners (totalling about 2,200), many Dutch and Asiatic sick and over 1,000 internees had been evacuated to Singapore by air or by landing craft.<sup>1</sup> With some help from 26th Division when it arrived, the Japanese successfully carried out the concentration of the remaining 13,550 Dutch and Asiatic prisoners and internees in Medan, Palembang and Padang, a very different state of affairs from that in Java.

On the 4th October 1945 a convoy carrying Headquarters 26th Indian Division (Major-General H. M. Chambers), the Naval Force Commander (Captain G. B. Sayer), Headquarters 71st Brigade (Brigadier H. P. L. Hutchinson), Headquarters Royal Artillery 26th Division (Brigadier T. E. D. Kelly), 1st Lincolnshire Regiment, 6th South Wales Borderers, 1/18th Royal Garhwal Rifles and the necessary ancillary and administrative troops sailed from Madras for Sumatra. At sea the convoy split, Naval Headquarters, Headquarters 26th Division, Headquarters 71st Brigade, the Lincolns and the Garhwals making for Padang, half-way down the south-west coast of Sumatra, while Headquarters Royal Artillery with the South Wales Borderers made for Medan on the north-east coast. Each part of the convoy had five L.S.T.s, some of which joined *en route* from Malaya, Colombo and Chittagong.<sup>2</sup>

At Emmahaven, the port of Padang, the Japanese emissaries, led by Major-General Yahagi, Chief of Staff of 25th Army, went on board the L.S.I.(L) *Persimmon* on the 10th October to receive orders, and on the same day other representatives of 25th Army went on board the destroyer *Venus* at Belawan, the port of Medan. Both towns were occupied on the same day and on the 12th Chambers established Headquarters Allied Forces in Sumatra in the town hall at Padang. Three days later 26th Division came under command of A.F.N.E.I., and on the 21st Chambers received the formal surrender of the Japanese forces from Tanabe and the senior Japanese naval officer in the island, Vice-Admiral Hirose.<sup>3</sup>

As in Java, the task of Allied forces in Sumatra was to rescue and evacuate Allied prisoners-of-war and internees, maintain law and order in key areas, disarm and concentrate surrendered Japanese in preparation for their repatriation and arrest those wanted for war crimes. When 26th Division arrived it found Medan and Padang in a state of intense political excitement, with the red and white republican flag well in evidence and numerous political parties, most of

<sup>1</sup> See pages 248-9.

<sup>2</sup> See Sketch 17, facing page 353.

<sup>3</sup> Hirose had moved to Sumatra from Sabang on the 1st September; see page 266.

which contained a hard core of armed youths (*Pemoedas*) trained by the Japanese in guerrilla warfare and all violently anti-Dutch. Members of the self-styled 'Government of the Sumatran Republic', whose headquarters were in Medan, gave assurance that they were prepared to co-operate with the British, but it soon became clear that little would be forthcoming unless Soekarno's 'Central Government' in Java approved. They accused the Ambonese and the N.I.C.A. organization (whose chief, Major-General A. I. Spits, had arrived on the 13th to confer with Chambers) of organizing terrorism, but agreed to hand over their arms provided the Ambonese were also disarmed. The general population at first was indifferent to the British/Indian forces but became hostile when it found that the N.I.C.A. was working with them.

On the arrival in Sumatra of the occupying forces the Japanese had been ordered to vacate Palembang, but on the 16th October they reported that the situation in that area had deteriorated: Indonesian police had attacked an armoury and removed a quantity of arms, which the Japanese were trying to recover, and attempts were being made to abduct Dutch civilians. Reports from R.A.P.W.I. sources requesting permission to suspend concentration of internees in Palembang confirmed the Japanese statement, and in consequence Chambers ordered the Japanese to increase their forces in the town, restore order and ensure the security of the oil refineries. He also asked for reinforcements to enable him to have troops in that area, and on the 24th October 1st Burma Regiment from 5th Division arrived at Palembang from Malaya. Its commanding officer was warned that no official recognition was to be given to the self-styled Republican Government, although individuals belonging to it could be met as private citizens. He was to use the local police as much as possible to control the populace, retain Japanese civilians in key posts and make every effort to persuade the local leaders to arrange the surrender of all arms other than police swords. He could use Japanese troops to enforce law and order, particularly in Palembang town and in the oil refineries, all orders to them being issued through the Commander *9th Air Division* whose Chief of Staff was to be summoned to battalion headquarters to receive them. Dutch armed forces, however, whether European or native, were to be used only for the close guard of internee camps. The arrival of the small Allied force at Palembang quickly restored order and the concentration of prisoners and internees from outlying camps was resumed.

The second lift of Allied troops to Sumatra began on the 29th October with the arrival from Madras at Medan of 6/6th Rajputana Rifles (less the company already at Padang with 26th Divisional Headquarters) with a company of 2nd Patiala Infantry, followed during the next few days by 4th Brigade (Brigadier J. F. R. Forman),

consisting of 2/7th Rajputs, 8/8th Punjab and 2/13th Frontier Force Rifles. The 8/8th Punjab moved across Sumatra by road without incident to join 71st Brigade at Padang, and 6th South Wales Borderers replaced it in 4th Brigade. The forces in the Medan area were then reorganized: Headquarters Royal Artillery 26th Division, with the Rajputana Rifles under command, became Headquarters Medan Area responsible for the security of the town and port, while 4th Brigade was given the task of providing a striking force for operations anywhere in north Sumatra, including keeping open the road from Medan to Fort de Kock. During November and December 4th Brigade was reinforced by 'A' Squadron 146th Regiment R.A.C. (armoured cars), and Medan Area by 12th Frontier Force Machine-Gun Battalion, 7th Indian Field Artillery Regiment and 2nd Patiala Infantry.<sup>1</sup>

Although there was no serious clash involving Allied forces anywhere in Sumatra for the first two months, the bitter enmity between Indonesians on the one hand and Chinese and Ambonese on the other led to outbreaks of sporadic fighting, sniping, kidnapping and murder, and many Dutch and other nationals living outside the protected camps were murdered or kidnapped. In east coast areas occupied by Allied forces (Medan and Palembang) thirty-five outrages were recorded between October and December, twenty of these being murders. None was of British subjects, and many seem to have been without motive other than sheer terrorism.<sup>2</sup> During the same period Indian troops were subjected to persistent propaganda, which had surprisingly little effect considering that it was based on religious grounds calculated to disturb the peace of mind of orthodox Mohammedans. At the beginning of December the general situation was so peaceful that Mountbatten contemplated evacuating all but the Medan area of Sumatra in order to make troops available to help deal with the serious situation in Java, using the Japanese *Imperial Guards Division*, which had up to that time proved obedient and trustworthy, to protect the Palembang oilfields and refineries.<sup>3</sup> Planning to put this into effect began at Headquarters 26th Division on the 17th December, but by that time extremist infiltration from Java was beginning to cause a deterioration in relations with the populace, and the evacuation of Japanese troops, which began in January, made matters worse, for extremists at once moved into the areas vacated.<sup>4</sup> The first serious incident involving Allied forces took place

<sup>1</sup> Later the machine-gun battalion and 6th Rajputana Rifles were transferred to 4th Brigade.

<sup>2</sup> The victims were eight Dutch, seven Ambonese, eleven Eurasians, four Swiss, two Danes, two Chinese and one Swede.

<sup>3</sup> See page 332.

<sup>4</sup> 26,252 Japanese were evacuated during January and February to Rempang Island in the Rhio Archipelago, leaving 45,248 in Sumatra.





32. H.M.S. *Bulolo*, Headquarters Ship of Rear-Admiral B. C. S. Martin.



33. Patrol in Java Jungle.



34. Typical Java landscape, with rice-fields in the foreground.



35. Stuart tanks on patrol in the Sourabaya airfield area.

in Padang early in December when the Brigade Major of 71st Brigade and a woman Red Cross worker were kidnapped and murdered. Drastic action was immediately taken against two villages where the murders were committed, during which several armed Indonesians were shot and others arrested, a vigorous curfew was imposed in Padang and its garrison was reinforced by 8/8th Punjab from Fort de Kock. This had a salutary effect and there were no further incidents of any sort in Padang for more than two months.

Once *Headquarters 25th Army* and its commander had surrendered Padang ceased to be of importance. Headquarters 26th Division therefore moved to Medan on the 30th January 1946 under command of Major-General Hedley, who succeeded Chambers on that date.<sup>1</sup> There had still been no serious incident either in Medan or Palembang up to this time, and the outbreak in Padang would appear to have been an isolated one in view of the subsequent quiet.

On the 9th February Clark-Kerr, who had arrived in Batavia at the beginning of the month, advised the Foreign Office and Mountbatten that the Dutch should occupy Bangka Island off the south-east coast of Sumatra to replace Japanese troops and safeguard the tin mines. He had, in consultation with Dempsey, come to the conclusion that, although such a landing might upset Indonesian leaders at the outset of the general negotiations about to start,<sup>2</sup> it would anger the Dutch if they were not allowed to carry out the local arrangement made some time previously for the island's occupation. On balance he considered that the risk of upsetting the Indonesians should be taken and the landing carried out. The landing by one battalion of Dutch assault troops took place without opposition on the 11th February before sanction had been received from the Foreign Office, whose reactions were set out in a letter on the 14th February:

'The Secretary of State accepts Sir A. Clark-Kerr's conclusion. But had this operation occurred during the discussions in the [United Nations] Security Council it might well have complicated the discussions there;<sup>3</sup> and he thinks it unfortunate, therefore that we—and, it is understood, the Chiefs of Staff also—should learn of the operation at the last minute, although it appears to have been planned some time ago.'

In view of this admonition the Chiefs of Staff told Mountbatten on the 18th February that they could not agree to a request he had made on the 11th to be empowered to bring Dutch troops into the Netherlands East Indies when he felt the moment opportune: there were political considerations which could only be properly assessed in London and all questions of re-entry must be referred to them after consultation with Clark-Kerr.

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<sup>1</sup> Hedley had formerly commanded 48th Brigade in Burma.

<sup>2</sup> See page 343.

<sup>3</sup> Discussions in the Security Council were in fact in progress at the time.

The Dutch landings in Bangka caused no immediate local reaction, but it soon became clear that this was only because they had taken the extremists by surprise. Within a few days patrol clashes occurred, and on the night of 23rd/24th February an attack, the first of several, was made on a Dutch post, and it became necessary for the Dutch to carry out mopping-up operations.

In Palembang, where these operations were interpreted as the forerunner of a Dutch landing in Sumatra, tension increased perceptibly, and on the 25th February three British naval officers, returning from a visit to the local Indonesian leader, Dr. Gani (a moderate who had kept the town comparatively quiet and the refineries in action), were waylaid.<sup>1</sup> One was shot dead, one was wounded and subsequently murdered and the third, though wounded, escaped to a nearby Japanese post. By mid-March the situation had deteriorated so much that Headquarters 71st Brigade and 1st Lincolns were moved by air from Padang to Palembang. On the 30th March a 16-strong patrol of the Lincolns was fired on at close range by automatics sited in a mosque, and charged by two parties of Indonesians armed with rifles, swords and spears. A company of the Lincolns went into action with mortar support to rescue the patrol. The Lincolns suffered thirteen casualties, including two killed, and over 100 casualties were inflicted on the attackers. It says much for Gani's influence that there were no more serious clashes in Palembang in spite of the fact that the garrison was not reinforced till July (to replace evacuated Japanese troops), and the eventual relief of British/Indian forces by the Dutch was carried out in November without incident.

From March onwards Indonesian Republican troops (T.R.I.) and extremists began to show signs of becoming organized and turning their activities against Allied forces. The first serious clash in Medan took place on the 8th March when a patrol looking for some Indian deserters was ambushed and suffered several casualties, including one officer killed. A few days later 2/7th Rajputs had to call for artillery support – the first time it was used in Sumatra – to help it clear road-blocks, and it became necessary to raid known extremist headquarters in search of arms. In Padang, which was now a sub-area with a garrison of two battalions, the peace that had prevailed since December was also broken.

The situation in Medan and Padang remained disturbed, and mopping-up operations in battalion strength, and even in brigade strength in the Medan area, against extremists became necessary.

<sup>1</sup> Gani, a medical practitioner, co-operated with the Allies on a give-and-take basis, and worked to improve Palembang as a port with a view to future negotiations with the Dutch and foreign oil interests. In close accord with Soekarno, he became the most powerful Indonesian executive in Sumatra.



By May there was a build-up of strength of T.R.I. and extremists in the Medan area, and Indonesian columns of up to 300 strong were met. They rarely stood to fight but were persistent in following up patrols and columns returning to base. In one such action troops of 4th Brigade incurred twenty-three casualties and killed forty-eight Indonesians while extricating a patrol which had been ambushed, but an operation of this size was exceptional, the main Indonesian activity being sniping and grenade-throwing. Despite the unrest, evacuation of Japanese from Sumatra continued steadily, and by the end of May 48,000 had been evacuated from Sumatra in addition to about 100,000 from the Outer Islands, many of them direct to Japan.

By mid-June the military situation in Sumatra was that at Medan there were six infantry battalions (including an anti-tank regiment employed in an infantry role), a squadron of armoured cars, an artillery regiment (less one battery), an R.A.F. Spitfire squadron and 10,900 Japanese troops. The British/Indian troops supplied a mobile column and guards on all vital installations and communications, while the Japanese protected the oilfield. At Padang there were two battalions, enough to provide guards for internee camps, vital installations and communications, but no mobile column could be provided unless the garrison was increased. In Palembang there were two infantry battalions and some landing craft and 13,500 Japanese troops. In addition to protecting the oilfield and refineries the Japanese maintained law and order in parts of the town, while British/Indian troops provided guards for vital installations and a small mobile column for operations anywhere in the Palembang area.

On the 20th June Stopford apprised the Chiefs of Staff of the situation in Sumatra and told them that, to replace the Japanese when they were evacuated, he would need reinforcements of three infantry battalions for Medan, four for Palembang and one for Padang, these eight battalions being the minimum required in view of the fact that the T.R.I. was about 47,000 strong. Its headquarters were at Fort de Kock and it was organized in five divisions, two of which were in southern Sumatra (Palembang and Lahat), one near Medan, one at Fort de Kock and one at Brieuen on the north coast.<sup>1</sup> There were in addition many extremist organizations, one in the north being composed of Achinese tribesmen, professional bandits who had always given the Dutch trouble. Neither the T.R.I. nor the extremists were, however, anything like as well armed as they were in Java.<sup>2</sup> There were also about 750,000 Chinese in the island, who presented another serious problem since they were hated by the Indonesians who believed them to be pro-Dutch, and Stopford feared that crimes

<sup>1</sup> See Sketch 17, facing page 353.

<sup>2</sup> They were said to have some artillery, but there is no record of it ever having been used.

of violence against them might greatly increase unless they could be afforded protection. He suggested that the reinforcements he needed might be provided by 80th Brigade when no longer required in the Outer Islands,<sup>1</sup> by three Dutch and one British or Indian battalion from A.F.N.E.I. resources and one from 5th Division.

India, however, refused to allow 80th Brigade to go to Sumatra, but agreed to allow him to retain 1/16th Punjab and 2nd Kumaon Regiments of 23rd Division, if necessary. These, with a regiment of artillery employed in an infantry role and a Gurkha battalion, which Malaya could make available, one battalion which A.F.N.E.I. would provide, and the three Dutch battalions made up the eight battalions Stopford wanted. The Chiefs of Staff agreed to the repatriated Japanese troops being replaced in the way he suggested, but on the 14th August impressed on him that British/Indian troops could remain in the key areas in Sumatra of Medan, Padang and Palembang only until relieved by the Dutch or the 30th November, whichever was earlier. Their insistence on this matter was due to the impression given by General S. H. Spoor (the Dutch Commander-in-Chief designate, Netherlands East Indies) that he intended to put stern repressive measures into effect as soon as he assumed overall control, and their determination not to allow British/Indian troops to become in any way involved in such a situation.

In working out their programme for the evacuation of Sumatra, A.F.N.E.I. calculated that on the 1st October at the earliest three Dutch battalions from the Bali and Lombok area would be available, followed between the 31st October and the 21st November by six garrison battalions from Europe. These, with a garrison battalion then being raised at Medan, would produce ten Dutch battalions. There was, however, the possibility that the Dutch might divert to Sumatra part of 'C' Division due from Europe in October, instead of sending it all to Java where it would relieve units for Sumatra.

July and August in Sumatra were relatively quiet, partly owing no doubt to the fact that the Mohammedan feast of Ramadan fell in those months in 1946. Nevertheless tension rose as a result of rumours of the imminent arrival of Dutch troops and reached a climax in early September with an outburst of hostility in Medan and Padang, which necessitated mobile columns going into action to clear both places of extremists and demolish roadblocks. Casualties were, however, slight and the outbreak did not last long. Trouble flared up again when Dutch troops began to land at Belawan, the port of Medan, on the 26th October and from then until the 4th November, when a truce was arranged, there were almost daily clashes with extremists endeavouring to cut the road between the port and town.

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<sup>1</sup> See page 355.

In Padang the extremists concentrated on ambushing vehicles on the road to the airfield and making small but persistent attacks on the perimeter, but by the end of the month sweeps carried out by the whole Padang Brigade (Brigadier N. G. Thompson with Headquarters Royal Artillery 26th Division) had cleared the area and there was no further trouble.<sup>1</sup>

At Palembang, which had remained quiet, Dutch troops began to arrive on the 23rd October to relieve 71st Brigade. The handover took place in full co-operation with the Indonesians without incident, and the last British/Indian troops left the town on the 9th November. At Medan the handover was completed on the 21st November and Headquarters 26th Division and 4th Indian Brigade Group had left by the 26th. The last troops to leave were from Padang on the 28th November, one day before Rear Headquarters XV Corps (A.F.N.E.I.) left Batavia.

During the occupation of Sumatra by 26th Division 68,402 Japanese (including Formosans and Koreans) were evacuated, 626 died and 551 were reported missing or deserted, leaving 1,189 labourers and technicians, and 584 suspected war criminals still on the island.<sup>2</sup> About half of the 13,550 Dutch and Asiatic prisoners and internees were evacuated to Holland and the rest to the camps in Batavia for disposal from there. The 26th Division suffered 303 casualties, including five officers and fifty other ranks killed and five missing. Indonesian casualties were believed to be a little under 1,400, including 484 known dead.

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<sup>1</sup> The Padang Brigade consisted of 1st Royal Garhwal Rifles, 8/8th Punjab Regiment, and Kumaon Regiment and one battery of 7th Indian Field Regiment.

<sup>2</sup> Suspected war criminals were concentrated on Sabang Island off the northern tip of Sumatra.





# CHAPTER XXXI

## POST-WAR REORGANIZATION IN SOUTH-EAST ASIA AND THE END OF S.E.A.C.

(November 1945—November 1946)

*See Maps 11 and 16*

WITH the great expansion eastwards of the boundaries of South-East Asia Command and the natural desire of the Government of India to return to peacetime conditions as soon as possible, it was evident that Ceylon and India were respectively too far distant from the areas to be controlled to be suitable sites for S.E.A.C.'s headquarters and its main base. In September 1945 Mountbatten decided that his headquarters and those of A.L.F.S.E.A. and A.C.S.E.A. should be established in Singapore by the 25th November.<sup>1</sup> In October he came to an agreement with the Commander-in-Chief in India that Singapore should be developed as the main base for S.E.A.C. as quickly as possible, and that India base should cease to function on the 1st April 1946. The British Government agreed to undertake the responsibility from the 1st April for the maintenance of all Imperial forces in South-East Asia, with the exception that the Government of India would continue to be responsible for the medical care of personnel evacuated from S.E.A.C., for the provision of items for which it was the only source of supply, for items peculiar to Indian troops and for all tentage.

The move of Supreme Headquarters and Headquarters A.L.F.S.E.A. and A.C.S.E.A. to Singapore, the development of the port as the main base for S.E.A.C., the need to retain an adequate garrison on the island, and the provision of accommodation for recovered Allied prisoners-of-war and internees (especially the Dutch who could not be sent back to the Netherlands East Indies) produced an acute shortage of accommodation on the island. To make room, Headquarters Malaya Command (which replaced 14th Army) opened at Kuala Lumpur on the 1st November and was joined by Headquarters British Military Administration, the repair of dam-

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<sup>1</sup> See Map 16, facing page 600.

aged buildings was speeded up and headquarters staffs, which had become swollen during the course of the war, were reduced to a more reasonable size. This reduction was helped by the withdrawal of American personnel from all headquarters staffs and their replacement by a very small liaison staff. Supreme Headquarters still retained the title of Allied, since Mountbatten remained the representative of the Supreme Commander for the Allied Powers (General MacArthur) in South-East Asia and controlled Allied forces other than American.

The build-up of S.E.A.C.'s new base was a slow process for, although the commercial port of Singapore had not been severely damaged, the whole dock area and installations were found to be in a state of extreme dilapidation from neglect. Owing to the lack of skilled technical and dock labour, the build-up of the base had to be undertaken by military engineer, transportation and dock units assisted by naval ratings until such time as the Singapore Harbour Board could be reconstituted and could take over. The magnitude of the task may be gauged by the fact that the base had to serve an area which in the first instance included Malaya, Siam, French Indo-China, the Netherlands East Indies, British North Borneo, Hong Kong and Christmas and Cocos Islands, and that it was necessary to prepare Singapore as a base to maintain the British Pacific Fleet (estimated at some sixty-four major naval vessels and a large number of auxiliaries), all ships of the East Indies Fleet (other than capital ships, aircraft carriers and cruisers), a number of naval air squadrons, five British/Indian divisions and some thirty-four R.A.F. squadrons with their supporting administrative units. This involved the restoration of the naval base to full working order, the increase in the capacity of the commercial port to 4,000 tons a day of imports and 2,000 tons a day of exports, the development of the Japanese-built airfield at Changi to take fully loaded four-engined aircraft,<sup>1</sup> and the strengthening of the runways of the old civil airport at Kallang to take two-engined transport aircraft.<sup>2</sup> Although work on the new base, which began in October 1945, was given priority, it was only just ready to replace India base by the agreed date of the 1st April 1946.

Early in 1946 the British Government decided that a Governor-General of Malaya should be appointed in May. He would have no

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<sup>1</sup> In 1943 the Japanese began to construct two intersecting earth airstrips at Changi, one running roughly north-south parallel to the main road and the other crossing it at right angles; see Appendix 30, page 535.

<sup>2</sup> See Map 11 (inset), facing page 282. As an example of the amount of work to be done, one company of Royal Engineers was employed continuously working round the clock from September to December to renew the electrical installations in the dock area.

executive authority but would be responsible for co-ordinating matters which concerned the Governor of the Malayan Union and the Governor of Singapore, and eventually would become the co-ordinating authority between these two and the Governments established in British North Borneo, Brunei and Sarawak. A Special Commissioner for South-East Asia was also to be appointed with the task of co-ordinating Commonwealth and foreign relations in the whole South-East Asian area, including Hong Kong,<sup>1</sup> and taking over from the Supreme Commander responsibility for all economic problems.

On the 23rd January Mountbatten told the Chiefs of Staff that he wished to plan for and begin the reduction of the forces under his command. On the 8th February they approved his plan for the reduction of his forces to peacetime garrisons and the return of surplus formations and units to their country of origin or to their peacetime stations (operation 'Epilogue'). It is not for this history to go into the very detailed arrangements which resulted over a considerable period in the implementation of operation 'Epilogue', but to deal with the far more important problem of the form which the post-war command in the Far East should take and when S.E.A.C. should be terminated.

The Chiefs of Staff had begun considering the problem of the post-war command towards the end of 1945, and there had been an exchange of views between them and Mountbatten on the general principles involved. On the 1st March 1946 Mountbatten recommended that S.E.A.C. could be wound up when it was agreed that his remaining responsibilities in French Indo-China (south of 16° North) could be assumed by a British Inter-Service Headquarters, when the Governor-General of Malaya and the Governors of the Malayan Union and Singapore had arrived and relieved him of the responsibility for the administration of these areas and when the control of economic matters and shipping had been handed over to the Special Commissioner. He proposed that he should hand over to the Governor-General the control of restoration of Malaya's internal economy, the working of Singapore harbour and all movement facilities in Malaya, the responsibility for law and order, the control of accommodation and the co-ordination of supply between the Services and the civilian authorities in Malaya. To the Special Commissioner he would hand over the control, including procurement and allocation, of all food stuffs and raw materials in the area, the co-ordination of shipping requirements for both imports and exports, the allotment of priorities between the Services and the various government and other civilian undertakings, the responsibility for the repatriation of Dutch refugees and other displaced

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<sup>1</sup> Hong Kong had its own Governor.

persons (subject to any restrictions imposed by military operations) and the responsibility for health intelligence until this duty was taken over by the United Nations Organization. He recommended, however, that the repatriation of Japanese surrendered personnel and the control of radio frequencies should remain as heretofore a military responsibility. Since the Governor-General of Malaya and the Special Commissioner for the Far East were not expected to arrive in Singapore before the beginning of May, he further recommended that the Supreme Allied Command should be terminated in the second week in May to allow time for proper handing over of functions from Supreme Headquarters to the appropriate civilian organizations.

To replace Supreme Headquarters, he recommended that a British Inter-Service Headquarters should be established in South-East Asia; this could be a small inter-service establishment whose functions would be confined to the co-ordination of strategic planning and of combined exercises, the provision of a chairman for any inter-service committee,<sup>1</sup> and of a representative of the Services at meetings of a Defence Committee, which he proposed should also be formed. He pointed out that, up till then, he had been the only co-ordinating authority for all matters in S.E.A.C. but, on the relegation of civil affairs to the appropriate civil authorities, the machinery for co-ordination would consist of the Governor-General of Malaya, the Special Commissioner and the British Supreme Commander who, he envisaged, would each hold regular meetings with the authorities they would be controlling or co-ordinating. This being the case, the Governor-General of Malaya would take the chair at meetings of the Governors of the British Colonial Territories in South-East Asia (the Malayan Union, Singapore, Borneo and Hong Kong with, possibly, Ceylon). The Special Commissioner would likewise hold regular meetings with the accredited representative of the British Government in foreign territories in the area (French Indo-China, Siam, the Netherlands East Indies and China). The British Supreme Commander would be responsible for taking the chair at meetings of the three Commanders-in-Chief. He presumed that representatives of the Governments in Australia, India and Burma would attend the above meetings as necessary. If this procedure were accepted, the Governor-General, the Special Commissioner and the British Supreme Commander would constitute the proposed Defence Committee. He felt sure that the Chiefs of Staff would agree that this was the ideal composition for a committee which must achieve results during the coming period of reconstruction and reorganization, when co-ordination and firm military,

<sup>1</sup> Such as the Joint Planning Staff, the Joint Intelligence Committee and the Joint Public Relations Committee.

political, economic and administrative direction would be essential.

Early in March the Chiefs of Staff approved in principle Mountbatten's recommendations on how he proposed to hand over his responsibilities to the civil authorities, but pointed out that the functions of the Special Commissioner were not executive but rather advisory in order to ensure co-ordination. They thought, however, that his Supreme Allied Command organization would have to continue until full control of Indo-China had passed to the French and of the Netherlands East Indies to the Dutch, and asked him his opinion on when this would take place. Mountbatten replied on the 14th March that the entry of six Dutch brigades into the Netherlands East Indies had begun on the 9th and would continue as fast as the provision of shipping made it possible,<sup>1</sup> and on the 19th that he would probably have to retain XV Corps and 23rd Indian Division until the Dutch division under formation in Europe had arrived in the Far East, which he understood would be about the end of 1946. It would then presumably be possible to transfer the full control of the Netherlands East Indies to the Dutch, with the sole exception of the responsibility for the evacuation of the remaining Japanese surrendered personnel which perhaps might not be concluded by that date. It seemed therefore that a Supreme Allied Commander would be required, mainly because of the situation in the Netherlands East Indies, until early in 1947. As regards French Indo-China, the control of this area had already been transferred to the French and his sole responsibility was now, as MacArthur's agent, to evacuate the remaining Japanese surrendered personnel.<sup>2</sup> He considered that this could be carried out by a British Supreme Commander but, taking all the circumstances into account, it might be as well if the Allied Supreme Command was retained at least until the end of 1946. He added that, irrespective of whether he was relieved of his appointment, or whether the appointment was to be abolished, he would like to reiterate the request he had already made to be allowed to return to the United Kingdom soon after mid-May, since he thought it advisable for the Governor-General of Malaya and the Special Commissioner to begin their tasks with a new Supreme Commander. Three days later finding that, owing to lack of staff, neither the Governor-General nor the Special Commissioner would be in a position to take over their responsibilities from him by mid-May, Mountbatten deferred the date to the 31st May 1946.

On the 1st April the Chiefs of Staff told Mountbatten that they considered the Allied Command in South-East Asia should be retained until the Dutch were in a position to assume full control of the Netherlands East Indies and all British/Indian troops had been

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<sup>1</sup> See page 346.

<sup>2</sup> See pages 305-6.

withdrawn from the area, a position unlikely to be reached before the autumn of 1946. For long-term arrangements for command, it was proposed to establish a South-East Asia Zone, comprising Malaya, Borneo, Hong Kong, the South China Sea, the Strait of Malacca and adjoining centres of strategic interest (Siam, French Indo-China and the Netherlands East Indies). They also proposed that the three Services in the zone should be commanded by the Commander-in-Chief, Pacific Station, with headquarters at Hong Kong, and the General Officer Commanding-in-Chief and Air Officer Commanding-in-Chief, Far East, both with headquarters at Singapore. For purposes of command and administration the Air Officer Commanding-in-Chief, Far East, would include Ceylon and Burma within his command. There would be a small Inter-Service Headquarters at Singapore representative of all three Services, and a Defence Committee consisting of the Governor-General of Malaya, the Special Commissioner and the Service High Command. They added that a decision would be taken shortly on whether the Inter-Service Headquarters should be headed by a committee composed of the Commanders-in-Chief of the three Services on the Middle East pattern, or by a Supreme Commander.

The handing over of the specified responsibilities from the Supreme Commander to the Special Commissioner (Lord Killearn), who had arrived in Singapore on the 16th March,<sup>1</sup> actually took place on the 10th April, several weeks earlier than anticipated. From that date the Special Commissioner dealt directly with the Governor-General of Malaya, the Governors of Borneo, Ceylon, the Malayan Union and Singapore, the British Minister in Bangkok (Siam), the British Consuls-General in Batavia (Netherlands East Indies) and Saigon (French Indo-China) as well as with Supreme Headquarters in the case of the British Military Administrations in Hong Kong, British North Borneo, Sarawak, Brunei and Labuan.

On the 24th April, with the approval of the Prime Minister, the Chiefs of Staff told Mountbatten that he should retain his appointment as Supreme Allied Commander until he returned to the United Kingdom for the Victory Parade, which was to be held in London at the beginning of June, and that, pending a final decision on the future command organization in the proposed South-East Asia Zone, the next senior commander in S.E.A.C. should assume the appointment of Acting Supreme Commander. On the 8th May the Chiefs of Staff approved the appointment of Stopford as Acting Supreme Allied Commander from the date on which Mountbatten left the Far East. The Governor-General of Malaya, the Right Honourable Malcolm Macdonald, who had been British High Commissioner in Canada, arrived in Singapore on the 21st May 1946

<sup>1</sup> See page 343 fn. 3.

and Mountbatten left Singapore on the 31st May after holding his appointment as Supreme Allied Commander for two and a half eventful years. Stopford assumed command on the 1st June.

Before leaving his command on the 31st May Mountbatten sent the Chiefs of Staff his views on the future organization of command in the Far East. He said that all experience in South-East Asia, all the views that his Commanders-in-Chief had expressed and the views of practically every senior officer with whom he had discussed the problem showed that a Supreme Commander was necessary in war. Without a Supreme Commander really effective co-ordination of the three Services and of political and economic problems could not be carried out. To retain the right perspective, the Supreme Command must not be diverted from high-level policy and major strategy to direct the operational command and administration of any one Service. This being the case, the appointment of the Supreme Commander in war must be distinct from that of any of the three Commanders-in-Chief, who would, of course, act as the Supreme Commander's Service advisers. Since modern development in the technique of war and recent examples of the way in which wars began made it essential that the system of command and administration in peace should be capable of rapid changeover to the requirements of war, a Supreme Commander with a nucleus headquarters should exist in peace so that it could be quickly built up when war became imminent.

Lord Killearn told the Foreign Office that, as Ambassador in Cairo throughout the war, he had seen at first hand the defects of the system set up in the Middle East in peacetime which entrusted the command of the three Services to three separate Commanders-in-Chief. The exigencies of war had led to a Minister of State being superimposed on them. He was more than ever convinced, in retrospect, that the system of single control was right, but to introduce it after war had broken out was a tardy measure of improvisation. It would be better to have in time of peace a Supreme Commander with three separate Commanders-in-Chief under him, and the requisite organization and planning would then be in existence before an emergency arose. He therefore endorsed Mountbatten's recommendations. They were also supported by Mr. Macdonald, who told the Colonial Office that, as prospective chairman of the Defence Committee in Singapore with special responsibilities for co-ordinating policies of the civil and military authorities in British territories in the Far East, he viewed the question of the appointment of a Supreme Commander as a matter of first-class importance.

Discussion on the question of command organization continued in

London until mid-July, when the Prime Minister (Mr. Attlee) decided that the matter should be referred to the Defence Committee. When the committee met on the 7th August, the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs pointed out the need to ensure continued co-ordination of policy from both the political and strategic aspects, which co-ordination was sadly lacking in the Far East before the outbreak of war with Japan.<sup>1</sup> A Supreme Commander had proved to be a convenient medium for ensuring co-ordination, and he therefore supported the recommendation from Singapore that a Supreme Commander should be retained in peace. The Secretary of State for the Colonies supported the Foreign Office view, pointing out that a Supreme Commander could resolve on-the-spot differences of opinion between the three Commanders-in-Chief.

The Chiefs of Staff, on the other hand, recommended that the appointment of a Supreme Commander should be abolished when the military commitments in the Netherlands East Indies came to an end. They fully agreed that the Supreme Commander system would be necessary when fighting with Allies in time of war, but were unanimous that the 'Trinity' system was preferable in peacetime. They supported their views by the following arguments:

(a) When there was a Supreme Commander, individual Service Commanders-in-Chief tended to concentrate on their own Service responsibilities and to overlook their collective responsibility for defence matters as a whole. Consequently the 'Trinity' system provided a better training for senior officers who might be required to fill the appointment of Supreme Commander in war.

(b) Although Mountbatten thought that if a Supreme Commander were appointed in the Far East in peacetime he would need a staff of only some twenty officers, experience in war had shown that both Mountbatten and Eisenhower had built up colossal staffs. It would therefore appear that the appointment of a Supreme Commander would mean the creation of additional and unnecessary staff.

(c) They found themselves in disagreement with the views presented by Killearn and Macdonald that, in the absence of a Supreme Commander, differences of opinion between the three Commanders-in-Chief would have to be solved by the Chairman of the Singapore Defence Committee. They saw no reason why there should be differences of opinion, since all three officers would receive identical directions from the Chiefs of Staff, but, if differences of opinion were to occur, they would have to be resolved by

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<sup>1</sup> See Volume I.



the Chiefs of Staff in London and not by the civilian chairman of the Defence Committee on the spot.

The Prime Minister expressed the view that there was some advantage to be gained by continuing the Supreme Commander system, since a Supreme Commander's staff would be drawn from all three Services and could plan for joint action in the case of war. In view of the unanimous views put forward by the Chiefs of Staff, however, the Defence Committee decided to accept their recommendation that the appointment of a Supreme Commander in South-East Asia should be abolished when the commitments in the Netherlands East Indies were ended, and that the system of a committee of three Commanders-in-Chief working in close co-operation, and each bearing collective as well as individual responsibility, should be adopted.

On the 15th August 1946 Stopford was told that, as soon as the tasks of S.E.A.C. in the Netherlands East Indies were finished, the appointment of Supreme Commander would be abolished and his duties undertaken by a committee of the three Service Commanders-in-Chief; and he was asked to submit recommendations to the Chiefs of Staff on the setting up of the new organization.

After discussions with his Commanders-in-Chief, Stopford proposed that the Defence Committee should be modified to include the three Commanders-in-Chief, in place of the Supreme Commander and his Chief of Staff. Its task would be to co-ordinate civil and military interests. A purely Service Committee consisting of the three Commanders-in-Chief would carry out the tasks which had previously been the responsibility of the Supreme Commander; its members would bear collective and individual responsibility, and have direct access to the Governor-General, the Special Commissioner and their own Service Ministries in London.

A Co-ordination Committee of Principal Staff Officers of the three Services, with a chairman appointed by the Defence Committee, should be formed to relieve the Defence Committee of matters other than those of first importance, the Commanders-in-Chief being similarly relieved of detail by a Chiefs of Staff Committee and a Principal Administrative Officers Committee. An inter-Service secretariat, which could include civil representatives, would deal with all secretarial work and maintain close relationship between the civil and fighting services. In Hong Kong, Malaya, Singapore and Ceylon there should be local defence committees directly responsible to the Commanders-in-Chief's Committee, and a Joint Intelligence Committee whose information should be passed to the Services through the Director of Intelligence at Singapore.

These proposals were finally approved on the 8th October, and came into force when South-East Asia Command ceased to exist at midnight on the 30th November/1st December 1946. By that time the withdrawal of British/Indian troops from the Netherlands East Indies had been completed, as had the task of rescuing Allied prisoners-of-war and internees with the exception of those remaining in the Netherlands East Indies, responsibility for whom had been taken over by the Dutch. All Japanese forces in S.E.A.C. had been disarmed and repatriated, except those who had been retained for labour purposes. This number (including some 13,500 for whom the Dutch authorities had assumed full responsibility) amounted to 98,000 men.<sup>1</sup> The trial of over 500 suspected war criminals had been completed. Some 2,700 suspects were to be released, leaving approximately 1,000 still to be tried.

The organization in the Far East adopted in December 1946 was identical in theory with that which had existed in Cairo during the campaign in the Western Desert, except that 1,500 miles separated the naval headquarters from those of the other Services. In view of the development during the war years of the system under which Supreme Commanders responsible to the Chiefs of Staff were appointed, this reversal to the system of a Committee of Defence is perhaps surprising. The five volumes forming this series show the vital importance, especially when Allies are operating together, of the existence of a Supreme Commander, who can devote all his energy to welding the Allies and the British Services into a homogeneous force, to the maintenance of their morale and to the conduct of operations against the enemy. Nevertheless in 1946 the Defence Committee in London, with the agreement of the Chiefs of Staff, reverted to a system of joint headquarters of Service Commanders-in-Chief, with a civilian chairman, a system which had proved to be so inefficient in the Far East in 1939-41.<sup>2</sup>

Experience in the Second World War showed that it is impossible to set up an efficient headquarters in a hurry, and very difficult to decide on a place where it can function in security and be provided with the necessary means of communication with the forces under its command. Wavell's A.B.D.A. Headquarters in 1942 did not have time to get going; S.E.A.C. Headquarters took several months to become fully operational, during which time the already established General Headquarters, India, was able to carry out many of its functions. The main necessity, therefore, is the provision in peacetime of an adequate inter-Service headquarters, staffed with officers

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<sup>1</sup> See Appendix 27.

<sup>2</sup> See Volume I.

experienced in the joint operations of land, sea and air forces, and firmly established with adequate communications in a place in which it can remain in the event of a major war in the theatre concerned. Such a headquarters should clearly be commanded by a Commander-in-Chief, rather than by a committee of Service Commanders-in-Chief.

It was not until 1963 that a unified command with its headquarters at Singapore, known as Far East Command under a Commander-in-Chief responsible to the British Government (through the Chief of the Defence Staff as Chairman of the Chiefs of Staff Committee), was set up in the Far East for the command of all naval, land and air forces in that area.<sup>1</sup> In this unified command the Commander-in-Chief exercises detailed command through his subordinate single Service commanders, who ceased, when the change was made, to be Commanders-in-Chief although they retained direct access to their own Service Ministries. The military Commander-in-Chief, Far East Land Forces, in consequence became General Officer Commanding-in-Chief, Far East Land Forces, and his naval and air force counterparts became Flag Officer Commanding and Air Officer Commanding, Far East.<sup>2</sup> All these (like Far East Command) have their headquarters at Singapore. To ensure that a bias towards any particular Service does not build up, successive Commanders-in-Chief have so far been selected from each Service in turn.

It is probable that in the event of war the Commander-in-Chief at the time would be appointed Supreme Commander. This would have obvious advantages, but the nature of the war, the composition of the forces involved and the existence of Allies might eventually necessitate the appointment of a Supreme Commander of a different Service or nationality. There would then have to be corresponding modifications in the headquarters staff, but it would only be a case of fitting fresh appointments into an already existing and efficient organization. It would appear, therefore, that the main need is for an overall inter-Service headquarters and Commander-in-Chief in being in each likely theatre of operations.

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<sup>1</sup> Army Council Instruction 369, 14.11.62. It is of interest that Mountbatten held the appointment of Chief of the Defence Staff at the time the unified command in the Far East was introduced, and was therefore able to bring into effect the proposals he himself had recommended in May 1946.

<sup>2</sup> In June 1964 the titles were again changed to Commander Far East Land Forces, Commander Far East Fleet and Commander Far East Air Force.



## **PART 4**

### **The War Against Japan in Retrospect (1941—1945)**



## CHAPTER XXXII

# THE CAUSES OF THE WAR AND THE OPENING PHASE

*See Map 14*

**T**HE War with Japan came about mainly as the result of Japanese aggression, and to explain that aggression it is necessary to consider Japan's history from the time that the arrival of a United States naval squadron under Commander Perry in 1853 forced her to give up her policy of seclusion and she began to take part in international affairs. Chiefly for reasons of national and economic security the Japanese developed a desire for expansion. This desire had as its principal driving force a deep sense of nationalism and pride of race, which led gradually to the conviction that the manifest destiny of the nation was to free east Asia, if not the whole of Asia, from domination by the Western Powers. This conviction was supported by the fact that Japan was the only nation in the Pacific which throughout the ages had retained its independence and had never been conquered.

Following the example set in the nineteenth century by the Western Powers in acquiring colonies in the Pacific, Japan between 1875 and 1880 occupied the Kurile Islands to the north and the Bonin and Ryukyu Islands to the south.<sup>1</sup> This was followed in 1894 and 1895 by the acquisition of Formosa and the Pescadores (in the Formosa Strait) as the result of a successful war with China. During this period Japanese leaders realized that, because of the aggressive foreign policy of the Great Powers in their relations with the continent of Asia, the independence and even survival of the nation could be secured only by means of a strong army and navy. Consequently the decision was taken to embark on a programme of military and naval expansion. The forces provided by this expansion brought Japan victory over Russia in the war of 1904-5, as a result of which she gained control of Korea and obtained the lease of the Liaotung Peninsula. Five years later Korea was incorporated into the Japanese Empire, while south Manchuria became a Japanese sphere of influence. A mere half century after emerging from a secluded feudalistic state, Japan found herself a World Power.

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<sup>1</sup> See Map 14, facing page 406.

Japan's expansion in China after the Russo-Japanese war brought her into conflict with the United States, whose policy, formulated at the end of the nineteenth century, was to secure equal opportunity for all nations to trade freely with China. This made it unavoidable that the United States must oppose the effort of any Power to gain absolute political and economic control of China, and in the end was to provide the basic cause of the war between Japan and the Allies.

Japan's next opportunity for expansion came in 1914 when, in accordance with the spirit of the Anglo-Japanese Alliance, she declared war on Germany and captured the German port of Tsingtao and the German colonies in the Pacific, the Marshall, Caroline and Mariana Islands. She followed up these successes by making in 1915 her Twenty-one Demands on China which, if accepted, would have given her virtual economic and political control of that country. Mainly owing to diplomatic pressure brought to bear by the United States the terms of the demands were modified before China was compelled to accept them, but they nevertheless marked a new and ambitious stage in Japan's foreign policy. At the Versailles Peace Conference in 1919 Japan secured a Mandate from the League of Nations to administer the Marshall, Caroline and Mariana island groups in the Pacific.

During the First World War Japan had been able to build up her industries to such an extent that by 1918 her economy was in a flourishing state. After a short post-war boom, however, depression set in, and the nation was faced with internal unrest arising partly from the depression and partly from the spread of socialist and Communist ideas from Russia. Although a constitutional form of government had been established soon after the middle of the nineteenth century, in the political field little headway had been made in building up an understanding of democratic principles and, as a result, public opinion in the country was lacking in force and never strong enough to be able to affect the general trend of national politics. The Cabinet was not responsible to the Diet but only to the Emperor. The idea of national leaders being responsible to the people was as yet incomprehensible to the Japanese, for there had not yet been sufficient time for the people to assimilate such an idea and build up a truly democratic government. Thus, although Japan appeared to outsiders to be a democracy, in reality her government remained oligarchic. As the mass of the people were lacking in first-hand knowledge of world affairs, it was comparatively easy for the Government and other organs to influence them by propaganda, truthful or otherwise. It was against this background that events occurred which led to increasing tensions within the nation, providing favourable conditions for both the ultra-nationalists in favour of expansion on the continent and the left-wing socialists



with leanings towards Communism and utterly opposed to capitalism and privilege.

The abrogation in 1921 of the Anglo-Japanese Alliance, on which Japan's foreign policy had been anchored for a period of twenty years, was one of the causes of internal tension. Not only was the abrogation itself resented, but also the fact that the British Government, having made the decision mainly in deference to the wishes of the United States and the British Dominions, seemed to the Japanese to show scant regard for the feelings and welfare of her old ally. Yet another irritant was the Washington Treaty of 1922, which included a Naval Limitation Agreement of 5:5:3 for capital ships of the United States, Great Britain and Japan. The chief Japanese delegate, Admiral Kato, was able to secure its ratification although many Japanese naval officers objected to it, and extremists, who wanted a navy capable of offensive as well as defensive action, were able to use this 'inferior' ratio later on to stir up anti-foreign and internal political feelings on the grounds of it being derogatory to the national prestige.

At the peace conference at Versailles, Japan had unsuccessfully put forward a demand for recognition of the principle of racial equality, and its rejection was looked upon as a slight. This feeling was exacerbated by the passage through the United States Congress in 1924 of the American Immigration Laws, which made racial discrimination legal and excluded Japan from the quota basis applicable to western countries. This coming so soon after the rejection of her demand for recognition of the principle of racial equality was considered to be a proof of the arrogance of the white races. It had a disastrous effect on Japan's relations with the United States and in a lesser degree with all white countries, particularly Australia which retained a 'White Australia' immigration policy.

Despite these and other setbacks and disturbances in her national life, Japan had gone ahead with plans for industrial expansion, but when the prosperity of the post-war years ended and she felt the full force of the world economic slump there was widespread hardship, discontent and unrest, particularly amongst the large agrarian population. This, together with the unenviable reputation for corruption and irresponsibility which the parliamentary parties had earned among the mass of the people and the growing fear of Communism, had the political effect of a swing in Japan towards militarism. Even to many moderate Japanese it seemed that things had been allowed to go too far to the left, the proof of this being the rapid gain in popularity of Communism and Socialism, both alien to their conception of Imperial rule. It was felt that, if these two movements could spread under a parliamentary régime, then it would be better

to have recourse once again, as Japan had had for centuries, to military control and authoritarianism.

Although the ensuing change over from a façade of democratic government to a thinly disguised military dictatorship took some time to develop, it was greatly facilitated by the form of the Japanese constitution under which the Prime Minister, appointed by the Emperor on the advice of the elder statesmen, was obliged to include in his Cabinet an Army Minister and a Navy Minister who had been selected by the Services from among senior generals and admirals. The armed Services were therefore in a position of great power since they could overthrow any Cabinet of whose policy they disapproved by threatening to resign, or prevent the formation of a Cabinet unacceptable to them by refusing to provide an Army or Navy Minister. The Prime Minister and his civilian colleagues had little independent authority, not only because of the peculiar position of the Army and Navy Ministers but also because according to the constitution the Supreme Command was independent of the Government and hence of control by the Cabinet. Responsibility to the Emperor for matters concerning operations and supreme command lay entirely in the hands of the Army and Navy Chiefs of Staff, who with the Emperor formed the Supreme Command. This independence of the High Command was gradually expanded so that there were in fact two Japanese Governments – the civil Cabinet and the General Staff (i.e. the Supreme Command), each functioning independently with sometimes poor co-ordination and often speaking with different voices. There was, however, a very important difference between them for, while the Supreme Command could and often did interfere in civil affairs, the reverse was not the case.

In addition to these constitutional characteristics of the Army and Navy systems, there were three matters affecting both Services which contributed to the drift of the nation to war during the critical decade before December 1941. The first was the gradual entry of the Army, and to a lesser extent of the Navy, into the political field; the second, an ever-increasing tendency to insubordination by junior officers (usually middle rank staff officers) against their superiors; and the third, increasing admiration of Germany.

The first two are interrelated, for it was *Kwantung Army Headquarters'* success in taking over Manchuria in 1931 against the wishes of the Government in Tokyo which started the Army on its path of intervening in politics. The boycott by China of Japanese-made consumer goods and the existence of an ineffective and corrupt government in Manchuria, coupled with the serious setback in Japanese economy caused by the world slump, gave certain extremists and ultra-nationalist officers of *Kwantung Army* the opportunity to make their first move towards aggression on the continent

and towards seizing control of Japan's destiny. Having secretly staged the Manchurian Incident, they set up a stable government and therefore a stable market in that area. This gained them strong political influence in Japan. Since it appeared that aggression paid good dividends, they were in a position to ensure that the Japanese Government flouted the League of Nations. Although the seizure of Manchuria in contravention of the Nine Power Treaty and the Kellogg-Briand Pact increased national morale and pride, it disturbed the equilibrium in the Far East which had been established by the Washington Naval Treaty of 1922. Its success increased the confidence of those in favour of expansion on the continent, was a serious setback to the moderate elements who had always supported collaboration with the western democracies, and produced a crisis in Sino-Japanese relations.

The Army's next move was into north China, where it followed the technique it had used in Manchuria. A crisis would be deliberately brought on by a local commander, who, without reference to Tokyo, would take military action and then, still on his own initiative, take steps to set up an autonomous government as soon as hostilities ceased. Control of foreign policy was thus arbitrarily assumed by the forces in the field, supported by the expansionist-minded staff officers in Tokyo, while the Cabinet, the Foreign Minister and at times even the Emperor himself and his Army Minister were apparently unable to exercise effective control.

From 1932 to 1936 a series of incidents, all planned in secret by extremist groups and carried out mostly by army and naval personnel with the object of seizing greater control of Japan's internal and foreign policies, took place in Tokyo. Although these incidents were acts of insubordination and mutiny and were often accompanied by the assassination of leading statesmen, politicians and even selected senior officers, the Supreme Command failed (perhaps through sympathy for the radical element in the Army or perhaps through fear of assassination) to take disciplinary action and punish the offenders. This extraordinary state of affairs, whereby the power lay in the hands of subordinate officers and not with their leaders and the Government, gradually led to a situation in which overseas commands ignored the instructions of the Government in Tokyo and even at times went so far as to disobey direct orders from the Emperor. Its consequence was a decline in national discipline, the disappearance of respect for lawful authority and chaos in foreign policy.

Since its foundation the Japanese Army had held the Prussian military system in great respect and, after the Franco-Prussian war, took the German Army as its model. The outstanding success of Hitler's régime in the 1930's increased the admiration for Germany

and led to a keen desire, especially within army circles, to develop the nation on the German pattern.

During the early 1930's Japan came to consider that, as a World Power, she had a special imperial mission to control east Asia and the west Pacific, and that the extension of her control over this vast region was as necessary for the well-being and welfare of its inhabitants as it was for the people of Japan. The need for self-preservation played a part in Japan's urge to expand, for she felt instinctively that she had to gain political hegemony over what she looked upon as her hinterland, to be stronger than the Soviet Union and to squeeze Britain and the United States out of China.

Up to 1936 power in the Far East, except in Japanese and Russian territory, was divided among Britain, Holland, France and the United States. China, although not a possession of any foreign country, was in fact dominated by them as a result of concessions in the form of rights and leased territories usually acquired by punitive expeditions. It was this Old Order which was to be challenged by the aggressive expansionism of Japan.

Up to 1937 the aims of the Japanese Army and Navy authorities differed: the Army, having founded the state of Manchukuo and assumed responsibility for its defence, looked northwards to Russia as a potential enemy, while the Navy looked southwards to sources of oil. Both realized that the course Japan was following might well create difficulties with foreign powers, and during the successive stages of her aggression on the Asian continent vigorous measures were therefore taken to prepare Japan for war. She began as rapidly as she could to build oil refineries and storage tanks, and to stockpile fuel oil and raw materials necessary for the production of warlike stores. By prohibiting imports of motor vehicles in 1937, she tried to ensure that her automobile and aircraft industries developed to a scale adequate to meet both her civilian and military needs.<sup>1</sup> During the same period she withdrew from the League of Nations and denounced the Washington Treaty of 1922. Since Britain, the United States and France refused to grant her parity in naval armaments, she withdrew from the London Naval Conference of 1935 on the limitation of naval armaments,<sup>2</sup> and began to build up her navy towards parity with Britain and modernized and enlarged her merchant fleet.<sup>3</sup>

In 1937 Japan embarked on the China 'Incident' which developed into a full-scale war with China. In 1938 the militarists began to think in a somewhat ill-defined manner of creating a Japanese sphere of influence which, in addition to China and Manchuria,

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<sup>1</sup> See Appendix 11.

<sup>2</sup> See Volume I, pages 12-13.

<sup>3</sup> See Volume I, page 13 and Volume V, Appendix 11.

would include Indo-China, Siam, Malaya and the Netherlands East Indies. From this vast area, which came to be known as the Southern Region, Japan would be able to obtain her requirements of rubber, tin, rice, coal, bauxite, timber and other raw materials, and above all oil.

Although the war came about mainly because of Japanese aggression in the decade from 1931, Britain and the United States cannot be held blameless for its occurrence since their weakness in the period after the First World War not only made Japanese aggression likely to be successful, but forced them from 1931 onwards to adopt a policy of appeasement towards Japan. On the assumption (reviewed annually) that there would be no war for ten years, the size and strength of the British armed forces were, by 1934, reduced to a level which rendered them quite unable to defend the British Empire. In 1921 Britain abandoned her long alliance with Japan and then signed the Washington and allied Treaties which put her, with her world-wide commitments, at a great disadvantage with Japan, whose main interests lay in the western Pacific where naval strength was the controlling factor. The fact that by these treaties Britain held parity with the United States and that, combined, they could have controlled the Pacific and thus contained Japan without unduly weakening their forces elsewhere was of little value to her, for the United States had refused to become a member of the League of Nations and under the shelter of the Monroe Doctrine had resumed her pre-1914 role of isolation from the rest of the world. Successive British Governments, trusting in the efficacy of the League of Nations, failed to keep their armed forces at a level commensurate with tasks they might be called upon to undertake in defence of the Empire, with the result that in 1931, when Japan began her aggression and flouted the authority of the League of Nations, neither that powerless body nor Britain, nor any other Power who had major interests in the Pacific, was in a position to do anything to stop her. With Germany falling under Nazi control and Italy under a Fascist dictatorship, Britain found herself facing a highly dangerous situation in Europe and was forced, owing to the weakness of her armed forces, to enter into an era of appeasement both in Europe and the Far East.

Britain belatedly realized her danger, but it was not until 1934 that she began very slowly to rearm and increase her neglected Services, and when war broke out in Europe in 1939 she still had not the means to defend her interests in Europe as well as in the Far East. Fortunately the signature of the Russo-German neutrality pact in August 1939 caused the downfall of the Japanese Cabinet which, at the behest of the army, was trying to bring about a military alliance

with Germany, and the conclusion of the pact was also a blow to the prestige and political power of the army. In consequence there was in Tokyo a swing away from the German-Italian axis and towards the democratic Powers in the autumn of 1939, which was to last until the swing was reversed by the successes of the German armies in the early summer of 1940. Both Britain and the United States were thus given some time (of which they took little advantage) in which to repair their neglected defences in the Far East and come to an agreed plan of action should Japan attack at some later date.

To understand why Japan by her own action deliberately brought the United States into the war as an ally of Britain and the Netherlands it is necessary to consider her reaction to events in the international sphere in the second half of 1940. Japan was dependent for much of her war material on imports from territories within the British and American spheres of influence in the Southern Region. Since the export of machine tools from the United States had been stopped in June 1940 and that of oil and scrap iron placed under strict control in July, it seemed to the Japanese leaders that they would have to take steps to free their country from reliance on the Anglo-American economy. To do this meant gaining control of the Southern Region, and this therefore became from July the main objective of Japanese foreign policy. If, as Japanese military circles had little doubt, Germany invaded Britain in the autumn of 1940, this would present Japan with the opportunity to solve the problem of the Southern Region to her own advantage. Action was therefore immediately begun to ensure close relationship with Germany, Italy and Russia, and to prepare the nation so that by August 1940 force could be used if necessary to take advantage of any change in the European situation.

In pursuance of this policy Japan concluded the Tripartite Pact with Germany and Italy in September 1940.<sup>1</sup> The pact had no binding military clauses, and was little more than a political agreement directed towards preventing the United States, by a threat of war on two fronts, from interfering with Japanese plans to build up a Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere. To free herself to undertake her plans in the Southern Region, Japan was more than anxious to bring the China 'Incident' to an end. To accomplish this meant not only increasing her military effort in China but also taking steps to force other Powers, especially Britain and the United States, to abandon their policy of aiding the Chiang Kai-shek régime. A confrontation with Britain and the United States therefore seemed to be unavoidable and, in consequence, the danger of war with either or both

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<sup>1</sup> See Volume I, page 46.

Powers increased, although it was at that time considered that Britain and the United States could be dealt with separately. Preparations taken by the army and navy for military operations in the Southern Region consisted therefore for the time being mainly in the collection of information and the study of plans.

The situation changed completely when, in the closing months of 1940, it was realized that the invasion of Britain by Germany was unlikely to take place and that the hoped-for fall of Britain would not occur. The Japanese Navy came to the conclusion that, in the changed circumstances, it was no longer advisable to regard Britain and the United States separately. The Army, while admitting that Britain and the United States seemed fairly close together, felt that there was some chance of keeping them apart strategically, if not politically, and that to throw this chance away voluntarily by attacking United States territory would be regrettable. The Admirals pointed out that the seizure of the Southern Region involved a major combined operation, which could not be adequately supported unless the Philippines were occupied. Left in American hands these islands would be a menace to the vital sea route from Japan to the Southern Region, and any Japanese forces operating in that region would be in great danger.<sup>1</sup> This argument was decisive, and it was accepted by all concerned early in 1941 that a military campaign in the Southern Region meant war with the United States as well as with Britain and the Netherlands.

Although early in 1941 Japan was well aware of the weakness of the defences of Malaya, the Philippines and the Netherlands East Indies, she was not prepared to go to war to gain control of the Southern Region until her exposed flank in Manchuria was secured. She therefore negotiated in April 1941 a Neutrality Pact with Russia which she considered gave her adequate security in Manchuria.<sup>2</sup> Once this was signed she felt free to carry on with her southward advance into the Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere, using diplomatic measures to gain her ends or, if they failed, by recourse to war. Her military leaders saw the next step as the occupation of southern Indo-China and the development of bases from which the invasion of the Philippines, Malaya and Singapore could be covered at short range. The naval leaders, were, however, doubtful of the ultimate consequences of going to war with the United States, and therefore supported the Premier, Konoye, in his efforts to avoid war with her. Despite the divergence of opinion between the Services, Japan forced the Vichy French to allow her to occupy

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<sup>1</sup> Holding this view, the navy began in January 1941 to plan a surprise attack on Pearl Harbour as the first act of war, for they realized that the American Pacific Fleet constituted the greatest danger to any campaign in the Southern Region.

<sup>2</sup> See Volume I, page 59.

southern Indo-China at the end of July. This action profoundly altered the whole situation in the Far East.

When the United States, followed by Britain and the Netherlands, replied to the occupation of southern Indo-China by freezing all Japan's overseas assets, she did so in the hope that her action would deter Japan from any further expansion. In taking this view she miscalculated, for it was this very action which caused Japan to reach the decision to go to war and seize by force the areas she was determined to control. Realizing that their precious reserves of oil fuel would diminish from day to day and would eventually prevent Japan from taking any military or naval action, the Admirals saw that, unless negotiations produced a speedy and satisfactory outcome, there was no other course of action open but to seize the oil resources in the Netherlands East Indies, and this meant war as soon as possible. Konoye was therefore forced to resign in mid-October and was replaced by General Tojo, who saw no alternative other than a recourse to war in the near future unless diplomatic negotiations with the United States quickly took an unexpected turn for the better. There was, however, little hope that these negotiations could succeed, for the United States was not likely to abandon the principles she had repeatedly enunciated as a basis for settlement in the Pacific, although she had no desire to precipitate a war in that ocean, while Japan could not come to any agreement with the United States, for to do so would have meant withdrawal from China which the army leaders refused to accept.

Shortly after the formation of the Tojo Cabinet in October 1941, Japanese leaders once again reviewed the possibility of limiting the war to one with only Britain and the Netherlands. The Admirals adhered to their view that seizure of the Philippines was an operational necessity, pointing out that, if war were not made on the United States at the same time as on Britain and the Netherlands, the advantage of initial surprise would be lost and that, because of Japan's inferiority in material means to wage war, surprise was absolutely essential. By October it was believed that the United States had already come to some agreement with Britain and the Netherlands for mutual defence against Japan and that, in the event of war with the latter two Powers, they would immediately seek aid from the United States. Since the United States needed supplies of rubber and tin and would undoubtedly view a Japanese advance into the Southern Region as endangering the Philippines, she could be expected to take all measures short of war to hamper the Japanese war effort, and might well enter the war at a moment she deemed propitious. The Japanese leaders, now convinced for these reasons that it would be impossible to keep the United States out of the war for long, decided that it was better to plan on that assumption and,



by striking the first blow, to obtain the advantage of surprise. The key to success appeared to be the destruction of the American Pacific Fleet by the surprise attack on Pearl Harbour which the Admirals had already planned. They calculated that this attack, if successful, would give Japan complete command of the sea in the western Pacific for a considerable period and that, with the advantages of the initiative and strategical surprise, they would find little difficulty in occupying the Philippines, Siam, Malaya, the Netherlands East Indies and a barrier of islands in the central Pacific, and establishing a defensive perimeter from Wake Island through the Gilbert Islands, New Britain, New Guinea, Java and Sumatra to Akyab on the Arakan coast of Burma and thence to the Himalayas, which covered an area containing nearly all the raw materials Japan needed to be self-sufficient. They then hoped that Britain and the United States would dissipate their strength in a vain effort to break through the perimeter defences and would, within a reasonably short period of time, become war-weary and ready to accept a compromise peace, leaving Japan in control of the Southern Region. These hopes they felt would be enhanced if, as they then thought, Germany defeated Russia and then turned her attention to Britain, leaving the United States isolated to fight a two-ocean war.

When the Japanese leaders committed their country to war with two highly industrialized Powers in addition to their heavy involvement with the China 'Incident', they were well aware that the reserves of oil fuel, even augmented by such supplies as could be obtained from the oilfields in the Southern Region, would suffice for some two years only,<sup>1</sup> and that a somewhat similar time limit applied to their stockpiles of those vital raw materials which could not be obtained from the countries they proposed to seize.<sup>2</sup> They therefore planned on a war of comparatively short duration. They made, however, two important miscalculations: they overestimated their own strength, and they failed to appreciate the vast potential strength and determination of their two new opponents. They thus found themselves involved in a war which might not end in stalemate and a compromise peace as they had hoped, but which might well be carried on relentlessly till they themselves faced defeat.

Being an island Power with few natural resources, Japan was dependent on imports of fuel oil and raw materials to maintain her industry. These imports could be obtained only from the Southern Region after its occupation. It was therefore essential that her navy

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<sup>1</sup> See Volume I, Appendix 3, Tables B to E, and Volume V, Appendix 11.

<sup>2</sup> See Appendix 11.

should retain command of the seas within her chosen defensive perimeter, and that her merchant fleet should be big enough not only to maintain her military garrisons holding a long and distant perimeter, but also to carry to her shores the fuel oil and raw materials on which her ability to wage war depended. This being the case, the strength of her navy (including its air arm) and the size of her merchant fleet became the vital factors if she were to achieve her aims. The strength of her navy was adequate to retain control of the western and south-western Pacific for some considerable time provided that the attack on Pearl Harbour was successful, but it was well known that the United States navy would eventually have an overwhelming superiority. Similarly it was evident that the United States air force would soon outrival her own, both numerically and in performance, for her aircraft industry had relied up to 1941 almost exclusively upon copying and improving upon aircraft produced by the United States and Europe. She thus had few aircraft designers capable of developing new types of aircraft when left to work entirely on their own, and it was inevitable that she would fall behind her enemies in technical development.

Japan entered the war with a merchant fleet of about six million tons, which included roughly half a million tons in oil tankers. It was this comparatively small tonnage which had to provide tankers for refuelling her fleet, support her far-flung garrisons and maintain the flow of necessary imports. Despite the lessons of the First World War, her leaders committed the nation to war without a properly organized convoy system to protect their merchant shipping and, surprisingly, had laid no plans for an extensive shipbuilding programme to replace losses. It was thus inevitable that the tonnage of the merchant fleet would progressively decline during the course of the war, whatever efforts were made after the war began to initiate a crash building programme.

Japan began the war with other severe disadvantages. There was no effective national comprehensive plan to harness the nation's industry to the war effort, or to control the distribution of the available manpower between the Services and industry and to direct labour within industry. Furthermore, although there was agreement between the Services for the initial stages of the war, the rivalry and jealousy between them which had existed previously, instead of ceasing in the national interest, continued throughout the war and, as the events outlined in this series of volumes show, persisted to the bitter end, even when the nation was facing invasion.

It is evident in retrospect that when she engaged herself in a conflict with the United States and Britain, Japan was not adequately prepared to wage a long war and many problems which were bound to arise had not been properly considered and solutions found. It

would appear that this was due to the fact that Service leaders, who thought mainly in terms of military strategy and did not fully comprehend the need to harness the whole nation for war, were allowed by the Japanese method of government and form of constitution to control both internal and foreign policy, a role for which they were uneducated and inexperienced. Thus Japan was led into a war which could not end in victory.

The Japanese offensives of the 8th December 1941 achieved complete surprise by their very audacity. The British forces in Malaya, Borneo and Hong Kong and the Americans in the Philippines were quite unable to hold up the carefully-planned Japanese assault delivered without declaration of war. In the Netherlands East Indies, invaded soon after, the Dutch were equally impotent. At Pearl Harbour the surprise was so great that the American Pacific Fleet was virtually destroyed in two hours.

Although Singapore was recognized as the keystone of Commonwealth strategy in the Far East, the disaster of Dunkirk and the collapse of France (whose task was to neutralize the Italian fleet in the Mediterranean), the need to hold Egypt and the Middle East and to assist Russia to repel the German invasion made it very difficult for reinforcements for its garrison to be found to bring it to a strength which might have deterred Japanese aggression. These factors enforced a policy of not sending reinforcements to the Far East until it became clear that diplomatic efforts to keep Japan out of the war were showing signs of breaking down, despite the fact that the Chiefs of Staff had warned of the danger inherent in this policy since it would take three months from the date movement was started to reinforce Singapore.

The first warning that diplomatic efforts were failing came on the 11th August 1941 when the Prime Minister cabled from the Atlantic Conference that the United States was about to warn Japan (who had just occupied French Indo-China) that any further encroachment on her part might lead to war. The next day the Chiefs of Staff met to discuss the immediate reinforcement of the Far East, and the American and British staffs met to revise the previously rejected plan to co-ordinate British, American and Dutch operations.<sup>1</sup> In spite of four months warning, preparations to meet a Japanese attack were woefully inadequate. The reasons for the failure of the British Government to provide an adequate garrison for Malaya and Singapore and its failure to provide a co-ordinated Allied plan of operations are clearly given in *Grand Strategy, Volume III, Part I*:

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<sup>1</sup> See Volume I, pages 75-6.

'The idea of a direct attack on Malaya or the Dutch East Indies, still more on American possessions, was implicitly rejected . . . Even at that date [November 1941] few people were really prepared to believe that Japan would risk an open conflict with the United States, or, to speak more exactly, that she would dare to commit her main forces to an operation in the south, while the U.S. Pacific Fleet was still in being and able to act offensively against her. This supposition was, indeed, the basis of British policy in the Far East during this period; and it explains much that must otherwise appear complacent and over-confident in the attitude of the Cabinet and the Chiefs of Staff. They knew that the forces which they were sending to the Far East were inadequate; but they were unwilling to increase them to the detriment of other fronts, because they believed that our main defence (and the only deterrent that Japan would recognize) was to be found elsewhere—in American naval power.'<sup>1</sup>

The destruction, almost as soon as they arrived, of reinforcements hurriedly sent to the Far East just before and after the outbreak of war has been described in Volume I. Nevertheless the disaster that overtook the Allies in the Far East might have been somewhat mitigated had there been any effective plan for co-ordination of effort, or even had there been an overall Allied Command before war broke out.

Within a matter of weeks, and in far less time than they themselves had thought possible, the Japanese established their perimeter from the Kuriles through the Netherlands East Indies to Burma, and they had command of the sea and of the air from Wake Island to the Bay of Bengal. The hurriedly formed American, British, Dutch and Australian joint command (A.B.D.A. Command) set up on the 15th January 1942 to co-ordinate Allied action in the Philippines, the Netherlands East Indies, Malaya and Burma was foredoomed to failure. It lasted six weeks, by which time Singapore had fallen, the Japanese were closing in on Rangoon, the American forces in the Philippines were surrounded in the Bataan peninsula near Manila, and a pitifully small fleet, all that was left of British, Dutch and American naval forces in the south-west Pacific, was about to sail to its destruction in a vain effort to stop the Japanese invasion forces approaching Java.<sup>2</sup>

Without a viable strategy, the weak Allied garrisons in the Far East were surprised and outmanoeuvred on the battlefield by a well-trained enemy acting on a carefully co-ordinated strategical plan. Resistance had thus completely collapsed by the end of the first week in March. Other than the beleaguered American garrison of the Philippines, the British force withdrawing in Burma under close pursuit and the remnants of the American Pacific fleet in the Pearl Harbour area, the British/Indian, Dutch, Australian and American

<sup>1</sup> See Gwyer, page 283.

<sup>2</sup> See Volume I, pages 437–8.

forces in the Far East were either dead, prisoners-of-war or fugitives in the mountains.

With the Japanese holding a perimeter from the central Pacific through New Britain, New Guinea and the Netherlands East Indies to Rangoon by the end of the opening phase of the war, the Allies were effectively divided geographically. It was evident even before March 1942 that any counter-offensive designed to recapture British and American possessions in the Far East and western Pacific and eventually to force Japan to surrender would have to be conducted in two widely separated theatres: the South-East Asia theatre (including India, Ceylon, Burma, Malaya, Siam, Indo-China and Sumatra) and the Pacific theatre (including the British, American and Free French islands in the Pacific, New Zealand, Australia and the Netherlands East Indies, excluding Sumatra). It was therefore agreed between the Prime Minister and the President that the South-East Asia theatre would be under British and the Pacific theatre under American control, though both the British and American commanders in the theatres would conduct their operations within an overall strategy adopted by the Combined [British and American] Chiefs of Staff as approved by the British and American Governments.<sup>1</sup>

In actual practice the direction of the war in the Pacific lay entirely in American hands, for Britain could supply no resources for the theatre until the very end of 1944. This was so much the case that, especially in naval matters, the Chiefs of Staff often did not know what action the Americans were taking. In the South-East Asia theatre the United States not only became the major supplier of the resources required in the theatre, but it also took a direct interest in the operations since these affected China. The direction of the war in South-East Asia, although nominally a British responsibility, thus became a combined British-American effort with both Allies playing their part.

The overall strategy adopted by the Combined Chiefs of Staff for the war against Japan was that the defeat of Germany took priority over the defeat of Japan. Within the limits that this decision imposed, Allied forces in the Pacific theatre, based initially on the United States and Australia, were to advance by way of the central and south-west Pacific with the object of recapturing the Philippines or Formosa as a stepping-stone to the eventual blockade and possible invasion of Japan, while the Allied forces in the South-East Asia theatre, based on India, were to take the offensive as and when

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<sup>1</sup> See Butler, *Grand Strategy, Volume III, Part II* (H.M.S.O., 1964), pages 471-5.

possible to open communications by air and land to the China theatre, which had been isolated by the loss of Rangoon and the Burma Road. The following chapters review the course of the war in these two widely separated theatres.

# CHAPTER XXXIII

## THE WAR IN THE PACIFIC

### (1942—45)

*See Maps 6, 14 and 16*

**T**HE strategy adopted by the American Chiefs of Staff for the Pacific theatre had initially to be purely defensive until they had recovered from the heavy losses suffered by their Pacific Fleet at Pearl Harbour and overcome their unpreparedness for war. They realized that, if they were to defeat Japan, they would have to launch a counter-offensive across the Pacific with the final object of invading the Japanese homeland, which meant a vast amphibious campaign advancing by bounds by way of the Pacific islands. They therefore planned to build a new fleet around a nucleus of fast aircraft carriers, and a large fleet train of specially-designed merchant ships and tankers which would enable the fleet to operate over great distances from temporary advanced naval bases and to remain at sea for long periods. Since such a building programme would clearly take time, there was little hope of launching an all-out counter-offensive in under eighteen months.

In the meantime they had to set the stage for the counter-offensive. The first step to be taken was to hold on to their remaining naval base in the Pacific (Pearl Harbour), for its loss would have forced them to begin their offensive from the west coast of the United States, a further 2,000 miles from their objective. The retention of Midway Island and the Hawaiian Islands was therefore vital.<sup>1</sup> The strengthening of the defences of Midway Island, which was within bombing range of Pearl Harbour, was of the first importance, for there was always the possibility that the Japanese Fleet, then in complete control of the western Pacific, might attempt to seize the island. The next step was to establish a secure line of communication to Australia, for whose defence they were responsible and which provided an advanced base from which to launch an offensive to regain control of the south-west Pacific. They therefore decided to garrison the chain of islands which ran between Pearl Harbour and Brisbane on the east coast of Australia. By March 1942 American

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<sup>1</sup>See Map 14, facing page 406.

and New Zealand garrisons had been provided for Palmyra, Christmas Island, Canton, the Society Islands, Samoa, the Friendly Islands, the Fiji Islands, New Hebrides and New Caledonia.<sup>1</sup> Since they realized that the Japanese, from their newly established base at Rabaul, might well launch an offensive to disrupt their line of communications, the American Chiefs of Staff established an advanced naval and air base in New Hebrides and began to concentrate a division in the Fiji Islands and another in New Caledonia. During the same period they placed MacArthur in command of the South-West Pacific Area with his headquarters at Brisbane, and Admiral Nimitz in command of the North, Central and South Pacific Areas with his headquarters at Pearl Harbour. Both commanders were directed to hold key positions in their respective areas and to prepare for major offensives, the first of which was to be launched from the South-West and South Pacific Areas.<sup>2</sup>

The strategy in the Pacific adopted initially by the Japanese was to destroy or neutralize the American Pacific Fleet at Pearl Harbour, seize the American advanced base in the Philippines, cut the American lines of communication across the Pacific by capturing Wake and Guam, and occupy a defensive perimeter from Wake through the Marshall and Gilbert Islands and the Bismarck Archipelago to Java. Since Japan had planned to fight the war in the Pacific as one of limited objectives, she had decided to remain on the defensive within this perimeter and engage the American fleet only when it attacked the perimeter. The possibility of occupying Midway Island as part of the original perimeter was discussed before the war but abandoned, since it was considered to be too far distant for the initial offensive.

Admiral I. Yamamoto, Commander-in-Chief, *Combined Fleet*, who was the most dominant personality in the Japanese Navy and the author of the plan to attack Pearl Harbour as the first act of war, was determined that a decisive battle must be fought with the American fleet (or what remained of it after Pearl Harbour) at an early stage in the war before the balance of naval power became unfavourable for Japan. On the 5th November 1941 he had directed that plans should be prepared for the capture or neutralization of Midway Island for use in the second stage of the naval operations in the Pacific.

As soon as it was seen early in 1942 that initial operations on all fronts were progressing satisfactorily, plans for the subsequent phases of the war were considered. Yamamoto advocated that an attempt should be made to bring the war to an end as soon as possible by

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<sup>1</sup> See Volume II, Chapters XIII and XVI.

<sup>2</sup> See Volume II, Map 15 and page 223.



taking the offensive outside the agreed defensive perimeter. On the 14th January 1942 he had a plan prepared for the *Combined Fleet* to capture Midway Island and Palmyra, with the object of establishing advanced air bases on them. When this had been accomplished, the Hawaiian Islands were to be attacked and, if possible, occupied and the remnant of the American fleet sought out and destroyed. He also put forward three other suggestions: an invasion of Australia, an offensive to cut the American lines of communication to Australia by the occupation of Fiji and Samoa, and the capture of Ceylon.<sup>1</sup>

Neither the naval nor the army section of *Imperial General Headquarters* was in favour of Yamamoto's plan to capture Midway Island, since each thought that the task of maintaining a garrison on such a distant island and holding it against a counter-offensive would be difficult.<sup>2</sup> The plan was finally dropped as impracticable. The Army refused to contemplate an invasion of Australia since formations were not available for such an extensive undertaking. The operation to occupy Fiji and Samoa was temporarily shelved, since Yamamoto did not press for it to be carried out. The capture of Ceylon, estimated to need the landing of two divisions and the support of the *Combined Fleet*, was discussed at a conference held on Yamamoto's flagship from the 20th to 22nd February. The Army opposed the operation, but the naval section of *Imperial General Headquarters*, although not enthusiastic, agreed that it was feasible. It was decided, however, that it was too early to make an attempt to link up with Germany in the Middle East, and the idea was dropped for the time being. It was never revived and Japan concentrated her attention on the Pacific theatre.

In March 1942 the strategy to be adopted in the Pacific was again reviewed by *Imperial General Headquarters*. The Navy (especially Yamamoto and the staff of the *Combined Fleet*) once again advocated offensive operations against Midway and the Hawaiian Islands and against Australia on the assumption that such operations would enable the enemy fleets to be destroyed. The Army, while admitting that operations to neutralize the Hawaiian Islands and Australia would be of value, were opposed to the large-scale operations which the invasion of either area would involve. The General Staff pointed out, as they had done during pre-war planning, that Japan's war potential and military capacity precluded her from attempting to overpower the United States, and that she should remain on the defensive and attempt to destroy the American forces when they attacked. They therefore advocated that Japan should adhere to the plans prepared before the outbreak of the war. *Imperial General Head-*

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<sup>1</sup> For Ceylon see Map 16, facing page 600.

<sup>2</sup> The distance from Tokyo Bay to Midway was only some 275 nautical miles more than to Wake.

*quarters* had not only to take these conflicting views into account, but also to weigh up the military advantages which might be gained by the extension of their original perimeter against the obviously disadvantageous effect such an extension would have on the length of time their slender reserves of oil fuel would last, and on the capacity of their limited merchant fleet to maintain the enlarged perimeter as well as the Japanese economy.

Prevented from undertaking the operations to occupy Midway, Palmyra and the Hawaiian Islands, Yamamoto decided on the 9th March to send the major portion of the *Combined Fleet*, including its aircraft carriers, into the Indian Ocean to destroy the British Eastern Fleet based on Ceylon in a surprise raid, and to provide cover for the convoys carrying army formations from Malaya to Rangoon for the final stages of the conquest of Burma. The *Combined Fleet* carried out air raids on Colombo and Trincomalee, sank several British warships and a large number of merchant ships with negligible losses to itself, but was unable to bring the main body of the British Eastern Fleet to action. It returned to Singapore on completion of the operation on the 12th April.<sup>1</sup>

On the 5th April *Imperial General Headquarters* reached a decision on future strategy in the Pacific. As soon as the *Combined Fleet* returned from its incursion into the Indian Ocean, the original perimeter in the Pacific was to be extended north-eastwards by the capture of the Aleutians to prevent them being used by the Americans as a base from which to bomb Japan, and south-eastwards to cut the line of communication between the United States and Australia. In addition, on the insistence of Yamamoto, a naval action was to be sought in the vicinity of Midway Island with the object of completing the destruction of the American fleet before its strength could be built up. These plans were readjusted after the Doolittle raid on Japan by American aircraft launched from a carrier force on the 18th April:<sup>2</sup> the south-eastward offensive was now to begin in May, but be restricted initially to seizing forward bases at Tulagi and Guadalcanal in the Solomon Islands and Port Moresby on the south coast of Papua in readiness for a major offensive to be undertaken later towards New Hebrides; and the proposed Aleutian Islands operations were to take place in June but the fleet, besides seeking a naval action in the vicinity of Midway Island, was to escort a force to undertake the capture of the island.

It was these decisions which brought about the naval battles of the Coral Sea in May and of Midway in June.<sup>3</sup> The former was inconclusive for the Japanese naval covering force was too weak for the

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<sup>1</sup> See Volume II, Chapter VII.

<sup>2</sup> See Volume II, page 225.

<sup>3</sup> See Map 6, facing page 125, and Volume II, Chapter XIII.

task in hand, and the convoy carrying the troops to occupy Port Moresby on the south coast of Papua had to turn back; Japanese troops, however, occupied Tulagi and Guadalcanal in the Solomons without opposition. Midway, in which an inferior American naval force was victorious, was a disaster for Japan. It was the fact that a large force of land-based bombers had been concentrated by the Americans on Midway Island which, although they failed to inflict any damage on the Japanese carriers, tipped the scales against Japan in the battle of Midway. It was the urgent need further to soften up resistance on the island before the proposed landing that led the Japanese naval commander to make a tactical error which was to enable the American carrier aircraft to destroy the Japanese carriers and return to Pearl Harbour as victors with comparatively small losses.

Having suffered the loss of four fleet carriers with all their aircraft and technical personnel as well as a quarter of their highly-trained pilots,<sup>1</sup> the Japanese navy was temporarily unable to dispute American naval command of the Pacific except in an area within the range of its land-based aircraft. The command of the sea passed to the Americans and, since they could outbuild the Japanese, they had no difficulty thereafter in retaining it. This was the turning point of the war, although Yamamoto did not recognize it as such. Not impressed by the skill of the American bomber pilots in the opening stages of the battle, he began, despite his losses, to plan for the capture of Canton Island with a view to bringing about another naval action in which he hoped he might destroy the American carriers.

The Japanese had had the opportunity of following up their initial success at Pearl Harbour and of occupying Midway in January 1942 when the Americans were at their weakest. This was what Yamamoto had advocated, but *Imperial General Headquarters* maintained their view that Midway (although not so far beyond Wake) was too distant to attack and, if captured, too difficult to hold. When some six months later they suddenly changed their minds it was too late, for the Americans had had time not only to reorganize their Pacific fleet but also to reinforce Midway with large numbers of land-based fighters and bombers. The change in policy would appear to have been brought about by the Doolittle raid, which lent force to Yamamoto's arguments for it disclosed a gap in the perimeter and convinced *Imperial General Headquarters* that an attempt must be made to close it. As stated in Volume II, Japan, by reaching for the shadow of further conquests, lost the bone of naval supremacy, without which she could not hold the vast area she had already won.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> These losses left Japan with only two carriers in commission and with two others shortly to join the fleet.

<sup>2</sup> See Volume II, page 233.

After the battles of the Coral Sea and Midway, the Japanese postponed their south-eastward offensive towards New Hebrides until August 1942, and arranged for a landing to be made on the north coast of Papua and for Port Moresby to be captured by a subsequent overland advance. The Americans, having no further fear for the safety of Midway Island and Pearl Harbour, were in a position to consider launching a counter-offensive. Since the Japanese occupation of Tulagi and Guadalcanal created a threat to their line of communication to Australia, the American Chiefs of Staff directed Nimitz and MacArthur on the 2nd July 1942 to undertake two parallel offensives: one through the Solomons and the other through Papua and New Guinea with the occupation of the New Britain-New Ireland-New Guinea area as their objective. They were to be in three phases: the first, to occupy Tulagi and Guadalcanal; the second, to seize the rest of the Solomons and Papua as far north as the Huon peninsula; and the third, to capture Rabaul.<sup>1</sup> The offensive opened with a landing on Guadalcanal on the 7th August, and by the next day American forces had captured the almost completed airfield on Guadalcanal and overcome all resistance at Tulagi. The speed with which the Americans gained control of the two islands came as a surprise to the Japanese who, badly underestimating American strength on Guadalcanal and thinking they would obtain a quick success, sent forward troops piecemeal to recapture the island. Thus began the epic struggle for Guadalcanal which lasted until the end of January 1943 when the Japanese had to admit defeat and withdraw. While the battle for Guadalcanal was raging the Japanese attempt to capture Port Moresby also met with defeat at the hands of the Australians. Weakened by the need to find reinforcements for Guadalcanal, the Japanese forces were gradually driven back to their base at Buna on the north coast of Papua from which they were eventually driven in the third week of January 1943. For the Japanese these two long battles were disastrous. They lost not only the initiative in the Pacific but also, in the many naval and air battles fought in the narrow waters in and around the Solomons, many ships, trained pilots and aircraft which, unlike the Americans who also lost many ships and aircraft, they could not quickly replace.<sup>2</sup>

In February 1943 *Imperial General Headquarters* came to realize that they could no longer afford to take the offensive in the Pacific, but would have to turn to the defensive and hold the general line from Lae in New Guinea to New Georgia. The Americans, on the other hand, were in a position to undertake the second phase of their two-pronged offensive with the object of breaking through to the Bismarck

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<sup>1</sup> See Map 6, facing page 125 and Volume II, pages 270-1.

<sup>2</sup> See Volume II, Chapter XVI.

Archipelago.<sup>1</sup> This meant an advance from Papua to drive the Japanese from Salamaua and Lae in preparation for the clearance of the Huon Peninsula, and either the capture or isolation of Rabaul by an advance up the Solomons. The next twelve months saw heavy fighting, during which the Allies secured their objectives, and the Japanese suffered heavy losses of aircraft and some two million tons of their already inadequate merchant fleet.

It was in this period that both contestants took decisions which had a considerable bearing on the rest of the campaign in the Pacific. Admiral Halsey, who commanded the American forces fighting their way up the Solomons, decided to by-pass certain strongly defended islands which were of no value to him and attack only those which would assist him to gain his objective, Rabaul.<sup>2</sup> As a result of the success of this decision, the by-passing strategy was developed, which not only greatly speeded up the American offensives but made it difficult for the Japanese to know where the next attack would fall. The Japanese, on the other hand, took decisions which were to make any major fleet action impossible during the short time that remained before the American navy had overwhelming numerical superiority. Although acutely aware that Japan's only hope of gaining the type of victory envisaged lay in the decisive defeat of the American fleet, two successive Commanders-in-Chief of the *Combined Fleet* denuded their carriers of aircraft and so rendered their fleet impotent. At the end of March 1943, in an effort to regain air superiority in the Solomons and thereby delay the resumption of the American offensive after the failure to hold Guadalcanal, Yamamoto sent aircraft from his carriers at Truk to Rabaul to reinforce the land-based air fleet. The all-out air offensive which followed in early April did little damage to the Americans but, although its losses of carrier aircraft and pilots were not heavy, *1st Carrier Squadron* of the *Combined Fleet* at Truk was so disorganized that it had to be sent back to Japan to refit.<sup>3</sup> In October 1943, with the object of delaying the American advance, which was by that time threatening to encircle Rabaul, Admiral M. Koga (successor to Yamamoto, who had been killed in an air crash) sent a large number of carrier aircraft from Truk to reinforce the air fleet at Rabaul. These aircraft reached Rabaul almost simultaneously with the American invasion of Bougainville. Koga had at this moment an opportunity to bring about a fleet action but, with his carriers denuded of aircraft, was helpless. As a result the Americans were able to use their carriers, free from interference by the Japanese fleet, to launch two heavy air attacks on Rabaul, which inflicted much damage on the naval

<sup>1</sup> See Volume II, Chapter XXII.

<sup>2</sup> See Volume II, pages 416-17.

<sup>3</sup> See Volume II, page 378.

reinforcement Koga had sent there to be used to oppose the landings on Bougainville.<sup>1</sup> In the air battles in November 1943 some two-thirds of the Japanese carrier aircraft were lost at Rabaul, and once again the *Combined Fleet's* carriers had to be sent back to Japan to re-equip. The losses in skilled pilots were such that, for the rest of the war, pilots of Japanese carrier aircraft were never again a match for their American opposite numbers. The attacks on Rabaul by the American carriers proved that, provided they were free from interference by an enemy fleet supported by carriers, they could be used with relative impunity in the vicinity of areas defended by land-based aircraft, and they were so used for the rest of the Pacific campaign.

At the Quadrant Conference at Quebec in August 1943 the Combined Chiefs of Staff specified two lines of approach towards Japan. MacArthur's advance was to continue in New Guinea, the Admiralty Islands were to be seized, Rabaul and the Bismarck Archipelago neutralized and a step-by-step advance made to the north-western extremity of New Guinea. Nimitz, who now had a sizeable fleet, was to move across the central Pacific, capturing successively the Gilberts, the Marshalls, Truk, Palau and the Marianas. The advance in the central Pacific was to have priority, but the two advances were to be mutually supporting and so planned that the Japanese would be left uncertain where the next blow would fall.<sup>2</sup> Almost simultaneously the Japanese, realizing that they could no longer hope to hold on to their original perimeter, decided to withdraw to a general line from Timor in the south, through western New Guinea and the Marianas to the Kurile Islands.

Under cover of their fast carrier force, the Americans occupied the Gilbert Islands in November 1943 and the Marshall Islands, including Eniwetok, by mid-February 1944. Although Eniwetok was within a comparatively short distance of Truk, the *Combined Fleet* could not offer any opposition since its carriers were refitting in Japan, and Koga decided on the 10th February, only just in time, to abandon his main base at Truk and seek safety elsewhere. The Japanese were meanwhile reinforcing their garrison in the Marianas and western New Guinea, and suffering severe losses in men and transports in the effort.<sup>3</sup>

Having broken through the Bismarck Archipelago and occupied the Admiralty Islands and the Huon Peninsula by March 1944,

<sup>1</sup> The carrier aircraft in two attacks sank a destroyer, hit and damaged seven cruisers and three destroyers and forced the Japanese to withdraw all their naval forces from Rabaul to Truk, never to return. See Volume III, Chapter VII.

<sup>2</sup> See Volume III, page 83.

<sup>3</sup> See Volume III, Chapter VIII. American carrier raids on Truk on the 17th and 18th February 1944 sank or damaged 200,000 tons of merchant shipping, destroyed 270 aircraft and sank two cruisers and four destroyers.

MacArthur advanced along the north coast of New Guinea, bypassing any centres of resistance which were of no importance to him. Hollandia was occupied in April, and Biak Island invaded in May. The Japanese had meanwhile begun to raise and train in Japan a new naval air fleet to replace the one destroyed in the attempt to hold the Solomons and the Huon Peninsula, and Koga had begun to prepare for a major fleet action, should the Marianas be invaded, by engaging the Americans in an area south-west of the Marianas where he could make good his inferiority in carriers by support from land-based aircraft from Saipan, Guam and the Palau Islands.<sup>1</sup>

In face of the rapid American advance in the central Pacific and their own air weakness in that area, the Japanese sent half of the partially-trained new naval air fleet to the Marianas in early February 1944, followed by the other half in May. Many of these aircraft were lost in pre-invasion American carrier raids on the islands, and in May, in an attempt to prevent the loss of Biak Island, a large number was sent south to New Guinea but had to be recalled when it became clear that the invasion of the Marianas was imminent. Few got back even as far as the Palaus. The land-based air support on which the *Combined Fleet* had counted was not therefore forthcoming and when, hampered by the shortage of oil fuel and with only nine carriers,<sup>2</sup> it engaged the American fleet (with its fifteen carriers) it was hopelessly outclassed. In the battle of the Philippine Sea in mid-June the *Combined Fleet* lost three carriers sunk and four damaged as well as practically all its aircraft, without inflicting any damage on its opponents.<sup>3</sup> By the 12th August 1944 Saipan, Tinian and Guam had been occupied. By the end of July, too, American forces had reached the north-western end of New Guinea. Japan was now open to heavy bombing, and Formosa and the Philippines to invasion.

After the capture of the Marianas the American Chiefs of Staff were undecided whether to advance to Formosa directly or by way of Luzon in the Philippines, although Nimitz was to capture the Palaus and MacArthur Mindanao. On the 8th September, however, they ordered MacArthur to occupy Leyte instead of Mindanao, but still left in abeyance the decision whether to go from there to Luzon or Formosa.<sup>4</sup> It was not until the 3rd October that they took a final decision on the strategy to be adopted for 1944-45. After the

<sup>1</sup> See Volume III, Chapter XXX.

<sup>2</sup> See Appendix 11.

<sup>3</sup> The comparative strengths of the American and Japanese fleets in the Pacific after the battle of the Philippine Sea were: battleships 17:9, fleet carriers 12:4, light carriers 9:5, escort carriers 47:3, cruisers 38:25, destroyers 249:73 and submarines 155:48 (see Volume III, page 518). The four Japanese fleet carriers were damaged and without aircraft.

<sup>4</sup> See Volume IV, page 63.

occupation of Leyte, MacArthur was ordered to invade Luzon, while Nimitz, after providing cover and support for the Luzon operation, was to capture in succession an island in the Bonins and one in the Ryukyus; the former to provide emergency landing facilities for the bombers based on the Marianas, and the latter for development into an advanced naval and air base for the invasion of Japan contemplated for the autumn of 1945.<sup>1</sup>

The Japanese for their part were now forced to defend an inner perimeter from the Philippines through Formosa, the Ryukyu and Bonin Islands to the Kuriles, and concentrated on the defence of the Philippines which they thought the Americans would attack first. Toyoda considered that his fleet could destroy an invasion force near the beaches in the absence of carriers, provided he had adequate cover from land-based aircraft.<sup>2</sup> The Japanese plan was to defend Luzon while providing some protection for airfields throughout the archipelago, and to concentrate the largest force of naval and army aircraft they could to obtain air superiority over the coastal waters. Again the speed of the American offensive was such that it found them unprepared. When Toyoda learnt of the approach of the invasion fleet to Leyte Gulf, he planned under cover of land-based aircraft to destroy it by gunfire while his carriers (which had practically no aircraft) acted as a decoy to draw the American carrier force away from the vicinity of Leyte. Unfortunately for Toyoda, the Americans attacked before the land-based aircraft had been concentrated in the Philippines. The Japanese carriers succeeded in drawing off the American carriers, although they were all sunk in the process. Thus the *Combined Fleet*, without adequate air cover, met with defeat in the battle of Leyte Gulf in October 1944 (the last major naval battle of the war), losing, in addition to its four carriers, three battleships, nine cruisers and eight destroyers against American losses of one carrier, two escort carriers and three destroyers.<sup>3</sup>

It was at this moment, just after American forces had gained a footing on Leyte, that the army section of *Imperial General Headquarters*, informed erroneously by the navy that the American fleet had suffered severe losses (particularly in carriers) off Formosa, made a last-minute change of plan and decided to defend Leyte instead of concentrating on the defence of Luzon.<sup>4</sup> This proved to be a disastrous decision, for it not only seriously weakened their chances of holding Luzon but was much too late to save Leyte. Furthermore it was expensive, for, although some 45,000 men did reach Leyte, a cruiser, eight destroyers, six escort craft, seventeen transports and a

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<sup>1</sup> See Volume IV, pages 68-9.

<sup>2</sup> Toyoda had succeeded Koga, who was killed in an air crash in February.

<sup>3</sup> See Volume IV, Chapter VII.

<sup>4</sup> See Volume IV, pages 70-1.



large number of aircraft were lost to no good purpose.<sup>1</sup> With the Japanese navy now impotent, her air forces in the Philippines almost destroyed and the garrison of Luzon well below its required strength owing to the attempt to reinforce Leyte, the invasion of Luzon offered the Americans no problem. The vital portion of the island, including most of Manila, was captured without difficulty by early February 1945.<sup>2</sup>

The Japanese were now completely cut off from the Southern Region, with the result that their economy, already on the decline, began to collapse.<sup>3</sup> The Americans, on the other hand, were in a position to undertake the final stages of their long advance across the Pacific – the capture of bases from which they could invade Japan. Their next move was therefore to seize Iwojima in the Bonins and then Okinawa in the Ryukyus. Having constructed air bases in the Marianas, they were also in a position to bring Japan under heavy air bombardment.

Japan now had her back to the wall: her navy had been crippled and the surviving ships were practically immobilized for lack of fuel; her naval and army air forces had suffered very serious losses and the shortage of petrol made it impossible for pilots to be properly trained; and her industry was running down owing to lack of raw materials. To stave off invasion she had to prevent the Allies from securing bases near her shores, and she therefore had to hold Formosa and the Ryukyu and Bonin Islands. She knew that her garrisons there would fight to the last man, and her problem was how to prevent them from being overwhelmed by superior forces. In this extremity her national characteristics made her turn to the use of suicide aircraft since, even with her diminished resources, this was possible and volunteer manpower was available.

The organization and preparation of an air force in which *Kamikaze* aircraft were the primary offensive weapon took some time, and only two attacks could be made on the American fleet when Iwojima was invaded in February 1945.<sup>4</sup> The situation was vastly different when Okinawa was invaded, and during the three months that the enormous Allied armada of some 1,500 ships had to lie off Okinawa the Japanese launched ten, mainly *Kamikaze*, mass air attacks on them, as well as a large number of small raids carried out by *Kamikazes* alone.

The problem of defence against the *Kamikaze* was never completely solved for, despite outlying lines of picket destroyers fitted with radar

<sup>1</sup> See Volume IV, Chapter VII.

<sup>2</sup> See Volume IV, Chapter VIII.

<sup>3</sup> See Appendix II.

<sup>4</sup> See Volume IV, Chapter XXI.

to give early warning of attacks, of heavy overhead air cover in the target area and intensive anti-aircraft fire from the ships, about a fifth of the *Kamikazes* at Okinawa managed to get through to their objectives and hit 402 ships, of which about a quarter were either sunk or so seriously damaged as to be rendered useless.<sup>1</sup> Fortunately the *Kamikaze* was by its nature bound to be a wasting asset, and during the struggle for Okinawa the Japanese had to abandon the idea of an élite corps of volunteers prepared to sacrifice themselves, and instead issue orders that in future suicide methods would be employed by all air units. This undoubtedly affected the efficiency of the mass attacks in the latter part of the Okinawa campaign. In many cases, particularly when men still under training were hurriedly sent forward as reinforcements, *Kamikaze* pilots showed signs of anxiety, coupled with contempt for senior officers who were considered to be callous and lacking in humanity. There were sorties in which pilots, clearly having made no attempt to locate their target, returned to base saying that it could not be found.

The *Kamikaze* weapon had other grave defects. Targets could not be selected and attacks could not be controlled, since they were individual rather than team efforts. Pilots at Okinawa frequently immolated themselves and their aircraft on the first enemy ship they saw, often in the outer ring of picket destroyers some fifty to a hundred miles from the vital target – the mass of shipping tightly packed around the island. Picket destroyers already under attack from *Kamikazes* appeared to attract others to the scene, and thus attacks on transports and store ships, on their close protection screen and on their covering escort carriers were far fewer than on the outlying picket destroyers. The American fleet therefore suffered heavy losses in destroyers, while a comparatively small number of the more vital escort carriers, transports and store ships were put out of action. Attacks on the carrier forces were the only ones that appeared to be properly conducted, since the targets were comparatively isolated and more obvious. Carriers of the British Pacific Fleet suffered less damage than did American carriers, for the British ships had armoured decks which the *Kamikaze* was unable to pierce. Another drawback in the use of the *Kamikaze* technique was that those directing the operation had little idea how the campaign was progressing, since there was no conclusive means of determining results and thus no indication of the amount of damage inflicted.

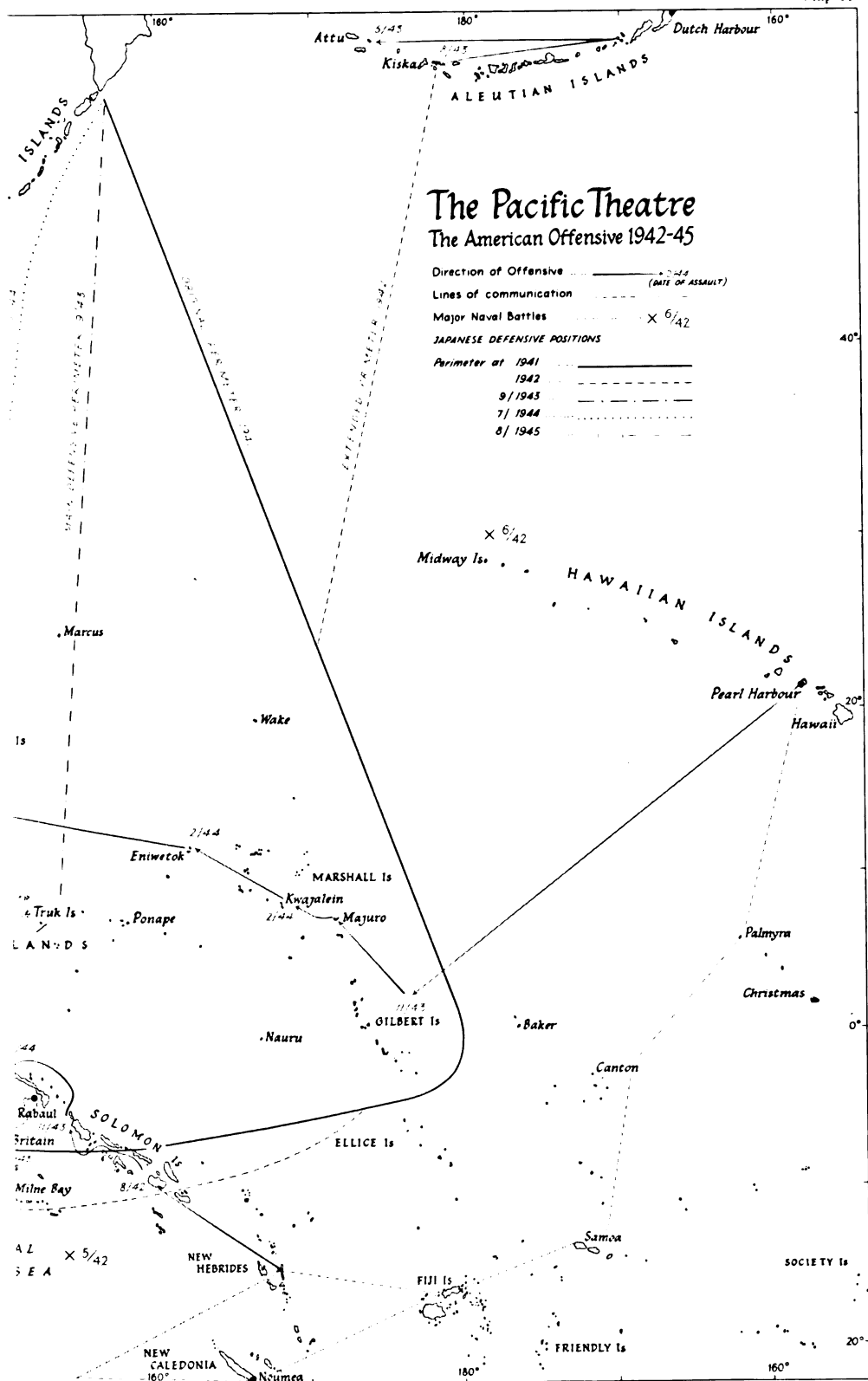
For these reasons the American defences against the weapon, although imperfect, prevailed and, as *Kamikaze* attacks became less and less effective, the capture of Okinawa became purely a matter of how long it would take the American army to wipe out the garrison. With the end of resistance in June, the American forces were in

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<sup>1</sup> See Chapter XII.

a position, as soon as the necessary preparations could be made, to begin a close blockade of Japan to cut her off from the Asian mainland, to increase their bombing of Japanese cities to a point where they could bring her economic life almost to a standstill and to invade her shores, if that became necessary.







## CHAPTER XXXIV

# THE WAR IN SOUTH-EAST ASIA

(1942—45)

*See Map 16*

IN South-East Asia by March 1942 it seemed to the British that the Japanese, with complete command of the sea in the Bay of Bengal and with air superiority and military formations to spare, could have undertaken the invasion of India, either through Arakan or by landings on her eastern coast, or could have attempted to disrupt Britain's line of communication by way of the Cape to both India and the Middle East by seizing Ceylon.<sup>1</sup> If the security of this line of communication were to be ensured and a base remain available from which a counter-offensive could eventually be launched to recapture Burma and Malaya and make contact with China, both India and Ceylon had to be held.

In the spring of 1942 Britain had little with which to defend herself in South-East Asia. The Eastern Fleet, based on Trincomalee, Colombo and Addu Atoll, was too weak and unbalanced to do battle with the powerful naval squadrons which Japan, at that time free to transfer her naval strength from the Pacific, could concentrate in the Indian Ocean. Wavell, who was once again Commander-in-Chief in India after the break up of A.B.D.A. Command, could muster only four incomplete divisions which were no match for the Japanese without further training,<sup>2</sup> and had practically no air force with which to protect Trincomalee, Colombo, the industrial areas around Calcutta and India's north-east frontier.

In the circumstances Britain had no alternative but to adopt the defensive. The Eastern Fleet could not be quickly strengthened, for in the preceding months two capital ships had been lost off Malaya and two others put out of action in Alexandria harbour. Between March and the end of June, however, the Chiefs of Staff were able to send three British infantry divisions and an East African brigade to India and Ceylon. All available aircraft were sent, and by the end

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<sup>1</sup> See Map 16, facing page 600.

<sup>2</sup> India had lost the equivalent of three divisions in Malaya and had sent the equivalent of another seven to the Middle East. Another division had suffered severe losses in Burma and was at this time involved in an arduous retreat to India's north-east frontier.

of April Wavell had some 270 first-line aircraft at his disposal, with many others to follow.<sup>1</sup> During March the Americans began to form an air force and establish an Air Ferry Command in Assam to provide contact with China by means of an airlift from there.

Realizing that India could not adequately function as a base in South-East Asia if Ceylon were to be lost and the line of communication in the Indian Ocean threatened, the Chiefs of Staff gave priority to the build-up of the defences of Ceylon. When the Japanese, as Wavell had predicted, raided Colombo and Trincomalee with carrier-borne aircraft early in April, the garrison of the island consisted of the equivalent of two divisions and eight R.A.F. squadrons. Since only one of the R.A.F. squadrons was a bomber squadron, the air force was not strong enough to inflict any damage on the Japanese fleet, but was able to offer effective opposition to the raids on both ports.<sup>2</sup>

The danger to India and Ceylon was, however, more apparent than real for, having reached their pre-selected perimeter, the Japanese decided to stand on the defensive and, except for the incursion of their fleet into the Indian Ocean, made no attempt to go outside their perimeter in South-East Asia. It was not until August 1942 that they began to consider launching an offensive at the end of the 1942 monsoon from Burma across India's north-east frontier into Assam and eastern Bengal, but they decided that the plan was too ambitious since the lack of communications and transport imposed insuperable administrative difficulties. Although the plan was kept under constant review, it was abandoned at the end of the year on orders of *Imperial General Headquarters* because of the drain on Japanese resources caused by the heavy fighting in the Solomons and Papua in the Pacific.<sup>3</sup> Japanese strategy for 1943 therefore became purely defensive.

Even before the withdrawal from Burma was completed, Wavell began to consider plans for a counter-offensive as soon as the necessary reinforcements arrived.<sup>4</sup> He had, however, to be content for the time being to dispose his meagre forces to cover the land frontier of India and at the same time hold a mobile reserve to meet the threat of invasion by sea. His immediate strategical object was to regain contact with China, but he realized that this was only possible with the full co-operation of Chiang Kai-shek's forces. He hoped that by the end of October he would be able to operate a number of small

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<sup>1</sup> See Volume II, Chapter VI.

<sup>2</sup> See Volume II, Chapter VII.

<sup>3</sup> See Volume II, page 308.

<sup>4</sup> See Volume II, Chapter XIV.



columns on a wide front directed towards the Chindwin and Myitkyina. With the defeat of the Japanese fleet at Midway early in June the danger of an invasion of India was greatly reduced, and Wavell began to consider the possibility of launching a major counter-offensive early in 1943 to regain Burma. He planned to implement his limited offensive from Assam into northern Burma during the 1942-43 dry weather, and to launch an amphibious operation to capture Akyab and Rangoon ('Anakim'). Almost simultaneously the Prime Minister told Wavell that he was not interested in 'very nice and useful nibbling' minor offensives, but in an all-out effort to recapture Rangoon and Moulmein with a subsequent advance on Bangkok. He suggested a land advance in Arakan to capture Akyab and the launching at the right time of an expedition of 40-50,000 troops to seize southern Burma, but warned Wavell that the resources for such an (amphibious) operation could be made available only if operations in the Middle East and Russia developed favourably. Wavell replied that he was closely considering the launching of 'Anakim' sometime in January 1943, subject to his being provided with an effective air striking force, sufficient assault shipping and landing craft and an Eastern Fleet strong enough to give the necessary cover, and provided American operations in the Pacific kept the main Japanese fleet occupied.

While the Chiefs of Staff were considering the provision of forces for 'Anakim', disaster befell the British forces in the Western Desert and the Russians on their southern front,<sup>1</sup> and civil disturbances in India seriously delayed work on improving the line of communications to Assam. These set-backs dashed any hopes of getting the resources required for 'Anakim' ready in time for its launching early in 1943, especially as Wavell was ordered in August 1942 to send a British division and an armoured brigade to Iraq, where a new command was being formed, and the flow of both British and American aircraft to India had temporarily to be halted. Wavell was, however, directed to continue planning and preparations for 'Anakim' in the hope that the situation in the west would improve, and that the American-Australian offensive in the Pacific, which had begun early in August, would prevent the Japanese from reinforcing Burma.

Wavell had meanwhile set on foot plans to build up India as a base for a large expeditionary force, to construct the airfields required to operate the air ferry from Assam to China, and to improve the exiguous communications to India's north-east frontier so that they could support an offensive into north Burma and also carry the material for dispatch to China. He also formed a long-range penetration (L.R.P.) brigade under Lieut.-Colonel (later Major-General)

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<sup>1</sup> See Appendix 28.

O. C. Wingate to be used to disrupt Japanese communications in connection with his proposed offensive into north Burma.

Any hope of gaining contact with China in the spring of 1943 was shattered when Chiang Kai-shek, on hearing of the postponement of 'Anakim' with its amphibious operation against Rangoon, refused to allow his Yunnan armies to co-operate with Wavell's proposed offensive into north Burma, thus depriving it of any strategical value.<sup>1</sup> In the circumstances Wavell somewhat reluctantly decided to let Wingate carry out his planned long-range penetration into Burma to disrupt Japanese communications and gain experience, and to support it by an advance by an infantry brigade from the Imphal plain to the Chindwin. Wavell had been told that the amphibious brigade which had undertaken the invasion of north Madagascar in May would be placed at his disposal, and would reach India late in 1942. He therefore ordered preliminary operations for the capture of Akyab, by which a division would advance down the coast from Chittagong to establish an advanced base as near Akyab as possible. Then, provided the build-up of the R.A.F. continued satisfactorily and the amphibious brigade arrived from Madagascar in time, he proposed to capture Akyab in December 1942 in order to reduce the air threat to Calcutta and provide him with a base for air attacks deep into Burma against the Japanese lines of communication.

In January 1943 the Prime Minister and the President with their Chiefs of Staff met at Casablanca to decide on the strategy for 1943-44. They confirmed the earlier decision that the defeat of Germany must precede a full-scale offensive against Japan. Subject to this, 'Anakim' was to be launched in mid-November 1943, with the limited offensives planned by Wavell into north Burma and on Akyab continuing in the interim. They also decided to send an Anglo-American mission to Chungking to co-ordinate plans with Chiang Kai-shek for the recovery of Burma. The mission soon found that Chiang Kai-shek was dragging his feet, and that he was making no effort to reorganize his forces, despite American aid. He made it clear that he was not prepared to support operations in north Burma until a large air force was placed at his disposal and delivery of material by the air ferry substantially increased and unless, in addition to an offensive in north Burma, a major amphibious operation was launched in the Bay of Bengal.

At the end of February 1943 Wavell undertook another detailed study of 'Anakim'. He came to the conclusion that the Eastern Fleet was not strong enough adequately to protect convoys in the Bay of Bengal, that his air strength was insufficient to enable him to secure air superiority at the point of attack and that the resources which he

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<sup>1</sup> See Volume II, Chapter XVII.

required for the operation were not reaching India in sufficient quantities, owing to the shortage of shipping allotted. In the circumstances he told the Chiefs of Staff that 'Anakim' was a gamble involving great risks. The launching of an operation on the lines of 'Anakim' was, however, in his opinion, the only way by which Burma could be regained in one campaigning season. Moreover, since it would result in the reoccupation of Burma and the reopening of the Burma Road, it was the only operation in South-East Asia which could hasten the defeat of Japan. He therefore advocated that planning for 'Anakim' should continue. Since he realized that circumstances might well render the plan too hazardous, he began to consider the possibility of launching a sudden assault against the centre of the Japanese line, the objectives being the control of the Sunda Strait (and of the Palembang oilfields) and a base in northern Sumatra from which the Strait of Malacca could be controlled.<sup>1</sup>

The operations into north Burma and Arakan did not produce the expected results. The incursion of the L.R.P. brigade into north Burma met with only limited success, for it had little tactical effect on the Japanese although considerable experience was gained, especially in supply-dropping. It did, however, have an important strategical effect for, suspecting that the operation might be a reconnaissance in force for a major Allied offensive, the Japanese revived their idea of taking the offensive to capture Imphal to forestall it, and this was to lead to their defeat.<sup>2</sup> The operations in Arakan to capture Akyab met with near disaster. Wavell decided to attempt a land advance when it became evident that the amphibious brigade could not be spared from Madagascar in time for the proposed amphibious operation. The British/Indian forces employed were unable to break through the defences covering the approaches to Akyab, and a well executed counter-offensive drove them back in May 1943 to the area from which they had begun the offensive in October 1942.<sup>3</sup>

By May 1943 the Chiefs of Staff knew that the course of the war in the Mediterranean would preclude the despatch of resources for 'Anakim' in the dry weather of 1943-44. In any case, they considered at the time that 'Anakim' would commit British forces to a major operation which was not essential towards the ultimate defeat of Japan for, even if it were successful, the Burma Road could probably not be opened until the middle of 1945, and therefore that the effect of the operation on China would be little more than psychological. Faced with the lack of success of the Arakan offensive and the depressing views expressed by the Chiefs of Staff on 'Anakim', the Prime

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<sup>1</sup> See Volume II, Chapter XXI.

<sup>2</sup> See Volume II, Chapter XVIII.

<sup>3</sup> See Volume II, Chapters XV, XIX and XX.

Minister asked them to consider amphibious assaults at one or more points along the Japanese perimeter from Moulmein to Timor.<sup>1</sup>

At the Trident Conference in May 1943 the strategy laid down for the dry weather of 1943-44 was that the tonnage delivered by the air ferry to China was to be substantially increased and a vigorous offensive launched at the end of the 1943 monsoon from Imphal and Ledo into north Burma with the object of linking up with Chiang Kai-shek's Yunnan armies, despite the views expressed by the British that the lines of communication to and in Assam could not support both. Akyab and Ramree Islands were to be captured and the Japanese sea communications to Burma cut. Administrative preparations were to be continued for the eventual launching of an amphibious operation of about the same size as 'Anakim'.<sup>2</sup>

Preparations to carry out the agreed operations were delayed by unprecedented floods in north-east India in July which swept away railways and roads, completely disrupting the flow of supplies to Assam and necessitating the diversion of a vast amount of engineering effort to repair the damage; and early in August the Chiefs of Staff told Auchinleck (who had succeeded Wavell in June) that all the assault shipping allotted to India for the capture of Akyab and Ramree was to be retained in the Middle East to enable that theatre to exploit a possible Italian collapse in the eastern Mediterranean. In the course of planning the operations decided on at Trident, Auchinleck had himself come to the conclusion that the offensive into northern Burma would have to be called off, and that the best military course for 1943-44 would be to avoid wasting effort in trying to launch an offensive into north Burma and instead to concentrate on supplying China by air, while increasing and conserving India's strength in order to prepare for an amphibious operation to seize northern Sumatra in the winter of 1944-45.<sup>3</sup>

It was by this time quite evident that the decisions reached at Trident, with the exception of the increase in the airlift to China, could not be carried out. Meanwhile, exasperated by the difficulties cropping up in South-East Asia, the Prime Minister had proposed a new approach to the strategical problem, which he intended to put before the Quadrant Conference which was to meet in Quebec in mid-August 1943. In broad outline his idea was to give the maximum aid to China by the airlift, and to use a greatly enlarged L.R.P. force under Wingate to create conditions in north Burma which would enable Chinese/American forces advancing from Ledo to link up with Chiang Kai-shek's Yunnan armies without committing the main British/Indian forces to a jungle campaign, and, in conjunction with

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<sup>1</sup> See Volume II, pages 368-70.

<sup>2</sup> See Volume II, Chapter XXIII.

<sup>3</sup> See Volume II, Chapter XXIV.

these actions, to make use of the flexibility of sea power to strike where the Japanese were not prepared. For this purpose he proposed that a powerful amphibious force should be built up to establish a base in northern Sumatra ('Culverin'), from which to threaten and eventually recapture Singapore and open the way to the South China Sea, where lay the vital Japanese communications with their sources of oil fuel. Churchill's idea was the logical outcome of the line of thought he had expressed in June 1942 after the battle of Midway, and which he, Wavell and Auchinleck had constantly had in mind as a better alternative to an onerous and difficult land campaign in Burma.

At the Quadrant Conference the idea of the extended use of L.R.P. forces was accepted enthusiastically, but 'Culverin' was considered to be a diversion from the main strategical object in South-East Asia – a link-up with China. The capture of northern Burma was therefore given priority. There was, however, to be an amphibious operation in the Bay of Bengal, but the selection of the objective was left open. It will be noted that the strategy advocated was very similar both to 'Anakim' and to the Trident decisions, except that the objective for amphibious operations in the Bay of Bengal was left for future decision. The Combined Chiefs of Staff directed, however, that a number of studies should be carried out to assess the potentialities of developing the air route to China to a scale which would make it possible to employ all the heavy bombers and transport aircraft which would become available if Germany were defeated in the autumn of 1944, of launching an amphibious operation against northern Sumatra ('Culverin'), of a land advance from north to south Burma and from Moulmein or the Kra Isthmus towards Bangkok, and of a direct amphibious attack on Singapore. It was also to be determined whether, to achieve any of the above, it would be necessary to capture Akyab and Ramree. Finally it was agreed that a Supreme Allied Command, separate from India, was to be set up as soon as possible in South-East Asia under a British commander with an American deputy and a combined Anglo-American staff.<sup>1</sup>

By November the war against Japan in South-East Asia was under the direction of a properly constituted Allied Command with Mountbatten as Supreme Commander. The command was supported by India base, a sound administrative organization under intensive development by the Commander-in-Chief in India (Auchinleck), and was backed by Wavell in his new capacity as Viceroy. This division between administrative and operational control might have caused difficulties, but it is worthy of note that there was at all times close

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<sup>1</sup> See Volume II, Chapter XXVI.

co-operation between Auchinleck and Mountbatten, each understanding the other's difficulties. Mountbatten never pressed Auchinleck to do the impossible, and Auchinleck never failed to fulfil his undertakings in letter and spirit. The new organization worked satisfactorily despite the fact that the American Chiefs of Staff more than once issued orders direct to their China-Burma-India Theatre on matters which were the responsibility of the Supreme Commander in contravention of the agreement that all orders regarding the new command were to be issued through the British Chiefs of Staff. It was, however, saved from serious dislocation on several occasions only by the personal efforts of the Supreme Commander.

Mountbatten's first directive, sent him by the Prime Minister on assuming command of S.E.A.C., required him, in pursuance of the Quadrant decisions, to engage the Japanese closely and wear down their forces, especially their air forces, thus establishing Allied superiority and forcing them to divert forces from the Pacific, and to maintain and broaden Allied contacts with China by means of the air-lift and by establishing contact through north Burma. By using his full sea and air power he was to seize some point or points which would induce a powerful enemy reaction and provide opportunities for a counter-stroke, and plans for an amphibious operation for 1944 were to be drawn up with this object in view. He was promised that he should receive, at least four weeks before his first amphibious operation, a battle fleet based on Ceylon strong enough to engage any forces which the Japanese could reasonably afford to detach from the Pacific.<sup>1</sup> It will be noted that this directive fell into two parts: first, to carry out the decisions of the Quadrant Conference for 1943-44, which included an amphibious operation somewhere in the Bay of Bengal, and second, the preparation for a major amphibious operation in 1944 designed to draw Japanese strength from the Pacific and producing suitable conditions for a decisive battle. It would appear that in drafting this directive the Prime Minister had 'Culverin' in mind.

With the expanded Indian army by now well trained and with the lines of communication to Assam and Arakan much improved, it seemed possible that a well co-ordinated counter-offensive into north Burma could at last be undertaken with some prospect of success. Mountbatten's plan for carrying out his directive during the dry season of 1943-44 differed little from that proposed by Auchinleck. It consisted of seven separate but correlated operations: the capture of the Andamans (instead of Rangoon); four land offensives, in Arakan towards Akyab, from Imphal to the Chindwin, from Ledo towards Myitkyina and by the Chinese Yunnan armies towards

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<sup>1</sup> See Volume III, pages 13-14.

Lashio and Bhamo; an airborne assault on Indaw, followed by the fly-in of an infantry division to hold the town; and operations by the greatly enlarged L.R.P. forces to cut the Japanese communications to Indaw and assist in the advance of the forces from Ledo and Yunnan.<sup>1</sup>

At the Sextant Conference in Cairo in November 1943 Chiang Kai-shek agreed to Mountbatten's plans, since they included a major amphibious operation in the Bay of Bengal. The Chiefs of Staff were, however, already beginning to have doubts about the availability of assault shipping and, after the plenary session at Teheran attended by Stalin, who insisted on the opening of a second front in Europe in the early summer of 1944, it was decided to defer the assault on the Andamans until the autumn of 1944 and to recall landing craft already assigned to S.E.A.C. to take part in the invasion of Europe. The cancellation of the amphibious assault on the Andamans resulted in Chiang Kai-shek once again refusing to allow his Yunnan armies to co-operate in the attempt to recapture north Burma, and this in turn made Mountbatten's strategical object unattainable. He had thus no option but to fall back on limited land advances in Arakan, from Imphal to the Chindwin and from Ledo towards Myitkyina assisted by L.R.P. forces operating in the vicinity of Indaw.<sup>2</sup> Thus for the third time the agreed strategy in South-East Asia collapsed before the first shot had been fired. It is not to be wondered that Mountbatten, like Wavell, Auchinleck and Churchill, felt that a new approach to the problem was essential.

While preparing his plans for the 1943-44 dry season, Mountbatten had been considering his long-term strategy in the light of his directive. He came to the conclusion that S.E.A.C.'s best method of contributing to the defeat of Japan in 1944 was to nourish the maximum air offensive from China. He therefore considered that, as the American attempt to drive a road from Ledo through to China was already out of step with the strategy in the Pacific,<sup>3</sup> he should provide the resources necessary to increase the airlift and defend the air route to China, and limit the scope of the plan for building the Ledo Road. Furthermore, since the reoccupation of Burma would absorb a disproportionate amount of his resources, he formed the opinion that he should limit his land and air operations in Burma to those needed to contain the Japanese and provide reasonable security for the air route. Such action would enable him to find the resources, once the defeat of Germany (expected by the end of 1944) permitted

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<sup>1</sup> See Volume III, pages 14-16.

<sup>2</sup> See Volume III, Chapter V.

<sup>3</sup> By early 1944 the American Pacific offensive was gathering momentum. It had practically broken through the Bismarck Barrier and in the central Pacific Nimitz had taken the Gilbert Islands and was attacking the Marshall Islands with the intention of invading the Marianas in June 1944.

the despatch of assault shipping to the Far East, to conduct progressive amphibious operations on the lines of 'Culverin' in the winter of 1944-45 to establish air bases in Sumatra, and thus make operations against Malaya or the Sunda Strait possible and so accelerate the advance to the China coast and hasten the defeat of Japan. Since his proposal would require careful study and the issue of a new directive, Mountbatten decided to send a special mission ('Axiom') to London and Washington to explain his views, which were clearly not in accord with American desires and which were bitterly opposed by his American deputy, Stilwell. The arrival of the 'Axiom' mission in London and later in Washington led to a wide divergence of opinion between the Prime Minister and the Chiefs of Staff, and between London and Washington.<sup>1</sup>

The Prime Minister favoured the course Mountbatten proposed, provided the resources for it could be found. The Chiefs of Staff, on the other hand, advocated that S.E.A.C.'s efforts should be concentrated on the extension of air operations into and through China, since, if an amphibious operation was to be launched in 1944-45, it would not only require the diversion of American resources from the Pacific, thus slowing down the offensive in that theatre and delaying Japan's final defeat, but would also be too late to secure an entry into the South China Sea in time to assist the Pacific advance. They pointed out, however, that the American project for driving through the Ledo Road to China could not be completed early enough to be of value, and, even when completed, could only deliver insignificant tonnages. The American Chiefs of Staff, who had just taken steps to accelerate their 1944 Pacific offensive, were alarmed by Mountbatten's proposals, for they considered it essential that they should be able to build up their air strength in China to the greatest possible extent to help them to gain control of the China-Formosa-Luzon triangle. They pointed out that, once this area was in their hands, the value of operations in Sumatra would be greatly reduced. They agreed to provide S.E.A.C. with 400 additional transport aircraft and four new air commandos in the latter part of 1944, on the grounds that these reinforcements would make a great difference to the achievement of their aims in north Burma.

It was while these arguments between Mountbatten, London and Washington were taking place that action by the Japanese entirely altered the situation in S.E.A.C. As has been said, the incursion of the L.R.P. brigade into north Burma early in 1943 made their high command aware of the difficulty of defending the long Chindwin River front. By the autumn of 1943 they had come to the conclusion

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<sup>1</sup> See Volume III, Chapter XI.



that an advance to the Imphal plain early in 1944 was essential not only to forestall the Allied offensive which they considered to be imminent, but also to ensure the defence of the western end of their perimeter, for once they had captured Imphal it would be necessary to hold only two passes in the immense mountain barrier between the Imphal plain and the rest of India.

Their strategical concept was that *28th Army* would undertake a limited offensive in Arakan in February 1944 designed to destroy part of the British forces there by the infiltration methods which had up till that time been so successful, and thereby draw Allied reserves to Arakan and hold them there. This was to be followed by an offensive across the Chindwin by *15th Army* designed to capture and hold the Imphal plain before the Allies could reinforce that area.<sup>1</sup> In the event the gap between their offensives was longer than they had planned, since they were forced to advance the date of the offensive in Arakan to forestall a British offensive, and postpone the launching of the Imphal offensive since administrative difficulties delayed the arrival of one of *15th Army's* divisions at the Chindwin. Moreover *14th Army* had anticipated both offensives, and all its subordinate commanders were ready to put into practice Slim's new strategical concept for dealing with Japanese infiltration,<sup>2</sup> with the result that the Japanese Arakan offensive collapsed in three weeks and their Imphal offensive ended in disaster. The Japanese had hoped to drive home their Imphal offensive before the Allies could bring in reinforcements to the area, but they had failed to realize that, with complete air superiority and adequate transport aircraft, the Allies could not only fly in reserves to Imphal but also supply its garrison by an airlift even if they succeeded in closing the Dimapur-Imphal road.

Deprived of their hoped-for strategical advantage and with their infiltration tactics thwarted, their Imphal offensive also collapsed. The magnitude of the disaster to *15th Army* which followed was partly due to Japanese unwillingness to give up the offensive until long after the monsoon had set in, although they realized it had failed, and partly due to their lack of adequate air support and poor administration. By the time they decided to withdraw, two-thirds of *15th Army* were in disorderly retreat towards the Chindwin,<sup>3</sup> and the Japanese had finally lost the initiative in Burma.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> See Volume III, Chapter VI.

<sup>2</sup> For details of Slim's strategical concept see Volume II, pages 350-1, and Volume III, pages 127-8.

<sup>3</sup> It had suffered 53,000 casualties (about fifty-five per cent of its total strength including reinforcements sent up during the battle), of which about 31,000 were dead.

<sup>4</sup> For the course of the battles in Arakan and around Imphal see Volume III, Chapters XIII, XVI, XIX to XXI and XXV.

With the development of the Japanese offensive in March the situation in S.E.A.C. altered considerably. Stilwell's American/Chinese forces had made appreciable progress in their advance towards Myitkyina, and the rest of S.E.A.C.'s forces had become locked in battle with the Japanese at Imphal and in Arakan. Aware that the acceleration of the offensive in the Pacific made the American project of driving through a road and oil pipeline from Ledo to Kunming more than ever out of step with global strategy, Mountbatten became firmly convinced by the end of March 1944 that the best way in which he could assist the Pacific offensive would be to develop the air route to China, so that American air forces based in south China could co-operate in an attack on Formosa. He expressed the opinion that the best way to achieve this object would be to capture the Rangoon-Prome area by an amphibious and airborne assault, and thus isolate and destroy all the Japanese forces in Burma. Since all his forces were involved in fighting on the Imphal plain and in Arakan, he could neither undertake the amphibious operation nor give additional assistance to Stilwell's forces advancing on Myitkyina. In the circumstances (for he saw no possibility of obtaining resources for an amphibious operation), he expressed his immediate object to be the seizure of the Myitkyina area and its development as an oilhead and airbase to assist in the movement of supplies to China. In view of this he suggested that his directive in regard to north Burma should be to continue to develop, maintain, broaden and protect the air link to China.<sup>1</sup>

Although there was still no agreement on the wording of his new directive, Mountbatten learned in the middle of April that the American Chiefs of Staff had told Stilwell that the offer to provide 400 transport aircraft was conditional on their being used to better advantage in S.E.A.C. than elsewhere, and in early May that Stilwell had received a directive from Washington charging him with the responsibility of providing air support from China during the American advance on Formosa and to support as far as possible the contemplated invasion of the Philippines in November. This not only meant that Stilwell was to become the arbiter of whether or not the aircraft would be put at S.E.A.C.'s disposal on arrival, but also violated the agreement regarding the issue of directives to S.E.A.C. through the Chiefs of Staff. It was not until the 3rd June that Mountbatten finally received his new directive, which was on the lines he had himself suggested in March, but added that he was to exploit the development of overland communications to China with the forces available or firmly allocated to his theatre.

With the receipt of his new directive Mountbatten was able to consider his strategy for the dry weather of 1944-45. He now had the

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<sup>1</sup> See Volume III, Chapter XVII.

initiative and adequate forces with which to implement his directive, but in making his future plans he had to take into account a number of events which had occurred while the battle to defeat *15th Army* was taking place around Imphal. These were, first, that Stilwell's American/Chinese forces, advancing from Ledo assisted by British L.R.P. formations, had captured Myitkyina airfield on the 17th May; second that, under a threat from the President to cut off all strategic supplies, Chiang Kai-shek, although there was no amphibious operation in the Bay of Bengal, had at last allowed his Yunnan armies to attack across the Salween on the 10th May (an offensive which, however, was half-hearted and held up only twenty-five miles west of the Salween by a very inferior Japanese force); and, third, that the Japanese had launched an offensive in eastern China which had captured most of the American-held airfields in that area.<sup>1</sup>

On the 23rd July Mountbatten submitted to the Chiefs of Staff plans for the reconquest of Burma and the gaining of contact with China.<sup>2</sup> He put forward two alternatives: one entailed an advance in four phases by all the forces in north Burma to gain a general line from Pakokku at the junction of the Irrawaddy and Chindwin Rivers through Mandalay to Lashio, thereby covering the trace of the proposed road and pipeline to China, and then exploitation south (operation 'Capital'); and the other an amphibious assault on Rangoon followed by an advance north (operation 'Dracula').<sup>3</sup> In either case the formations on the Arakan front would do no more than contain the Japanese forces in that area.

The Prime Minister favoured 'Dracula', but suggested that, instead of moving north from Rangoon to mop up Burma, the advance should be eastwards. The Chiefs of Staff considered it was essential that the forces in north Burma should remain on the offensive, but proposed that operations should be limited to holding the enemy in check while 'Dracula' was carried out. 'Dracula' could not, however, begin before March 1945, since the resources which would have to be sent from Europe would not be available earlier and then only if Germany were defeated by October 1944, nor later than March 1945 without serious interference in its later stages from the monsoon. In mid-August 1944 Mountbatten ordered the first two phases of 'Capital' to be carried out as soon as possible. For 14th Army this meant the capture of that area of north Burma which lay between the Chindwin and Irrawaddy, and for Stilwell's and the Yunnan forces the capture of Mongmit (south of Bhamo) and Lashio. These operations would suffice to clear the trace of the Ledo Road, safeguard the air supply route to China and threaten Mandalay from west,

<sup>1</sup> See Volume III, Chapters XV, XXVIII and XXIX.

<sup>2</sup> See Volume IV, Chapter I.

<sup>3</sup> These two alternatives taken together were similar to Wavell's 'Anakim' plan.

north and north-east. The Americans had no objection to 'Dracula' provided that no resources were taken from 'Capital'.

The matter was discussed at the Octagon Conference in Quebec in September 1944, after which Mountbatten was issued with another directive which authorized him to capture all Burma provided operations to achieve this did not prejudice the security of the air supply route to China. Approved operations were therefore the early phases of 'Capital' and 'Dracula'. If 'Dracula' could not be launched in March 1945, exploitation of 'Capital' was to be carried out provided it did not interfere with preparations for 'Dracula' at the end of the year. It was clear that at Chiefs of Staff level there was still little liking for the reoccupation of Burma by a land advance from the north.

The delay in the defeat of Germany once again made it impossible for the resources for a major amphibious operation to be found, and by early October 1944 it was clear that 'Dracula' would have to be deferred. Slim had meanwhile asked that Akyab should be captured and developed as an air base for the support of operations in central and south Burma, a task well within the capacity of the force already there, since the Japanese had withdrawn the greater part of a division from Arakan. Mountbatten therefore decided that, instead of the defensive strategy he had earlier recommended, north Arakan should be cleared and Akyab and Ramree occupied. In addition he suggested to the Chiefs of Staff that a naval and air base might be established on the Kra Isthmus, but this idea was turned down on the grounds that it might tie up forces needed for 'Dracula' in December 1945. 'Capital' and its subsidiary operations in Arakan thus became the only operations envisaged for 1944-45.<sup>1</sup> This was to result in Burma eventually being reoccupied after all by the little favoured land advance from the north.

In the autumn of 1944, with their vital communications to the Southern Region threatened with disruption and their homeland within range of American bombers in the Marianas, the Japanese had to concentrate the major part of their resources in the Pacific. They were no longer able to reinforce their armies in Burma with men or material and, after the disaster to *15th Army*, contemplated withdrawing from Burma altogether. They decided, however, that such a course would expose the flank of the chain of defences from Burma to Sumatra, and therefore ordered *Burma Area Army* to regroup its forces to cover vital strategical areas in south Burma, including its south-west coast, and to continue interrupting

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<sup>1</sup> See Volume IV, Chapter IX.

communications between India and China as a secondary task only so long as that could be done without prejudice to the area army's primary task. As a result of these instructions, *Burma Area Army* decided to hold the general line Lashio-Mandalay—the course of the Irrawaddy River to the oilfields at Yenangyaung and thence to Ramree Island in Arakan. This meant abandoning all north Burma, and the forces in that area were ordered to begin their withdrawal to the left bank of the Irrawaddy on the 1st December 1944. It also meant abandoning Akyab.

By mid-November 14th Army had advanced to the Chindwin and was in the process of establishing bridgeheads across it, while the American/Chinese forces were moving south from Myitkyina towards Indaw and Bhamo and the Chinese Yunnan armies were advancing very slowly westwards from the Salween. Early in December Slim (14th Army) began to suspect that the Japanese were withdrawing across the Irrawaddy, and that he would be unable to bring them to battle in the plain between the Chindwin and the Irrawaddy as planned. He therefore decided to adjust his plan with the object of cutting the Japanese communications with south Burma, and thereby forcing them to do battle south of the Irrawaddy in an area where his superiority in tanks could be used to the best advantage.<sup>1</sup> He consequently ordered one of his two corps to advance east on Mandalay on a wide front to simulate the advance of the whole of 14th Army, while he sent his other corps (under strict wireless silence and a carefully planned deception scheme) south to seize a bridgehead across the Irrawaddy near its junction with the Chindwin and from it make a rapid thrust with an armoured brigade and a mechanized division on Meiktila. There it was to be reinforced and form a firm anvil against which the other corps swinging south from the Mandalay area could crush all the Japanese forces in north Burma. Slim's decision posed A.L.F.S.E.A. with a difficult administrative problem, for the forward troops in the Meiktila area would be outside the economic air range of transport aircraft operating from 14th Army's main base at Imphal before the inland water transport fleet, in process of being built at the Kalewa boat factory on the Chindwin, and forward supply bases north of the Irrawaddy could be ready for use. The benefits of the occupation of Akyab at the beginning of January 1945 now began to be felt for it was well within economic air supply range of Meiktila. A.L.F.S.E.A. quickly built it up as an air base, and it began to replace Imphal as the air supply base for 14th Army shortly after Meiktila was captured early in March. The

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<sup>1</sup> See Volume IV, Chapter XV.

capture of Ramree Island at the end of January and its development as an air base brought the whole of south Burma within range of supply-dropping aircraft, and it, with Akyab, made possible an advance by 14th Army on Rangoon from the north.<sup>1</sup>

The loss of Meiktila was a shattering blow to the Japanese. It cut the communications to both their armies in north Burma and broke their Irrawaddy line west of Mandalay. They had only two courses open to them: either an immediate retreat into south Burma before 14th Army could build up its strength at Meiktila and close all the escape routes, or to launch a major counter-offensive to recapture Meiktila and re-establish their Irrawaddy line. They chose the latter with the result that Slim had nearly the whole of their forces in north Burma trapped.<sup>2</sup> After fierce fighting during March the Japanese suffered a devastating defeat and by the end of the month *Burma Area Army* began to lose control.<sup>3</sup> The American/Chinese forces in the north had meanwhile joined hands with the Chinese Yunnan armies and cleared the trace of the extension of the Ledo Road to China, and the first convoy from India reached Kunming early in February 1945. As soon as the road was opened, Chiang Kai-shek ordered his Yunnan armies to withdraw across the Salween and take no further part in the fighting in Burma.<sup>4</sup>

The continuation of the Japanese offensive in east China in the autumn of 1944 and the apparent growing danger to Kunming led Wedemeyer (the American commander in the China Theatre) to demand the transfer in December 1944 of two of the American/Chinese divisions from Burma to China as well as transport aircraft to move and maintain them. The two divisions were transferred by the end of the month and three transport squadrons loaned to China. As soon, however, as the road from Ledo to China had been put through to Kunming, the American Chiefs of Staff lost all interest in Mountbatten's campaign to regain Burma and, although the danger to Kunming no longer existed, demanded the transfer to China of all American/Chinese formations fighting on the left flank of 14th Army, pointing out that the primary object of all American-sponsored forces in S.E.A.C. was that of rendering support to China. Almost simultaneously, Chiang Kai-shek advised Mountbatten to halt his offensive at Mandalay. Since the maintenance of the American/Chinese forces in north Burma was already becoming a strain on the available airlift, Mountbatten advised the Chiefs of Staff to agree to the American request, subject to the proviso that the aircraft to move the formations were found without jeopardizing the progress of the current operations.

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<sup>1</sup> See Volume IV, Chapter XVIII.

<sup>2</sup> One division was left in the Shan States.

<sup>3</sup> See Volume IV, Chapters XXIII, XXV and XXVI.

<sup>4</sup> See Volume IV, Chapter XVII.

The American Chiefs of Staff, however, instructed Sultan to move these formations to China in American transport aircraft, including those allotted to S.E.A.C. This would have had a serious effect on the advance on Rangoon, and Mountbatten told Sultan (who was under his command in S.E.A.C.) that he was not to use any transport aircraft allotted to S.E.A.C. for this purpose, and explained to the Chiefs of Staff that the transport aircraft allotted to 14th Army were barely adequate and that, unless he was free to deploy all transport aircraft within S.E.A.C. as he found necessary, he would have to withdraw two divisions from 14th Army in the near future. It required the personal intervention of the Prime Minister before the American Chiefs of Staff agreed to give Mountbatten full use of the American aircraft assigned to S.E.A.C until the capture of Rangoon or the 1st June, whichever was earlier.<sup>1</sup>

The 14th Army plan for the advance into south Burma, with the capture of Rangoon as the objective, was for a fully-mechanized corps to drive straight down the Meiktila-Rangoon road with a follow-up division to cover its left flank, while another corps moved down the Irrawaddy valley with a mechanized division driving on Prome, and a standard division cleared Yenangyaung and then moved down the west bank of the Irrawaddy to intercept the Japanese withdrawing from Arakan. The strategical concept was to split the Japanese forces in Burma into three by a relentless two-pronged drive southwards, and then complete their destruction. Slim had, however, cause for anxiety over the time factor, for the determined Japanese counter-offensive at Meiktila had delayed the start of his drive on Rangoon and there was a danger that the monsoon might bring his mechanized columns to a halt short of their objective. Since maintenance difficulties might then have made a withdrawal to north Burma unavoidable, with serious military and political repercussions, he asked that an amphibious assault ('Modified Dracula') should be mounted to capture Rangoon.

Fierce resistance twenty-five miles south of Meiktila was soon overwhelmed, after which the Japanese high command lost control and the retreat became a rout. Preceded by the only airborne operation of the Burma campaign, the division which had undertaken the amphibious assault on Rangoon entered the city on the 3rd May to find that it had been evacuated by the Japanese on the 29th April. Three days later, a few miles north of Rangoon, physical contact was made with 14th Army advanced guards which had been temporarily held up by torrential rain and floods at Pegu.<sup>2</sup> Thus, despite all the

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<sup>1</sup> See Volume IV, Chapters XXIV and XXVII.

<sup>2</sup> See Volume IV, Chapter XXXII.

reasons put forward regarding the difficulties which would have to be overcome if Burma were to be reoccupied from the north, 14th Army, helped by the possession of air supremacy which made air supply possible, covered the 600 odd miles from the Chindwin to Rangoon in four months, during which it had defeated and scattered two Japanese armies and part of a third.

It will have been noted that during the three years between the Battle of Midway and the capture of Rangoon, Britain and America held widely different views on the strategy to be adopted in South-East Asia. The concept of the part to be played in the war by the forces in South-East Asia, accepted by the Combined Chiefs of Staff shortly after the outbreak of the war, was that they were to establish, maintain and expand an air route to China, while establishing a land route to China through north Burma so that China could be kept in the war and air bases could be built up on her territory from which Japan could be bombed and Japanese shipping in the South China Sea attacked. There was never any disagreement between the Allies on this object, but there were differing views on how it was to be attained. The American view was that it could be gained only by a major campaign to reoccupy north Burma, although it was admitted that the capture of the whole of Burma might be necessary. The Americans established an air ferry to China to operate from British-built airfields in Assam and began to construct a road from Ledo towards Myitkyina, from where it was to be continued by way of Bhamo to join with the old Burma Road on the China-Burma frontier north-east of Lashio. American-trained Chinese divisions were to cover the construction of the road, while S.E.A.C. forces with the co-operation of the Chinese Yunnan armies were to clear north Burma to a sufficient depth to cover the trace of the road and protect the air ferry. The British view was that, although the establishment of an airlift to China was essential, the proposed road from Ledo to Kunming would prove valueless, since its eventual capacity would be negligible and it would take too long to construct. They considered that any road to China would be of little use unless material could be fed on to it from a seaport, and the only suitable port was Rangoon. The capture of Rangoon and the repair of the Burma Road would entail either a long and arduous land campaign from the north or an amphibious assault on Rangoon (for which assault landing craft could not be found without American help), followed by the reconquest of Burma from the south, which it was thought would not be too difficult since the possession of Rangoon would sever the main communications of the Japanese in Burma and deprive them of their main base.



Successive British theatre commanders, faced with the paucity of communications to the north-east frontier, the enormous engineering problems involved and the lack of transport aircraft (at least in the early part of the war), urged that action in north Burma should be confined to securing the air ferry and containing the Japanese and that, whenever the necessary resources could be found, the main effort should be an amphibious operation to capture Rangoon.

At various stages, Wavell, the Prime Minister, Auchinleck and Mountbatten advocated that all resources not required to protect the airlift to China should be used to undertake other amphibious operations, such as the capture of north Sumatra ('Culverin') as a stepping-stone to the recapture of Singapore and control of the South China Sea, thereby interrupting the flow of oil from the Netherlands East Indies to Japan. This strategy undoubtedly had its attractions but it was not tried, mainly because it would have entailed the diversion of shipping from the Pacific and thus have delayed the invasion of Japan.

The American strategy for South-East Asia was ineffective since it could never keep step with the Pacific campaign. It was thwarted largely by the intransigence of Chiang Kai-shek, who consistently refused to co-operate with operations in north Burma unless there was a major amphibious offensive in the Bay of Bengal at the same time. The situation became almost Gilbertian. The Americans refused to agree to resources being diverted for amphibious operations against Rangoon in order that every effort should be concentrated on opening land communications to China by way of north Burma, and the Chinese refused to co-operate unless there were simultaneous large-scale amphibious operations.

After the ending of hostilities in Europe and the recapture of Rangoon, which took place almost simultaneously, S.E.A.C. was at last promised sufficient assault shipping and landing craft to make it possible for a major amphibious operation to be carried out. Mountbatten's main object then became the invasion of Malaya ('Zipper') and the recapture of Singapore ('Mailist').

The long-term planning for S.E.A.C. operations had always been based on the principle that large reinforcements would become available when the war in Europe ended. Nevertheless, in order to retain the initiative and give the Japanese no time to recover from their defeat in Burma, Mountbatten decided to invade Malaya at the earliest possible moment with the forces already at his disposal, provided he could be given the necessary shipping and landing craft, and some carrier-borne aircraft. Furthermore, to save time he decided to accept the risk of invading Malaya without first estab-

lishing an advanced naval and air base in the Kra Isthmus area. The Chiefs of Staff approved his plan, in spite of the objections raised by the American Chiefs of Staff that the diversion of shipping might be prejudicial to the invasion of Japan.

Whilst Mountbatten's plan obviated the need for sending large reinforcements from Europe, political pressure in London resulted in the period of time for repatriation of British troops from the Far East ('Python'), already reduced from five years to three years eight months with serious repercussions on the efficiency of British units, being further reduced by four months. The effect of this was the withdrawal of the only two British divisions in S.E.A.C. from the forces assembling for the invasion of Malaya, and in 14th Army being short of army and corps troops, especially artillery, engineer and signal units.

If it had been necessary to carry out the invasion of Malaya against determined opposition these reductions in the strength of 14th Army might have had serious consequences, for even the unopposed landings in September 1945 ran into considerable difficulties.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> See Chapter XXV.

## CHAPTER XXXV

### EPILOGUE

*See Maps 10, 15 and 16*

THE war in the Pacific and South-East Asia theatres took very different courses as will have been seen from the five volumes of this series. The Pacific theatre was by its nature the main theatre for it was only in that ocean that Japan herself could be attacked directly and forced to surrender, and the ocean itself provided ready made lines of communication. Provided that Japan could be prevented from exploiting her initial successes, the United States' greatly superior industrial capabilities would eventually enable her to gain command of the sea and launch a counter-offensive across the Pacific with Japan as its final objective. By the end of 1943 America was in a position to launch her counter-offensive, and its speed accelerated month by month in almost geometrical progression. In a short period of eighteen months it had advanced some 4,000 nautical miles from the Gilbert and Solomon Islands to Iwojima and Okinawa, which were within short range of Japan and provided excellent bases from which an invasion could be launched. By 1944 Japan had been forced to place practically all her navy, the greater part of her air strength and some thirty-eight per cent of her military formations in the Pacific,<sup>1</sup> but she failed to regain command of the sea or keep open communications to her vital sources of oil and raw materials. Her defeat was inevitable.

The South-East Asia theatre was a complete contrast. The Pacific, Middle East and European theatres needed practically all the assault shipping and landing craft that the United States and Britain could produce. As a result all major operations in South-East Asia until 1945 had to be on land, aided by such small-scale amphibious assaults as could be undertaken. In these circumstances the only contribution the Allied forces there could make initially towards the defeat of Japan was to secure India as a firm base, to contain as much of the Japanese strength as possible in Burma and Malaya, and to gain contact with China by both air and land, if

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<sup>1</sup> In 1944 Japan, Manchuria, Korea and China absorbed forty-nine per cent of her army formations, and thirteen per cent were in Indo-China, the Netherlands East Indies and Burma.

possible, so that she could be supplied with arms and equipment to keep her fighting and able to provide a base where an Allied air force could be built up to assist the American counter-offensive when it reached the western Pacific.

From the outset land operations suffered from the lack of any through communications to India's north-east frontier, and the country and climate were such that the provision of communications and airfields necessary to support an army on the frontier as well as an airlift to China could only be a slow process. Thus for two and a half years S.E.A.C. had to remain on the defensive, and contact with China was confined to an airlift in some of the worst flying conditions in the world. It was not until the spring of 1944, when the Japanese embarked on their Imphal offensive, that the decisive battles were fought and the initiative passed to the Allies and they were able to consider launching a major land offensive.

By the autumn of 1944 Myitkyina had been occupied, and it became possible to develop it as an oilhead and staging post on the air ferry route to China. Since this meant that the flow of supplies to China by air would shortly be considerably augmented, it must be asked whether the Combined Chiefs of Staff should not then have taken the decision to stand on the defensive, for by that time the American counter-offensive had crossed the Pacific and seized the Marianas, and Japan was bound to be defeated. The need to build up a large American air force in south China had disappeared, and Burma could have been reoccupied without further effort after the surrender of Japan.

The United States had from the outset of the war held the view that, however exorbitant Chiang Kai-shek's demands were, they would have to be considered, for she felt that, if he made a separate peace, large Japanese resources would be released for use elsewhere. Despite the fact that Chiang Kai-shek constantly refused to co-operate in a land advance into northern Burma, which would have enabled the Allies to make an early physical contact with China, the American determination to build a road from Ledo to Kunming persisted. A vast organization was built up in India to enable this to be accomplished as well as to increase to the greatest possible extent the volume of supplies carried to China by the air ferry.

After the defeat of the Japanese *15th Army* at Imphal and Kohima the American Chiefs of Staff insisted that an offensive should be launched to clear north Burma, so that the Ledo Road could be carried forward from Myitkyina to Kunming. The British Chiefs of Staff were not in favour of a major land campaign and would have preferred to adopt the defensive in the north so that a strong striking force could be built up for an amphibious assault on Rangoon, for they considered that a road to China which was not fed directly from a

seaport would have little value. When Mountbatten put forward the British views to his Deputy (Stilwell) and to his three Commanders-in-Chief, they all protested on the grounds that failure to follow up the defeated Japanese forces would be to sacrifice the substance of their certain and quick destruction for the shadow of a direct assault against Rangoon which could not be launched until March 1945 owing to lack of assault shipping and other resources. The conclusion was then reached that the quickest road to victory in Burma would be by a land advance from the north which, thanks to air supremacy and the ability to supply the Allied forces by air, was possible. This solution satisfied both British and American aims: for Britain it held out the prospect of an early liberation of Burma; and for the United States it meant complete security for the trace of the road and pipeline to China, as well as for the expanded air ferry by way of Myitkyina.

Whether the Ledo Road, with its very limited capacity, and the pipeline beyond Myitkyina, which were not finished until the spring of 1945, paid an adequate dividend can only be assessed by their results. The American plan to disrupt Japanese communications in the South China Sea and assist the Pacific offensive with a strong air force established in south China did not materialize. By no means all of the enormous quantities of equipment and stores sent at high cost to Chiang Kai-shek were used against the Japanese, and, after the Japanese surrender, the Nationalist Government was unable to control China and establish the friendly progressive State which would have rendered all the expenditure and effort worthwhile. Whether Chiang Kai-shek would have made a separate peace had the United States not made the effort to gain physical contact with China must remain a controversial point. It seems hardly likely, however, that, having already resisted aggression for some five years, he would have given up the struggle shortly after gaining two powerful Allies, or later when the campaign in the Pacific made it clear that Japan would meet with defeat.

The fact that British forces returned to Britain's former colonies as victorious liberators accounts to a great extent for the difference between the post-war histories of Burma and Malaya and those of other European Powers with colonies in the Far East. It enabled her to relinquish sovereignty over her former colonies as an act of grace and not of duress. Politically the reconquest of Burma was at the time considered well worthwhile, and militarily it was the inevitable follow-up of the decisive battles of 1944.

Burma was of value to Japan as a protection for her western flank and as long as by holding it she could prevent direct contact between India and China. The air strength she was able to spare from the Pacific was so little that she was never able to interfere with the air-

lift to China or prevent the Allies gaining and holding air supremacy. When she began to meet with defeat in the Pacific, Burma became of little importance to her. She realized, however, that her forces there, which absorbed only a small percentage of her military strength, were a well worthwhile detachment so long as they could fight, for they contained in Burma a superior Allied force backed by a large administrative organization. She therefore left them to do what they could, although from the end of 1944 they were virtually cut off from Japan and their sources of supply.

The fact that Chiang Kai-shek's National Government held out against the Japanese for the eight years from 1937-1945 was of value to Britain and America. From 1937 to 1941 Japanese casualties in China were about 600,000, of which some 175,000 were killed, and the war during these years cost her thirty-eight billion yen,<sup>1</sup> about two-thirds of her total military expenditure. From the end of 1941 to August 1945 the war with Britain, the United States and China cost Japan 200 billion yen,<sup>2</sup> and tied down in China alone about half the Japanese troops serving overseas, other than in Manchuria. During this period 396,000 Japanese lost their lives in China.<sup>3</sup> The maintenance of a large force in China absorbed vast quantities of equipment, munitions and vehicles, including railway locomotives, rolling stock and inland water transport craft. Men and material were thus committed to China which might well have been used elsewhere between 1941 and 1945.<sup>4</sup> Had Chiang Kai-shek made a separate peace with Japan, the Allies would have had to pay a much higher price for defeating Japan than they had actually to pay in money and material.

The cost to China of the eight-year struggle was immense. Chinese battle casualties as given by the Nationalist Government were 3.2 million, of which 1.3 million were killed and the rest were wounded or missing.<sup>5</sup> The losses of civilian life and property are incalculable. Japanese aircraft had bombed every sizeable city and town, in many cases repeatedly, and the Chinese themselves had flooded large areas to block Japanese offensives. As a result millions of civilians were forced to flee from their homes and suffered extreme privation. The Japanese army had also seized property and requisitioned labour,

<sup>1</sup> At the average exchange rate between 1937 and 1941, approximately £2,200 millions.

<sup>2</sup> At the 1941 exchange rate, approximately £11,600 millions.

<sup>3</sup> Young, *China and The Helping Hand, 1937-1945* (Harvard University Press, 1963), page 417.

<sup>4</sup> The Japanese offensive in 1944 in China involved 620,000 first class troops, and was the largest land operation undertaken by them during the whole war.

<sup>5</sup> Young, page 417. These figures do not include the casualties among guerrilla and local militia forces.

sometimes without payment, and had exacted brutal reprisals on anyone (and indeed whole families and villages) who resisted.

The Japanese occupation of the more developed areas of the country, including all the main ports, disrupted China's economy and caused racing inflation. More than half the population was in Japanese-occupied territory where Chinese administration would have to be restored anew; agriculture was suffering from a shortage of labour, fertilizers and animals stocks; industry was at a low ebb; stocks of consumer goods were negligible and foreign trade scarcely existed; communications functioned only spasmodically; and the people had been reduced to a state of disillusionment and misery. To restore the situation a strong, efficient administration had to be set up in the liberated areas which could secure the co-operation and loyalty of the population.

By the end of the war, however, many Chinese had lost confidence in the National Government, which had been seriously weakened, not only militarily and economically, but also politically and in morale by the long years of struggle against Japan.<sup>1</sup> A scramble for place and power had developed among its leaders, and much of the enormous sums of money poured into the country by the United States had stuck to the fingers of government officials of all ranks. The military and political reforms which American advisers had tried to initiate between 1941 and 1945 had made little progress owing to the reluctance of Chiang Kai-shek to accept them. When the Japanese surrendered, the National Government had neither the means nor the ability to deal with the problems facing it, nor plans to meet the urgent tasks it would have to tackle. This situation favoured the Chinese Communists, for Mao Tse-tung, from his headquarters in Yen-an, had built up an efficient organization in north-west China and in the areas which the Japanese had overrun but could not control, and had raised a disciplined force of some 300,000 men backed by a large militia force.

In September 1945 Communist forces, organized as guerrilla units, were scattered throughout northern and central China and along the coast in country through which ran the Japanese lines of communication. Nationalist forces, on the other hand, were concentrated in west-central and south China, far from the coast, centres of industry, main cities and important towns. To help them take over Japanese-occupied territory as quickly as possible and prevent it from falling into Communist hands, Wedemeyer flew three Nationalist armies in September and October to key areas in east and north China, including Shanghai, Nanking and Peking, and in the following months moved some four to five hundred thousand troops by sea

<sup>1</sup> U.S. Department of State Publication 3573 (1949), *United States Relations with China*, page vii.

through Hong Kong to those areas. To assist the National Government to maintain control of the key areas in north China and to disarm and repatriate the Japanese, the United States, at Chiang Kai-shek's request, sent American Marine formations to occupy Peking, Tientsin and the coal-mining area around Tangshan together with the railways in the vicinity of that town. With this assistance Chiang Kai-shek was able to effect the surrender of the majority of the 1.05 million Japanese troops in China proper. Nevertheless, despite the attempts of the National Government to enforce MacArthur's order that all Japanese in China should surrender only to Chiang Kai-shek's representatives, the Communists were able to force the surrender of a large number of Japanese in north and central China and take possession of their weapons and equipment.

By the end of 1945 the National Government had gained control of the east-west railway through Tungshan and Kaifeng to Sian and most of China which lay to its south. To the north, where civil strife was becoming more bitter, it held Peking, Tatung, Taiyuan and Tientsin, and the railways from Peking to the Manchurian border and to Paotow. It did not, however, control the north-south railway lines and thus Nationalist forces in the north had no line of communication to their base in south China, except by sea. The Chinese Communists held north-west China and large areas of central China between Peking and Kaifeng.

In Manchuria the Russians began to violate the terms of the Sino-Soviet treaty immediately after the Japanese surrender.<sup>1</sup> In the months following they took no steps to prevent the Chinese Communists from obtaining huge quantities of weapons and equipment surrendered by the Japanese, and blocked the entry of Nationalist troops through Manchurian ports while the Communists were building up their forces. By the end of 1945 Nationalist troops had fought their way along the railways running north-east from Peking and Tientsin and had occupied Mukden.<sup>2</sup> Their subsequent advance was impeded by the Russian refusal to allow them to use the railways north of Mukden, and by the Russian delay in withdrawing from the country. Communist troops, who meanwhile had steadily increased their hold on the interior, were thus in a position to occupy the main cities and dominate the lines of communication north of Mukden when the Russian armies made their withdrawal from the country between the 6th and 29th April 1946. The support given by Russia to the Chinese Communists in defiance of the treaty she had signed with the National Government exacerbated a situation which inevitably developed into a full-scale civil war, and led to a transformation

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<sup>1</sup> See pages 202-3.

<sup>2</sup> See Map 10, facing page 181.



in China more profound than had happened since the fall of the Manchu Empire.

The surrender of Germany in May 1945 freed large Allied forces for use in the Far East. The object in the Pacific then became one of bringing the war to a speedy end without, if possible, having to invade the Japanese mainland, which would probably have lengthened the war and resulted in heavy casualties. Although the American Chiefs of Staff knew that Japan, having lost command of the sea and under close blockade from June 1945, was virtually defeated, they could not tell for how long she would continue the struggle, despite the effects of the blockade and the growing scale of bombing to which she was being subjected. They therefore had no alternative but to continue preparations for the invasion, which could not be launched before November, while exploring every avenue which might bring the Japanese to surrender before that date. The scale of air attack could not be increased beyond that already planned for the pre-invasion period except by use of the atomic bomb, which at the time had not been proved as a weapon. The only course of action open to the Americans was therefore to try and induce Japan to surrender, but it became evident that this object could not be achieved without some declaration explaining to the Japanese exactly what unconditional surrender entailed. It was not, however, until the end of July that this essential step was taken with the issue of the Potsdam Declaration.<sup>1</sup>

With the Japanese Supreme War Council consisting of four members from the armed Services, to whom surrender of an undefeated army on Japanese soil would have been a disgraceful act, and but two civilians, there was little possibility that it would be prepared to accept the terms of the declaration, since it involved agreement to the destruction of the power of the armed Services and the occupation of the country. Although the Emperor and the two civilian members of the Council, who realized the hopeless state of the national economy, welcomed the declaration in principle, there could be no question of its acceptance in practice and it was therefore decided that it should be ignored. The Allies therefore decided to implement the threat of 'utter destruction' contained in the declaration, and orders were issued for the use of the atomic bomb, by now a proved weapon.

The Russian declaration of war was the decisive factor in bringing Japan to accept the Potsdam Declaration, for it brought home to all members of the Supreme Council the realization that the last hope

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<sup>1</sup> See Appendix 15.

of a negotiated peace had gone and that there was no alternative but to accept the Allied terms sooner or later. The representatives of the armed Services would clearly have welcomed an invasion since it would have strengthened the nation's determination to hold out, and they no doubt hoped that, if the defence could have inflicted heavy losses on the invading forces, the Allies might have had to modify their terms. Furthermore they knew that by accepting the Allied declaration they themselves would lose everything. An internal struggle within the Supreme Council and the Cabinet therefore developed between the representatives of the armed Services and those who wished to surrender before the country was reduced to complete economic chaos, further destruction and eventual invasion. Although the Emperor succeeded in forcing the acceptance of the declaration with the proviso that the Imperial dynasty was retained, and the Allies had by implication accepted the condition, the struggle between the contending parties in the War Council and the Cabinet continued and was so evenly balanced that it became necessary for the Emperor himself to resolve it and advise the acceptance of the Allied terms.

It is noteworthy that throughout the struggle in the War Council from the 9th to the 14th August the fact that atomic bombs had been dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki did not materially alter the views held by the representatives of the armed Services. This no doubt was due to lack of knowledge of the after-effects of an atomic explosion, and to the fact that the destruction in the two towns, although devastating, was considered to be no greater than that of a heavy B.29 incendiary attack.<sup>1</sup> The dropping of the atomic bombs did, however, enable the Emperor to succeed in getting his decision to end the war accepted by the Supreme Council.

It was a courageous act on the part of the Emperor to make the decision to accept the Allied terms against the advice of his Army and Navy Chiefs of Staff. It is evident that, without pressure from him, the military element in the Supreme Council would have prolonged the struggle and forced the Allies to undertake an invasion of Japan, with all its unknown consequences and heavy losses. Furthermore, without his authority the large Japanese armies overseas might well have fought on for a considerable period, causing even greater chaos throughout the Far East than already existed. Although there was a last-minute attempt by elements of the Army to stage a *coup d'état* (which was foiled largely owing to Umezu's refusal to have anything to do with it),<sup>2</sup> the Japanese people, thanks to the Emperor's authority, obeyed his command, and hostilities came to an end everywhere except in the Kuriles, Manchuria and north China, where the

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<sup>1</sup> See Chapter XX.

<sup>2</sup> See page 216.

Russians took care to get the utmost value for themselves before they too ended hostilities.

It is of interest to consider whether the war could have been shortened had a declaration defining the term 'unconditional surrender' been issued in June at the end of the Okinawa campaign, as many of the President's advisers had advocated.<sup>1</sup> The Japanese approach made to Russia, despite the abrogation of the Neutrality Pact, played straight into Stalin's hands, since he found himself in the position of being able to allow the Japanese to continue their wishful thinking for as long as it suited his purpose, which was, if time allowed, to participate in the war and therefore re-establish Russia's position in the Far East lost in 1904. Since Japan held the mistaken view until the 9th August that Russia might be prepared to act as a mediator, it is most probable that her reaction to a declaration issued in June would have been no different from that to the Potsdam Declaration at the end of July.

The most important results of the war against Japan were the emergence of Communist China as the dominant Power in east Asia in place of Japan, and the gradual disappearance of colonial rule by the Western Powers. A number of newly-fledged independent nations emerged, some of which were to remain within the western orbit, some uncommitted either to the West or to the Communists and others which came under Communist influence in whole or in part. It can therefore be said that, although Japan failed to gain control of the Southern Region and to set up her Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere, she did succeed in her aim of ousting the European Colonial Powers from their dominating position in Asia.

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<sup>1</sup> See pages 184-5.



# Appendices

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## APPENDIX 1

### Outline Order of Battle of Air Command, South-East Asia 30th June 1945

HEADQUARTERS, AIR COMMAND S.E.A.: Kandy, Ceylon  
(*Air Chief Marshal Sir Keith Park*)

I. HEADQUARTERS, R.A.F. BURMA: Calcutta (for Rangoon)  
(*Air Marshal W. A. Coryton*)

221 GROUP R.A.F.: Rangoon (*Air Vice-Marshal G. A. Bouchier*)

906 Wing: 28 (F.R.) Squadron	Hurricane
176 (N.F.) Squadron	Beaufighter
273 (F.) Squadron	Spitfire
607 (F.) Squadron	Spitfire
908 Wing: 47 (L.B.) Squadron	Mosquito
110 (L.B.) Squadron	Mosquito
909 Wing: 152 (F.) Squadron	Spitfire
155 (F.) Squadron	Spitfire
910 Wing: 34 (F.B.) Squadron	Thunderbolt
42 (F.B.) Squadron	Thunderbolt
79 (F.B.) Squadron	Thunderbolt
113 (F.B.) Squadron	Thunderbolt

231 GROUP R.A.F.: Calcutta (*Major-General J. T. Durrant, S.A.A.F.*)

175 Wing: 99 (H.B.) Squadron	Liberator
184 Wing: 355 (H.B.) Squadron	Liberator
356 (H.B.) Squadron	Liberator
185 Wing: 159 (H.B.) Squadron	Liberator
357 (S.D.) Squadron	Liberator/Dakota
358 (S.D.) Squadron	Liberator
1341 (H.B.) Flight	Halifax
347 Wing: 681 (P.R.) Squadron	Spitfire
684 (P.R.) Squadron	Mosquito

232 GROUP R.A.F.<sup>1</sup>: Comilla (*Air Vice-Marshal J. D. I. Hardman*)

341 Wing: 62 (Tpt.) Squadron	Dakota
194 (Tpt.) Squadron	Dakota
267 (Tpt.) Squadron	Dakota
342 Wing: 31 (Tpt.) Squadron	Dakota
117 (Tpt.) Squadron	Dakota
436 (Tpt.) Squadron (R.C.A.F.)	Dakota
345 Wing: 435 (Tpt.) Squadron (R.C.A.F.)	Dakota

## 2. DIRECTLY UNDER COMMAND OF HEADQUARTERS, AIR COMMAND

222 GROUP R.A.F.: Colombo (*Air Marshal A. Durston*)<sup>2</sup>

8 (S.D.) Squadron	Liberator
160 (G.R.) Squadron	Liberator
203 (G.R.) Squadron	Liberator
205 (Fg.Bt.) Squadron	Sunderland
212 (Fg.Bt.) Squadron	Catalina
240 (Fg.Bt.) Squadron	Catalina
321 (G.R.) Squadron	Liberator
(Netherlands)	
35 (Fg.Bt.) Squadron (S.A.A.F.)	Sunderland
209 (Fg.Bt.) Squadron	Sunderland
346 Wing: 22 (T.E.F.) Squadron	Beaufighter
230 (Fg.Bt.) Squadron	Sunderland
136 (F.) Squadron	Spitfire

229 GROUP R.A.F.<sup>1</sup>: New Delhi (*Air Vice-Marshal C. E. N. Guest*)

52 (Tpt.) Squadron	Dakota
252 (Tpt.) Squadron	Liberator
352 (Tpt.) Squadron	Dakota

3. NON-OPERATIONAL SQUADRONS <sup>3</sup>224 GROUP R.A.F.: Madras (*Air Vice-Marshal The Earl of Bandon*)

901 Wing: 45 (L.B.) Squadron	Mosquito
82 (L.B.) Squadron	Mosquito
84 (L.B.) Squadron	Mosquito
211 (T.E.F.) Squadron	Beaufighter

<sup>1</sup> 229 and 232 Groups were administered by Headquarters Transport Command in the United Kingdom, which was responsible for the provision of transit crews, the system of maintenance and the replacement of aircraft. They came under the local commander for operations.

<sup>2</sup> These squadrons were deployed throughout the Indian Ocean.

<sup>3</sup> There were, in addition, several other non-operational R.A.F. formations and squadrons in various states of re-equipment and training, but they are not shown since they took no part in subsequent operations.



902 Wing: 11 (F.B.) Squadron	Hurricane
904 Wing: 134 (F.B.) Squadron	Thunderbolt
258 (F.B.) Squadron	Thunderbolt
905 Wing: 5 (F.B.) Squadron	Thunderbolt
30 (F.B.) Squadron	Thunderbolt
123 (F.B.) Squadron	Thunderbolt
135 (F.B.) Squadron	Thunderbolt
907 Wing: 20 (F.B.) Squadron	Hurricane

*Note:*

F.—Fighter; N.F.—Night Fighter; T.E.F.—Twin-Engine Fighter; F.R.—Fighter-Reconnaissance; F.B.—Fighter-Bomber; Fg.Bt.—Flying-Boat; G.R.—General Reconnaissance; L.B.—Light Bomber; H.B.—Heavy Bomber; P.R.—Photographic Reconnaissance; Tpt.—Transport; S.D.—Special Duties.

# APPENDIX 2

## Skeleton Order of Battle of the Japanese 28th Army, June 1945

Unit	Strength	Remarks
Army Headquarters Group:		
H.Q. 28th Army	637	Including 200 sick and wounded.
Baba Force (nucleus 121st Infantry Regiment)	1,786	Including 160 sick and wounded and 88 horses.
Sei Force (transport)	1,500	Including personnel only of M.T. companies, of whom 221 were sick and wounded.
Irie Force (106th Base Hospital)	1,070	Including 280 sick and wounded.
Shin-I Force	1,600	Including part of 72nd I.M.B.
Southern Field Depot	400	
South-Western Signal Unit	300	
<b>Total</b>	<b>7,293</b>	
<b>Kan-I Group</b>	<b>4,350</b>	Consisted mainly of provisional units, administrative troops and non-combatants, of whom 150 were sick and wounded.
Shimbu Group:		
143rd Regiment (less one battalion);		
H.Q. 55th Engineer and Artillery		
Regiments with detachments of		
each; one company each of 112th		
and 144th Regiments	6,821	Including 1,096 sick and wounded.
54th Division Group:		
111th Infantry Regiment	900	
154th Infantry Regiment	900	
III/121st Battalion	400	
Reconnaissance Regiment	200	
54th Field Artillery Regiment	1,000	
54th Engineer Regiment	250	
Administrative units and non-combatants	4,500	
Attached units of the Katsu Force:		
153rd Infantry Regiment	800	
III/49th Field Artillery Regiment	200	
Engineer and medical detachments	150	
<b>Total</b>	<b>9,300</b>	
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>27,764</b>	

## APPENDIX 3

### 28th Army and IV Corps Casualties May—August 1945

At a *28th Army* conference held on the 27th and 28th June 1945 the strength of the army was stated to be 27,764 (see Appendix 2).

On the 22nd September *28th Army* reported its strength to *Burma Area Army* as follows:

Unit	Present on duty	In Hospital	Missing	Total
Army H.Q.	277	92	163	532
Army Troops	1,560	773	1,224	3,557
54th Division	3,232	460	1,615	5,307
Shimbu Group	2,880	594	820	4,294
Grand Totals	7,949	1,919	3,822 <sup>1</sup>	13,690

No exact figures of dead can be given because some of the attached units mentioned in the order of battle in June had left *28th Army* by September. It seems, however, that about half of those that took part in the break-out perished.

From the 7th May to the 15th August 1945 IV Corps claimed to have killed 9,791 and taken 1,491 prisoners. Of these some were of *15th* and *33rd Armies* and are over and above the figures given by *28th Army*. Of the 1,491 prisoners, 660 were captured during the break-out between the 20th July and early August. The dead unaccounted for by IV Corps were those who died of sickness or were killed by P.B.F. and clandestine forces or drowned in the swamps or the Sittang.

The IV Corps losses from the 7th May to the 15th August were 435 killed, 1,452 wounded and 14 missing.

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<sup>1</sup> Some of these were expected to return.

## APPENDIX 4

### Outline Order of Battle for the Invasion of Malaya (Operation 'Zipper')

#### ROYAL NAVY

##### Support forces:

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| (a) Close Gun Support                                  | 2 battleships<br>2 cruisers<br>4 destroyers<br>4 sloops                                |
| (b) Air Support  | 1 cruiser<br>9 assault carriers<br>Destroyer escort as allocated by<br>C.-in-C. E.I.F. |
| (c) 81 assault ships                                   |  |
| (d) 111 major landing craft<br>276 minor landing craft |  |

#### ARMY

##### XXXIV Indian Corps

###### Armour

- 11th Cavalry (P.A.V.O.) (armoured car reconnaissance regiment)
- 25th Dragoons Amphibious Group
- 50th Indian Tank Brigade
  - 13th Lancers
  - 19th Lancers
  - 45th Cavalry
  - 2/4th Bombay Grenadiers
- Field squadrons, bridging troops, workshops etc.

###### Artillery

- 18th (Self-Propelled) Field Regiment, R.A.
- 208th (Self-Propelled) Field Regiment, R.A. (less one battery)
- 6th Medium Regiment, R.A.
- 86th Medium Regiment, R.A.
- 1st Indian Medium Regiment
- 1st Heavy Anti-Aircraft Regiment, Hong Kong and Singapore R.A.
- 8th Sikh Light Anti-Aircraft Regiment (less one battery)
- 9th Rajput Light Anti-Aircraft Regiment
- One flight 656 Air O.P. Squadron, R.A.F.
- Balloon units etc.

Royal Marines  
34 Amphibious Support Regiment, R.M.

Commandos  
3 Commando Brigade

Parachute Brigade  
Parachute Brigade 6th Airborne Division

Infantry Divisions  
5th Indian Division  
23rd Indian Division  
25th Indian Division  
26th Indian Division

ROYAL AIR FORCE

Eight Thunderbolt squadrons (single-engine fighters)  
Two Spitfire squadrons (single-engine fighters)  
Half Spitfire squadron (photographic reconnaissance)  
Half Mosquito squadron (photographic reconnaissance)  
One Spitfire squadron (fighter reconnaissance)  
Four Mosquito squadrons (light bombers, armed)  
One Mosquito squadron (light bombers, unarmed)  
Half Mosquito squadron (twin-engine night fighters)  
Two Beaufighter squadrons (twin-engine fighters, coastal)  
Forty-four light aircraft  
Three transport Dakotas for D.D.T. spraying  
Eight Sunderland flying-boats  
Two transport Dakotas  
656 Air O.P. Squadron R.A.F.

NAVAL AIR FORCE

100 Hellcats	}	(single-engine American fighters) (adaptation of the Spitfire)
20 Wildcats		
60 Seafires		

## APPENDIX 5

### Proposed Build-Up for the First Phase of 'Zipper'

Army:	D-day	Two infantry divisions + an infantry brigade and some armoured units
	D+3	Three infantry divisions + a commando brigade and a tank brigade
	D+8	Three infantry divisions + a commando brigade, a parachute brigade and a tank brigade
	D+23	Three infantry divisions and an infantry brigade + a commando brigade, a parachute brigade and a tank brigade
	D+31	Three infantry divisions and two infantry brigades + a commando brigade, a parachute brigade and a tank brigade
	D+44	Four infantry divisions + a commando brigade, a parachute brigade and a tank brigade
R.A.F. <sup>1</sup> :	D+1	Two squadrons single-engine fighters (short-range) Three twin-engine night fighter aircraft Four Visual Control Posts (if first airfield serviceable)
	D+3	Four Sentinels (casualty evacuation)
	D+4	Three Sunderlands (air/sea rescue)
	D+6	Two squadrons single-engine fighter-bombers (long-range) Five twin-engine night fighters Half squadron fighter/recce. and three photo. recce. Spitfires Three Dakotas (communication squadron) Three Dakotas (D.D.T. spraying)
	D+12	Four squadrons single-engine fighter-bombers (long-range) Fifteen Dakotas (supply-dropping) Twelve Sentinels (casualty evacuation) Ten Sentinels (communication squadron)
	D+15	Half squadron fighter/recce. Half squadron single-engine long-range photo. recce. (less three aircraft)

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<sup>1</sup> The R.A.F. build-up, unlike that of the army, shows the additional aircraft due to arrive on the given dates, not the total number of aircraft available on those dates.

APPENDIX 6  
Timetable for Mounting 'Zipper' (First Three Convoys Only)

Date	Bombay	Cochin	Madras	Vizagapatam	Calcutta and Chittagong	Rangoon
9th July	Final mounting plan issued	Final mounting plan issued	Final mounting plan issued	Final mounting plan issued	Final mounting plan issued	Final mounting plan issued
20th July	Vehicles to be in concentration areas. Stage I water-proofing begins	—	—	—	—	—
1st August	Units to have reached concentration area	—	Vehicles to be in concentration area. Stage I water-proofing begins	—	—	—
4th August	—	—	—	Vehicles to be in concentration area. Stage I water-proofing begins	—	—
9th August	—	Stage I water-proofing of naval vehicles begins	—	—	—	—
10th August	Loading of M.T./stores ships begins	Units to have reached concentration area	Units to have reached concentration area	Units to have reached concentration area	—	—

Date	Bombay	Cochin	Madras	Vizagapatam	Calcutta and Chittagong	Rangoon
12th August	Loading of stores ships begins	—	—	—	—	—
15th August	—	—	Loading of L.C.T.s begins	—	—	—
19th August	—	—	Loading of M.T./ stores ships begins	—	—	—
20th August	—	—	L.C.T.s complete loading	—	—	—
21st August	—	—	L.C.T.s sail for Mandapam	—	—	—
23rd August	Loading of L.S.T.s begins	—	—	—	—	—
25th August	Personnel begin to embark	—	—	—	—	—
26th August	—	Loading of stores ships begins	—	—	—	—
27th August	D-day slow convoy sails(8)	—	Loading of L.S.T.s begins	—	—	—
28th August	—	—	—	Loading of L.S.T.s begins	—	—



Date	Bombay	Cochin	Madras	Vizagapatam	Calcutta and Chittagong	Rangoon
29th August	—	Personnel begin to embark	1st L.C.T. convoy sails from Mandapam(6)	Personnel begin to embark	—	—
30th August	D+3 slow convoy sails(8)	—	Personnel begin to embark. 2nd L.C.T. convoy sails from Mandapam(6)	D-day slow convoy sails(8)	—	—
31st August	D-day fast convoy sails(12)	Loading of L.S.T.s begins	—	—	—	—
1st September	—	—	D-day slow convoy sails(8)	—	—	—
2nd September	D+3 fast convoy sails(12)	D-day fast convoy sails(12) D+3 slow convoy sails	—	D-day fast convoy sails(12) D+3 slow convoy sails(8)	—	—
3rd September	—	—	D-day fast convoy sails(12)	—	—	—
4th September	—	D+3 fast convoy sails(12)	D+3 slow convoy sails(8)	—	—	D-day convoy sails(8)
5th September	D+8 slow convoy sails(8)	—	—	—	—	—

Date	Bombay	Cochin	Madras	Vizagapatam	Calcutta and Chittagong	Rangoon
6th September	—	—	D+3 fast convoy sails(12)	—	—	—
7th September	—	—	—	—	—	D+3 convoy sails(8)
8th September	—	—	—	—	—	—
9th September (D-day)	D+8 fast convoy sails(12)	—	—	—	D+8 slow convoy sails(8)(d)	—
10th September	—	—	D+8 slow convoy sails(8)	D+8 slow convoy sails(8)	D+8 fast convoy sails(12)(c)	—
11th September	—	D+8 fast convoy sails(12)	—	—	—	—
12th September	—	—	D+8 fast convoy sails(12)	—	—	—
13th September	—	—	—	—	—	D+8 convoy sails(8)

*Notes:*

- (a) The figure in brackets after sailing date of convoy denotes its speed in knots.  
 (b) A naval convoy of minesweepers left Trincomalee on the 3rd September (D-6) at ten knots.  
 (c) The D+8 fast convoys were timed to arrive in the assault area on D+8 but the slow convoys on D+9.  
 (d) All from Calcutta.  
 (e) Four personnel ships, two from Calcutta and two from Chittagong, to rendezvous with D+8 convoy from Rangoon off Rangoon River on the 14th September (D+5).

## APPENDIX 7

## The Planned Build-Up in Malaya for the First Phase of 'Zipper'

## A. Summary of D-day, D+3 and D+8 convoys from Indian ports and Rangoon to Malaya.

Convoy	Date of arrival at Malaya	Personnel	Vehicles	Animals	Stores (tons) incl. packed P.O.L.	Bulk P.O.L. (tons)	Remarks
D-day	9th September	50,749	3,738	—	10,060	—	For details see following pages.
D+3	12th September	35,938	4,093	—	23,750	4,000	For details see following pages.
D+8	17th September	31,504	2,587	1,420	49,000	—	For details see following pages.
Total first three convoys		118,191	10,418	1,420	82,810†	4,000	†Including 15,000 tons packed P.O.L.

## B. Summary of D+23, D+31, D+44 and D+53 convoys from Indian ports to Malaya.

D+23	2nd October	28,691	2,310	426	32,600†	4,500	†Including 5,000 tons packed P.O.L.
D+31	10th October	25,269	3,254	—	56,000†	7,500	†Including 6,000 tons packed P.O.L.
D+44	23rd October	24,301	2,328	420	31,500†	8,000	†Including 5,000 tons packed P.O.L.
D+53	1st November	6,547	609	†	†	†	†Figures not available.
Total next four convoys		84,808	8,501	846	120,100†	20,000	†Including 16,000 tons packed P.O.L.

## C. Grand total of build-up, 9th September to 1st November 1945.

First seven convoys		202,999	18,919	2,266	202,910†	24,000	†Including 31,000 tons packed P.O.L.
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## D. Convoys after 1st November were to carry 7th and 20th Divisions and 255th Tank Brigade from Burma and 254th Tank Brigade from India to complete build-up for second phase.

Loading Tables for first phase of 'Zipper' (first three convoys only)

D-day convoys

Port	Formations and units allotted	Numbers involved			Shipping allotted	Capacity			Remarks
		Personnel	Vehicles	Stores (tons)		Personnel	Vehicles	Stores (tons)	
Bombay	Tactical H.Q. XXXIV Corps Part of 60th Army Group R.A. Corps troops and R.A.F.	9,684	871	7,110	9 M.T./stores ships (fitted) 3 coasters 3 personnel ships	2,250	900	1,800	The convoy included 3 L.S.E.s and 3 tankers
						—	—	5,310	
						7,434	—	—	
Cochin	74th Brigade Group (25th Division)	5,914	—	—	2 personnel ships	9,684	900	7,110	
Madras	37th Brigade Group (23rd Division) 25th Division (less 53rd and 74th Brigades) 'C' Squadron 11th Cavalry Elements of 13th and 19th Lancers Half 46th Beach Group Elements 41st Beach Group 7,000 corps troops and R.A.F.	16,331	1,732†	2,350	47 L.C.T.s 16 L.S.T.(2)s 3 M.T./stores ships (fitted) 5 L.S.I.s 2 personnel ships	1,100	168	1,050	†Some of the vehicles allotted to Madras had to be embarked at Vizagapatam and Bombay. The convoy included 4 L.S.H.s, 2 L.S.C.s and 1 L.S.D.
						4,800	880	850	
						750	300	450	
						3,849	—	—	
						5,832	—	—	
						16,331	1,348	2,350	

Port	Formations and units allotted	Numbers involved			Shipping allotted	Capacity			Remarks
		Personnel	Vehicles	Stores (tons)		Personnel	Vehicles	Stores (tons)	
Vizagapatam	53rd Brigade Group (25th Division) Remainder 46th Beach Group Remainder 19th Lancers	7,004	410	450	8 L.S.T.(2)s 1 L.S.T.(3) 3 M.T./stores ships (fitted) 2 L.S.I.s 1 personnel ship	2,400 300 750  2,034 1,520	440 45 300  — —	— — 450  — —	
	Unallotted	144	21	—		7,004	785	450	
Total D-day convoys from India		39,077	3,034	9,910		144	21	—	
						39,077	3,033	9,910	
Rangoon	Part 5th Division	11,672	704	150	12 L.S.T.(2)s 1 M.T./stores ship (fitted) 4 personnel ships	3,600 250 7,822	660 100 —	— 150 —	
						11,672	760	150	
Grand Total D-day convoys		50,749	3,738	10,060		50,749	3,814	10,060	

## D+3 Convoys

Port	Formations and units embarked	Numbers involved			Shipping allotted	Capacity			Remarks
		Personnel	Vehicles	Stores (tons)		Personnel	Vehicles	Stores (tons)	
Bombay	Main H.Q. XXXIV Corps 23rd Division (less 37th Brigade) 3 Commando Brigade 45th Cavalry Remainder 11th Cavalry Remainder 41st Beach Group H.Q. 453 L. of C. Sub-Area Elements of 60th Army Group R.A.	26,354	2,946	18,300	3 stores ships 17 L.S.T.(3)s 4 L.S.L.s 22 M.T./stores ships (fitted) 5 personnel ships	— 5,100 4,144 5,500 11,610 26,354	— 755 — 2,200 — 2,955	15,000 — — 3,300 — 18,300	The convoy included 1 L.S.H. and 5 tankers
Cochin	Corps troops and R.A.F.	2,047	60†	800	1 stores ship 1 L.S.T.(3) 1 personnel ship	— 300 1,747 2,047	— 60 — 60	800 — — 800	†These were the only vehicles embarked at Cochin
Madras and Vizagapatam	Corps troops and R.A.F.	3,377	657	4,050	7 M.T./stores ships (fitted) 2 personnel ships 1 packed petrol ship	1,750 1,627 — 3,377	700 — — 700	1,050 — 3,000 4,050	The convoy included 5 tankers

Port	Formations and units embarked	Numbers involved			Shipping allotted	Capacity			Remarks
		Personnel	Vehicles	Stores (tons)		Personnel	Vehicles	Stores (tons)	
	Unallotted	84	34	—		84	34	—	
Total D+3 convoys from India		31,862	3,697	23,150		31,862	3,749	23,150	
Rangoon	Part 5th Division	4,076	396	600	4 M.T./stores ships 2 personnel ships	1,000	400	600	
						3,076	—	—	
						4,076	400	600	
Grand Total D+3 convoys		35,938	4,093	23,750		35,938	4,149	23,750	

## D+8 Convoys

Port	Formations and units embarked	Numbers involved				Shipping allotted	Capacity				Remarks
		Personnel	Vehicles	Animals	Stores		Personnel	Vehicles	Animals	Stores	
Bombay	5th Parachute Brigade Rear H.Q. XXXIV Corps Remainder 60th Army Group R.A. Corps troops and R.A.F.	10,033	1,051	895	44,950	6 M.T./stores ships (fitted)	—	900	—	5,000	Tex Persian Gulf
						2 M.T./stores ships (unfitted)	500	200	—	—	
						1 mule ship	150	—	1,100	—	
						4 cargo ships	—	—	—	27,950	
						5 personnel ships packed petrol ships†	9,983	—	—	—	
Cochin	Corps troops	2,135	—	—	—	2 personnel ships	10,033	1,100	1,100	44,950	
							2,135	—	—	—	
Madras	Tactical H.Q. 14th Army Corps troops	7,819	677	595	750	3 M.T./stores ships (fitted)	750	390	—	—	This convoy also included 3 tankers, 1 collier, 1 distilling ship, 1 survey ship, 1 degaussing ship and 1 Naval Store issuing ship.
						2 M.T./stores ships (unfitted)	—	300	—	750	
						1 mule ship	100	—	600	—	
						4 personnel ships	6,969	—	—	—	
							7,819	690	600	750	



Port	Formations and units embarked	Numbers involved				Shipping allotted	Capacity				Remarks
		Personnel	Vehicles	Animals	Stores		Personnel	Vehicles	Animals	Stores	
Vizagapatam	—	—	—	—	—	1 packed petrol ship	—	—	—	—	
Calcutta & Chittagong	Corps and army troops	6,580	698	—	3,150	4 personnel ships	6,580	—	—	—	Ships in this convoy sailed from Calcutta with the exception of two personnel ships from Chittagong.
						5 M.T./stores ships	—	750	—	3,150	
						1 heavy lift ship	—	—	—	—	
							6,580	750	—	3,150	
Total D+8 convoys from India		26,567	2,426	1,420	48,850		26,567	2,540	1,700	48,850	
Rangoon	Remainder 5th Division	4,937	161	—	150	1 M.T./stores ship	—	150	—	150	
						3 personnel ships	4,937	—	—	—	
							4,937	150	—	150	
Grand Total D+8 convoys		31,504	2,587	1,420	49,000		31,504	2,690	1,700	49,000	

Note:

L.C.T.—landing craft, tank; L.S.C.—landing ship, carrier; L.S.D.—landing ship, dock (basically a self-propelled floating dock); L.S.E.—landing ship, emergency repair; L.S.H.—landing ship, headquarters; L.S.I.—landing ship, infantry; L.S.T.(2)—landing ship, tank (diesel-engined, shallow draught); L.S.T.(3)—landing ship, tank (steam propelled, heavier and larger and with deeper draught than the L.S.T.(2)).

## APPENDIX 8

The Strength and Disposition of the Japanese Army and Naval Air Forces to be Available by the End of March 1945 for the Defence of Japan and the Approaches to It.

Formation	Location	Type of Aircraft				Total Aircraft	Operational Area	Mission	Remarks
		Fighters	Bombers	Recce. & Liaison	Kami-kaze				
A. AIR DEFENCE OF JAPAN									
(i) Army 10th Air Division 11th Air Division 12th Air Division	} Japan	400	—	45	—	445	Japan	Home Defence	{ These three air divisions were under the tactical command of 14th, 15th and 16th Area Armies respectively. Technically they were first under 1st Air Army and later under 6th Air Army.
(ii) Navy Homeland Air Defence Force		160	—	—	—	160	Japan	Home Defence	
B. AIR FORCES BASED IN JAPAN FOR DEFENCE OF APPROACHES									
(i) Army 6th Air Army	Japan	{ 60 90	30 90	20 45	100 300	735	Ryukyu Is.	Attack on Allied transports and advanced bases	{ 1st line aircraft. Reserve aircraft.
(ii) Navy 5th Air Fleet 3rd Air Fleet 10th Air Fleet	Japan	{ 200 340 —	310 220 —	10 20 —	520 580 2,000	4,200	Ryukyu Is.	Attack on Allied tank forces	{ 70 aircraft allotted to Bonin Is. Of the 2,000 Kamikazes, 1,300 were under training, to be ready by 30th April.

C. AIR FORCES BASED OVERSEAS FOR DEFENCE OF APPROACHES	(i) Army	China	{ 30 75	70 50	16 —	150 50	266 175	China Formosa	Attack on Allied transports	To remain in China. To be ready to move to Formosa.
	5th Air Army								—do— —do—	— —
	3rd Air Army	Indo-China	25	15	—	—	40	Formosa		
	8th Air Division	Formosa	120	60	10	250	440	Ryukyu Is.		
D. SURFACE ESCORT FORCES	(ii) Navy	Formosa	40	40	5	—	85	Ryukyu Is.	Attack on Allied task forces	—
	1st Air Fleet									
	Navy	Japan S.W. Pacific E. China Sea	— — —	— — —	150 50 150	— — —	350	—	Escort duties	—
	Totals		1,540	885	521	3,950	6,896			

## APPENDIX 9

### Strength of Army Air Units Allotted to the Defence of Japan on the 31st March 1945

10th Air Division (under command of 12th Area Army in the Tokyo—Yokohama area)

	Fighter	Reconnaissance
17th Air Regiment	—	6
23rd Air Regiment	25	—
28th Air Regiment	12	—
47th Air Regiment	35	—
53rd Air Regiment	25	—
70th Air Regiment	35	—
244th Air Regiment	35	—
	<hr/>	
	167	6
Available from training units	90	—
	<hr/>	
	257	6

Anti-aircraft guns: 600

11th Air Division (under command of 15th Area Army in the Nagoya—Osaka area)

5th Air Regiment	20	—
16th Air Regiment	—	6
56th Air Regiment	30	—
	<hr/>	
	50	6
Available from training units	70	—
	<hr/>	
	120	6

Anti-aircraft guns: 350

12th Air Division (under command of 16th Area Army in Kyushu)

4th Air Regiment	35	—
51st Air Regiment	15	—
52nd Air Regiment	15	—
59th Air Regiment	35	—
19th Air Squadron	—	6
	<hr/>	
	100	6
Available from training units	60	—
	<hr/>	
	160	6

Anti-aircraft guns: 300

**Total:** 537 fighters, 18 reconnaissance aircraft and 1,250 anti-aircraft guns.

## APPENDIX 10

## The Distribution of the Japanese Army, Mid-June 1945

Location	Command	Area Army H.Q. or Army H.Q.	Divisions	Number of Divisions	Remarks
A. Japan	First General Army	11th, 12th and 13th Area Armies	1st Guards, 3rd Guards, 44th, 72nd, 73rd, 81st, 84th, 93rd, 140th, 142nd, 143rd, 147th, 151st, 152nd, 153rd, 157th, 201st, 202nd, 209th, 214th, 221st, 222nd, 224th, 239th, 230th, 231st, 234th, 308th, 316th, 321st (Oshima), 322nd, 354th, 355th, 1st Armoured, 4th Armoured, 10th and 11th Air.	33 Infantry† 2 Armoured 2 Air	Responsible for north-eastern, eastern and east coast districts of Japan.  †224th, 230th and 231st Divisions were later transferred to Second General Army.
B. North-East Front	Second General Army	15th and 16th Area Armies	11th, 25th, 57th, 77th, 86th, 144th, 145th, 146th, 154th, 155th, 156th, 205th, 206th, 212th, 216th, 225th, 303rd, 312th, 344th, 351st, 12th Air.	20 Infantry† 1 Air	Responsible for central and west- ern districts of Honshu, Shikoku and Kyushu.
C. Korea	5th Area Army	27th Army	7th, 42nd, 88th, 89th, 91st, 1st Air.	5 Infantry 1 Air	Responsible for Hokkaido, Sak- halin and Kurile Islands.
	17th Area Army	17th Area Army	96th, 111th, 120th, 121st, 150th, 160th, 320th.	7 Infantry	
D. Manchuria	Kwantung Army	1st and 3rd Area Armies, and 4th Army	79th, 107th, 108th, 112th, 119th, 122nd, 123rd, 124th, 125th, 126th, 127th, 128th.	12 Infantry	



Location	Command	Area Army H.Q. or Army H.Q.	Divisions	Number of Divisions	Remarks
E. China	China Expeditionary Force	North China Area Army	59th, 63rd, 110th, 114th, 115th, 117th, 118th. 3rd Armoured.	7 Infantry 1 Armoured	The 13th and 23rd Armies were directly under Headquarters China Expeditionary Force.
		6th Area Army	3rd, 13th, 27th, 34th, 39th, 40th, 47th, 58th, 64th, 65th, 68th, 70th, 116th, 132nd, 133rd.	15 Infantry	The 6th Army was under com- mand of 13th Army.
		13th Army	60th, 61st, 69th, 161st.	4 Infantry	
		23rd Army	104th, 129th, 130th, 131st. 13th Air.	4 Infantry 1 Air	
F. Central Pacific		31st Army	14th, 29th, 43rd, 52nd, 109th.	5 Infantry	The 14th was lost in Palau, the 29th in Guam, the 43rd in Saipan and the 109th in Iwo- jima. The 52nd was at Truk.
G. Ryukyu Islands	10th Area Army	32nd Army	24th, 28th, 62nd.	3 Infantry	The 24th and 62nd were in Oki- nawa and the 28th was in the Sakishima Group.
H. Formosa	10th Area Army	40th Army	9th, 12th, 50th, 66th, 71st. 8th Air.	5 Infantry 1 Air	The 9th Division was transferred from Okinawa and the 71st Division from Manchuria in February 1945.

Location	Command	Area Army H.Q. or Army H.Q.	Divisions	Number of Divisions	Remarks
J. South East Pacific	8th Area Army	17th Army	6th, 17th, 38th.	3 Infantry	
K. Operations controlled by Southern Army	Southern Army ( <i>Field-Marshal Count. H. Terauchi</i> )				
(1) New Guinea and New Britain		18th Army	20th, 41st, 51st.	3 Infantry	
(2) Philippine Islands		14th Area Army	1st, 8th, 10th, 16th, 19th, 23rd, 26th, 30th, 100th, 102nd, 103rd, 105th, 2nd Armoured, 4th Air.	12 Infantry 1 Armoured 1 Air	
(3) North Australian Front		2nd Army	5th, 32nd, 35th, 36th, 48th, 7th Air.	5 Infantry 1 Air	This front was roughly from Java to Amboina, both inclusive. The 19th Army had been disbanded.
(4) Indian Ocean Borneo Java Sumatra Malaya (excluding Johore)		7th Area Army (Singapore) 37th Army 16th Army 25th Army 29th Army	Garrison units. Garrison units. 2nd Guards, 9th Air. 94th, garrison units.	3 Infantry 1 Air	
Johore		Under 7th Area Army H.Q.	46th.		

Location	Command	Area Army H.Q. or Army H.Q.	Divisions	Number of Divisions	Remarks
(5) Indo-China	Southern Army	38th Army	2nd (less detachment), 21st, 22nd. 5th Air.	3 Infantry (less detach- ments) 1 Air	
(6) Siam		39th Army	4th (less detachment), 37th.	2 Infantry	
(7) Burma		Burma Area Army 15th Army 28th Army 33rd Army Area Army H.Q.	15th, 31st, 33rd. 54th, 55th. 18th, 49th, 53rd, detachments from 2nd and 4th. 56th.	9 (plus) Infantry	

*Notes:*

1. This appendix should be compared with Appendix 5 of Volume I, Appendix 12 of Volume III and Appendix 7 of Volume IV.
2. The Japanese Army, which in 1941 consisted of fifty-one divisions and five air divisions, had by June 1945 been expanded to 160 infantry divisions, four armoured divisions and ten air divisions (2nd and 6th Air Divisions had been abolished and 13th Air Division newly-formed in central China). By the end of the war there were 171 infantry divisions.



## APPENDIX II

### The Japanese Economy, 1937-1945

This Appendix does not purport to be a thorough review of the Japanese economy during the period named, for that lies outside the purview of this history. It consists of a general review of the Japanese oil problem, her steel, coal, shipbuilding, aircraft and motor vehicle industries, and of some miscellaneous minor industries which affected the general living conditions of the Japanese people. It is written to draw the reader's attention to the following points:

(a) Japan's economy and her ability to wage war depended largely on imports which included such vital raw materials as oil fuel, iron ore, coking coal, raw metals or ores required for alloy steels, bauxite, rubber, tin and foodstuffs as well as many others of lesser importance.

(b) From the time of her seizure of Manchuria in 1931 Japan had set to work to strengthen her economy and her merchant navy, a process which was vastly accelerated in 1937 when she began to put herself on a war footing. In addition to measures which would strengthen her aircraft and motor industries, she set to work to increase her output of domestic coal, and to create stockpiles of iron ore, scrap iron and steel and oil fuel so that she would become less dependent on imports in time of war.

(c) Despite these efforts she was carrying only 65 per cent of her imports in her own vessels in 1941. Her merchant fleet of six million tons, part of which would be required to transport and maintain the troops to hold the defensive perimeter around the Southern Region and Pacific islands which she intended to gain and defend,<sup>1</sup> was thus clearly insufficient to meet her needs in war.

(d) The Japanese Government, from 1937 under constant pressure from those who favoured expansion, failed to produce an overall plan for total mobilization of the nation for war, especially for war against two powerful industrial nations. There were, for example, no plans in 1941 to increase the output of the shipbuilding industry, to ensure proper direction of labour or to eliminate competition between the Services for raw materials and finished articles.

(e) Japan's 'Achilles heel' was merchant shipping. It was insufficient for her needs in war and therefore needed to be carefully preserved and increased. Nothing was done to increase the output of the shipbuilding industry until well after the war had begun, and shipping

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<sup>1</sup> See Volume I, pages 91-92.

was used in an uneconomic manner. The result was that by the middle of 1944, even before the American Pacific offensive had reoccupied the Philippines and cut the line of communication to the Southern Region, shipping losses greatly exceeded the output of the shipbuilding industry and imports had been sharply reduced.

(f) Japan's ability to wage war had been reduced to an alarming extent owing to her shipping losses well before the end of 1944. Owing to lack of imports of raw materials, her industrial output was rapidly declining and would probably have ground to a halt by the end of 1945.

(g) The close air and sea blockade, together with the massive incendiary air attacks on urban areas and the mining of the Inland Sea, was not the primary cause of the rapid decline in Japan's ability to resist. It simply accelerated the decline.

#### SECTION I

##### *The Japanese Oil Problem and its Effect on the Course of the War*

From her own oilwells and from the production of synthetic oil, Japan could provide only some ten per cent of her annual peacetime requirements. As part of the preparations made for her expansionist programme she had, during the 1930s, imported annually quantities considerably in excess of her actual requirements and in 1938 had introduced petrol rationing for civilian users. By the 1st April 1941 she had created a reserve stock of crude and refined oils amounting to about forty-nine million U.S. barrels, had constructed in the home islands storage for some sixty million barrels, had provided a capacity for refining crude oil of some thirty-two million barrels a year and had launched a very ambitious programme to develop her production of synthetic oil.

The freezing of her assets by Britain, the United States and the Netherlands East Indies in July 1941 immediately stopped her imports of oil fuel, and forced her to make use of her reserves. Her inability to survive without imports of oil, and the knowledge that the longer she waited the smaller would be the reserves on which she would have to depend until sources of supply had been captured and brought into production were two of the major factors which caused her to go to war with Britain and the United States in December 1941.<sup>1</sup> The early capture of the Netherlands East Indies was essential since the oilfields in Borneo, Java and Sumatra were the only source within her reach. Since the Dutch would do their best to destroy the oilfield installations, the invading forces were closely followed by a large number of civilian experts, together with essential machinery so that production could be restarted as soon as possible.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Her reserves had been reduced to forty-three million U.S. barrels by December 1941, a loss of six million in eight months.

<sup>2</sup> The exploitation of the oilfields was seriously delayed when an American submarine sank a transport carrying some 900 skilled workers to the Netherlands East Indies on the 8th May 1942.

In her pre-war planning Japan gambled on the early capture of the oilfields in the Southern Region, and on the full exploitation of their resources before her reserves were exhausted. Although production in 1942 from the captured oilfields might not be large, she reckoned that thereafter it would increase annually (although it was unlikely to reach the pre-war figures) and counted on importing at least 1.9 million U.S. barrels in 1942, 12.6 million in 1943 and 28.5 million in 1944. The balance of the production would be used to supply her forces in the Southern Region. Since she began the war with a reserve of only forty-three million U.S. barrels and estimated that her annual wartime usage would be between thirty-five and thirty-six million barrels, she realized that, even with drastic rationing, she would have sufficient oil to wage war for only some two years.<sup>1</sup> She assumed that she would be able to hold the defensive perimeter from Wake Island through New Guinea and the Netherlands East Indies to Burma which she intended to gain at the beginning of the war,<sup>2</sup> and would have no difficulty in keeping open the sea routes between the oilfields in the Southern Region and Japan. The transport of oil to Japan would not therefore prove too difficult, provided that sufficient tankers to allow for the inevitable losses were built.

Events were to prove that her calculations were based on false premises. Japan began the war with a tanker fleet of only some 575,000 tons, for she had allowed the bulk of her large pre-war imports of oil to be carried in foreign bottoms. New construction in 1942 and 1943 was considerably greater than losses, and by November 1943 the tanker tonnage had reached a figure of 834,000, but this was insufficient since three-quarters of it was employed solely on the task of moving oil from the Southern Region to Japan, and the remainder was used to supply the forces holding the conquered territories in the Pacific and in the south. The United States had in the meanwhile begun a long-distance blockade by launching a submarine offensive aimed at the destruction of shipping and in particular tankers. Owing to the distance of the American bases from the vital sea route between the Southern Region and Japan, sinkings in 1942 and 1943 were not sufficient to reduce Japanese tanker tonnage, which reached its peak in November—December 1943. As the American offensive in the Pacific gained momentum and the chain of Japanese island defences was steadily pushed back westwards, not only could American submarines work closer to the China coast, with a consequent increase in the number of tankers sunk, but the fast carrier force was also able to strike at the Japanese forward naval bases. In two such strikes on Truk and Palau in February and March 1944, the fast carrier force sank a third of the tankers attached to the *Combined Fleet*, a loss which affected all subsequent fleet movements. When the greater part of New Guinea had been occupied by the end of July 1944 and the Marianas had been captured by August, the weight of attack on the Japanese lifeline greatly increased, and the tonnage of shipping sunk, including tankers, soared. The occupation of Leyte and Luzon between October 1944 and March 1945 cut the lifeline. Very few tankers managed to complete the voyage from the Southern Region to

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<sup>1</sup> See Volume I, Appendix 3

<sup>2</sup> See Volume I, Chapter V.

Japan in the first quarter of 1945, and the last tanker left the southern oilfields for Japan on the 19th March 1945.

The effect of the growing American submarine offensive and the selection of tankers as priority targets is illustrated by the decline in the proportion of the oil produced in the southern oilfields which reached Japan: from forty per cent in 1942, it fell to twenty-nine per cent in 1943, to 13.5 per cent in 1944 and to nothing in 1945. This is shown more clearly in the following table:

Year from 1st April	Production in southern oilfields	Sent to Japan	Used in south or lost at sea	Pre-war forecast of imports to Japan	Remarks
1941	65.1	—	—	—	All figures are in million U.S. barrels.  Total forecast of imports (column 5), 43.1; actually received (column 3), 30.0.
1942	25.9	10.5(40%)	15.4	1.9	
1943	49.6	14.5(29%)	35.1	12.6	
1944	36.9	5.0(13.5%)	31.9	28.6	
1945 (April to August)	6.5	nil	6.5	?	

For the four years from the 1st April 1937 to the 31st March 1941 Japanese imports of oil averaged 34.3 million U.S. barrels a year.<sup>1</sup> For the subsequent four-year period to the 31st March 1945, the total imports were only 38.39 million, an annual average of 9.6 million, which was about a quarter of the pre-war figure. In these circumstances the reserves had to be used at a rapid rate and, despite frantic efforts to reduce consumption and increase home production of both crude and synthetic oil, they had been reduced by the 1st April 1945 to only 3.71 million barrels. The following table shows the gradually deteriorating position:

Year from 1st April	Imported	Production		Total	Used in year	Deficit	Stocks on 1st April
		Home crude	Home synthetic				
1941	8.37	1.94	1.22	11.53	22.58	- 11.05	48.90
1942	10.52	1.69	1.50	13.71	25.80	- 12.09	37.85
1943	14.50	1.79	1.05	17.34	27.80	- 10.46	25.76
1944	5.00	1.58	1.23	7.81	19.40	- 11.59	15.30
1945 (5 months only)	nil	0.81	0.18	0.99	4.60	- 3.61	3.71

Stocks used, 48.80; balance left on the 1st September 1945, 0.10<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> See Volume I, Appendix 3.

<sup>2</sup> All figures are in million U.S. barrels.

The bombing of oil storage depots, refineries and synthetic oil plants in Japan began on the 10th May 1945 and continued till the 14th August, during which time some 10,500 tons of bombs were dropped on these targets.<sup>1</sup> It was ascertained after the war that these attacks destroyed some twelve per cent of the storage capacity and eighty-five per cent of both the refining and the synthetic oil plants. It will be seen that, as Japan's oil position was already hopeless by the 1st April 1945, these attacks did little to expedite her collapse.

The figures given above make it clear that oil fuel was one of Japan's greatest problems. The need for oil determined her strategy throughout the war, and the urgent need for its conservation governed the tactical operations of her military forces, particularly the naval and air forces. Her war strategy had to be based first on the speedy capture of the oilfields in the Netherlands East Indies, then on the establishment of a chain of tankers operating between the oilfields and Japan, and finally on the defence of this vital lifeline and the oilfields. These requirements necessitated the capture of Singapore, the establishment of a chain of island fortresses in the Pacific and the disposition of her forces to hold this defensive perimeter.

The naval battle of Midway was the turning point of the war. It involved the *Imperial Navy* in the expenditure of considerable quantities of oil fuel, an expenditure which, as Admiral Toyoda admitted after the war, was felt throughout the remainder of the war and had a serious effect on Japanese naval strategy. This was very noticeable during the struggle for the Marianas and during the Battle of the Philippine Sea, when the fleet had to operate on a limited radius of action.<sup>2</sup> After the loss of the Marianas, with fuel becoming even scarcer, the bulk of the Japanese navy had to be located in the south as close as possible to the sources of oil fuel, while, so that pilots could be trained, all carriers had to be located in the Inland Sea where they drew on Japan's dwindling reserves of fuel. Owing to this division of its ships, the *Combined Fleet* at the Battle of Leyte Gulf was short of air support. Moreover, lack of fuel imposed further tactical disabilities in that movements had to be restricted by the amount of fuel available, which forced the adoption of complex tactics dependent for success on exact timing. After the loss of Leyte and Luzon the vital link to the south was cut, and the remnants of the Japanese navy were practically immobilized. When Okinawa was attacked, only 7,000 tons of fuel could be allotted to the navy for surface operations in defence of the island, which reduced the number of ships in the sortie designed to aid the defenders to ten.

The position of the Japanese air forces was equally bad. The shortage of aviation petrol first affected the testing of new aircraft and engines, then limited the training of pilots and eventually restricted operations. New aircraft were normally given a test flight of some two to three hours with five landings. From January 1943 this time was halved, and was eventually

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<sup>1</sup> See Chapter XVI.

<sup>2</sup> Fuelling instructions for the naval forces involved contained these limiting orders: 'Cruising radius 2,500 miles at 18 knots, 24 hours at 20 knots; decisive action 12 hours at full speed; pursuit 12 hours at 24 knots'.

reduced to half an hour if the aircraft appeared to be satisfactory. Towards the end of the war, types of aircraft which had been in production for some time were accepted if they could fly from the producing factory to the point of delivery. Engine tests, which before the war covered seven to nine hours running, were reduced by 1945 to two hours, and only one in ten engines produced was tested. Until 1943 all trainee pilots were given one hundred hours of basic instruction; in 1944 this was cut to forty hours, advanced operational training was limited to thirty hours and navigational training was omitted altogether, pilots being instructed to follow their leader into action. Naturally many failed to return to base, even if they survived the air battle. Furthermore, training units had to make do with a 50/50 mixture of alcohol and petrol during 1944, and from April 1945 were issued with fuel which was practically pure alcohol and necessitated modifications to engines. Aircraft with first-line units designed to use 92 octane petrol had, from the beginning of the Okinawa campaign, to be issued with 87 octane petrol. Unless called upon for operations, first-line aircraft were flown on an average once every three weeks, and their engines were seldom run and were thus in poor condition.

Since the shortage of petrol led to pilots being partially-trained, they were no match for Allied pilots if sent into battle using orthodox tactics. This was one of the reasons for the adoption of *Kamikaze* tactics, which was the only sure way of using partially-trained pilots and getting results. Moreover *Kamikaze* pilots required fuel for only a one-way trip with a small margin for manoeuvre. By the end of the Okinawa campaign in June 1945 the situation was so desperate that opposition to Allied attacks on Japan was seldom offered. Aircraft were carefully concealed and the remaining stocks of fuel dispersed and stored in the safest possible places well inland.

## SECTION 2

### *The Steel Industry*

Before the war Japan's steel industry was almost entirely dependent for its raw materials on imports from overseas. When Japan began her preparations for war in 1937, the Government ordered all steel plants to accumulate stockpiles of both iron ore and scrap.

#### Iron Ore

In 1937 the output of steel was five million tons, but in that year eighty-four per cent of the iron ore and fifty-five per cent of the scrap iron and steel consumed were imported. Before the embargo on Japanese overseas assets in 1941 fifty-seven per cent of her iron ore imports were obtained from Malaya and the Philippines, twenty-nine per cent from Korea, Manchuria and China and fourteen per cent from other countries. When the embargo was applied Japan turned to China for supplies, the percentage of imports from this source rising from fifty per cent at the end of 1941 to about eighty-eight per cent in 1943. Although by the capture of Malaya and the Philippines she overcame the embargo, she was never able to draw anything like the pre-war quantities of iron ore from these sources mainly

owing to the difficulty of finding shipping to carry it; and imports from these two sources fell from 3,000,000 tons in 1940 to 169,000 tons in 1943 and 23,000 tons in 1944. As the war went on and shipping losses mounted, efforts were made to exploit low-grade deposits in Korea; 235,000 tons were imported from this source in 1943 and 610,000 tons in 1944. This increase did not counterbalance the loss of imports from China, which fell from an average of 374,000 tons a month in the first six months of 1943 to only 37,000 tons in December 1944. By 1945 Japan depended almost entirely for iron ore on what she could import from Korea and on the very low-grade domestic supplies from the mines in Hokkaido.

On the outbreak of war the stockpiles of iron ore amounted to 2.6 million tons. In 1941-42 the output of steel was greatly expanded, with the result that, although imports were adequate to meet normal requirements, half of the stockpile had been used by the end of 1942. The Japanese began to economize in 1943 when only some 600,000 tons were used. In 1944 this figure fell to 120,000 tons, so that by the beginning of 1945 there were still some 680,000 tons in hand.

#### Scrap Iron and Steel

Imports and stockpiles of scrap iron and steel reached a peak in 1939, when imports totalled 2.5 million tons and stockpiles reached 5.8 million tons. Imports dropped in 1940 by half and in 1941 to ten per cent of the 1939 figures. After the outbreak of war imports fell to negligible quantities. As a result the Japanese were from 1941 onwards forced to draw upon their stockpile to an increasing extent, and by the end of 1944 only 308,000 tons were left.

#### Coking Coal

Before the war almost all Japan's high-grade coking coal was imported from north China. Imports reached a peak of four million tons in 1942 and thereafter, owing to the shipping shortage, declined. In 1944 imports were down to thirty-five per cent, and in the first quarter of 1945 to fourteen per cent, of the 1942 total; thereafter they rapidly fell away to nothing. An attempt was made in 1944 to route the north China coking coal by rail to Korean ports, but the limited capacity of the railways proved just as serious an impediment as the shipping shortage. Imports from deposits in north-east Manchuria, which could be brought by the short sea route from Korean ports across the Sea of Japan, were increased from 5,000 tons in 1943 to 124,000 tons in 1944, but this amount did little to offset the steep decline in imports from China and, during 1944, Japan had to fall back on the extremely poor quality coking coal which could be obtained from coal mines in Hokkaido.

#### Raw Materials for Steel Alloys

Raw materials required for the manufacture of alloy steels such as manganese, chrome, tungsten, vanadium, molybdenum, nickel and cobalt were all imported before the war. After the outbreak of war alternative sources of supply were found for all of these except nickel, but the quantities available were small. When shipping became scarce in 1944 and

communications with the Southern Region were cut, imports ceased altogether.

As a result of growing shortages from 1941 onwards, the alloy content of special steels had progressively to be lowered, with dire results. The production of high speed steels, normally containing some sixteen per cent of cobalt, very soon became impossible. By 1943 stainless steel had to be made without nickel, and eventually the chrome content had to be severely reduced. As the war went on structural steel had to be made without molybdenum. The nickel content in steels used for gun barrels, armour plate, torpedo air chambers and so on had to be sharply reduced. The gradual lowering of the quality of steel plates for shipbuilding eventually resulted in their cracking under cold bending, and welding became extremely difficult. The general shortage of steel for the shipbuilding industry prevented prefabrication, and resulted in construction being a hand-to-mouth operation which made nonsense of any production programme. The aircraft industry was the worst hit by the lack of alloy steels, which, from the spring of 1944, caused a rapid decline in the output of aircraft engines at the very moment when the shortage of engines was holding up aircraft production.

The Japanese steel industry was producing at an annual rate of 7·8 million tons by early 1944, but thereafter the shortage of raw materials caused a rapid decline in production to an annual rate of about one million tons. From about mid-1944 the drop in both the quality and quantity of steel became one of the limiting factors in the production of weapons of war, and by early 1945 Japan's ability to wage war, to the extent that it depended on steel, had been effectively sapped. This was brought about entirely by the long-range blockade by American submarines which caused shipping losses to exceed replacements. The bombing of the steel plants in Kyushu in 1943-44 had little effect and, as by 1945 there was a large quantity of unused spare capacity, the intensive air attacks that year had little effect on the production of steel.

### SECTION 3

#### *The Coal Industry*

Japan had no resources of anthracite, or high-grade coking coal required for steel production, but had reasonable resources of medium- to low-grade bituminous coal. The principal coalfields were in Hokkaido and north-west Kyushu, but there were a few mines in western Honshu producing some fifteen per cent of the total domestic production. In general the main industrial centres in east and central Honshu were not sited close to the coalfields. Normally coal was carried from Hokkaido and Kyushu by sea to ports in Honshu and, in 1941, almost the whole of the home output of coal was transported in this way. To economize in coastal shipping and to avoid air raids, a railway tunnel was opened in 1942 under the Shimono-seki Strait, linking the railway system of Honshu with that of Kyushu. A rail wagon ferry was also put into operation across the Tsugaru Strait between Hakodate in Hokkaido and Aomori in Honshu.



In 1937 the coal industry was given a target of seventy million tons a year, which necessitated the greatest possible exploitation of existing mines, the opening up of new mines and a drive to increase production. Large numbers of uneconomic mines were therefore brought into production, and output rose from forty-five million tons to fifty-seven million tons in 1940, but thereafter fell gradually to forty-nine million tons in 1944 and to some thirty-three million tons in 1945, largely because the army conscripted many of the regular miners who had to be replaced by Koreans, Chinese and prisoners-of-war. By 1945 only about two-thirds of the original labour force of trained miners remained and, though the number of men employed in the mines had risen from 300,000 in 1940 to some 420,000 in 1945, output per man had fallen from 173 to 119 tons a year. Production was also affected by difficulties in obtaining mining equipment and by the consequent lowering of the standard of maintenance.

Consumption, which was 51 millions in 1937, rose to 66.5 million tons in 1940. During the war years it gradually declined to 52 millions in 1944, but from June of that year fell sharply, dropping from 4.5 million tons in that month to 3.5 millions in January 1945 and to 2.25 millions in July 1945. This drop occurred despite supplies for the army and navy being maintained at the same level and those for the railways and shipbuilding industry being increased.

Until 1945 consumption always exceeded domestic production. The balance was imported, as long as it was possible, from north China, Inner Mongolia, Korea, Manchuria, Indo-China and Formosa. In 1940 imports were some ten million tons but they fell to about three millions in 1943. In the first quarter of 1944 monthly imports averaged 416,000 tons, but by the third quarter they had fallen to 190,000 and in the last quarter to 102,000 tons. Thereafter they declined rapidly and ceased altogether in June 1945. Most of the imports were of high-grade coal or coking coal. The fall in imports therefore hit those industries depending on high-grade coal, particularly steel. The railways and coal-burning shipping were able to get their requirements from home production throughout the war. Except for coking coal (for which see *The Steel Industry*), Japan was never in difficulties over this essential commodity, since the fall in consumption balanced the fall in home production and imports.

#### SECTION 4

##### *The Shipbuilding Industry*

During the 1930s Japan had improved and enlarged her merchant fleet by replacing slow and out-of-date vessels with fast new ones. By 1940 the merchant fleet consisted of over 700 ocean-going freighters, of which many were capable of twelve knots or over, 132 passenger-cargo vessels, of which forty-nine were capable of speeds of fifteen knots or over, and forty-nine ocean-going tankers. The total tonnage of this fleet on the outbreak of war in December 1941 was approximately six million and the percentage of imports carried in her own vessels had risen from fifty-four in 1937 to sixty-five in 1941.

From 1937 onwards, having denounced the 1922 Washington Naval Treaty on Naval Limitation, Japan began to strengthen her naval forces at the expense of merchant shipping output, since even in this period steel supply was limited and naval yards could cope with only some forty per cent of the naval requirements, the remainder having to be met by civilian shipyards. The trend from 1937 to 1941 is illustrated by the following table:

Year	New Merchant Tonnage	New Naval Tonnage	Total
1937	442,382	55,360	497,742
1938	410,644	63,589	474,233
1939	343,526	58,248	401,774
1940	279,816	94,705	374,521
1941	237,617	225,159	462,776

From 1936 to 1941 the modernization and repair of existing naval units were also undertaken, and by December 1941 there was only one destroyer in need of repair.

Japan appeared satisfied that, with a merchant fleet of six million tons and a very limited shipbuilding industry, she could wage war in the vast area of the central and south Pacific against two Powers whose shipbuilding resources were far greater than her own. The responsibility for merchant shipping lay with the Communications Ministry, which in December 1941 planned to build 398,000 tons in 1942, 317,000 tons in 1943 and 247,000 tons in 1944. The Cabinet Planning Board was more realistic and, expecting losses of some 700 to 800,000 tons a year, prepared a plan whereby tonnage built would rise from 300,000 in 1942 to 600,000 in 1944. Since the Ministry lacked the staff, experience and prestige to promote a large-scale expansion of merchant shipping, it could not compete with the Service authorities in the scramble for raw materials and production capacity, and the allocation of resources to merchant shipping was made from what was left after the armed forces had taken what they wanted. This situation was so unsound that in March 1942 the Cabinet gave control of merchant shipping construction to the navy, whose technical bureau had the staff and the prestige to initiate expansion and make changes in the design of ships to improve production. This move forced the navy to consider and balance the relationship between merchant and naval shipping requirements and the enlargement of shipbuilding capacity.

The construction of naval vessels from 1941 to 1945 was as follows:

Type	1941	1942	1943	1944	1945	Total 1941-5	Total 1931-45
Battleships	1	1	—	—	—	2	3
Aircraft Carriers	5	6	3	4	—	18	25
Cruisers	1	2	2	1	—	6	18
Destroyers	9	9	15	31	6	70	117
Submarines	11	22	40	37	22	132	156

In anticipation of invasion, a secondary fleet was built up towards the end of the war. This fleet included landing craft, coast defence and special attack vessels. The latter consisted of suicide boats (*Shinyo*), midget submarines (*Kairyu* and *Koryu*), and one-man human torpedoes (*Kaiten*), all of which could be built quickly and required little steel. The suicide boats were built of wood with an explosive charge in the bow and were powered by a standard type of petrol engine. The midget submarines were of two types: the *Kairyu* of eighteen to twenty tons, which had a crew of two men and could be built in about thirty days, and the *Koryu* of forty to fifty tons, which had a crew of five men and could be built in about sixty days. The human torpedo carried one man and was of four to eight tons displacement.

By the standardization and expansion of existing shipyards, and the construction of new yards, the output of merchant shipping was greatly increased after it became the responsibility of the navy. Nevertheless losses exceeded the new construction and the tonnage captured or salvaged to such an extent that by August 1945 the merchant fleet of some six million tons had been reduced to 1.5 million tons. This is illustrated by the following table:

Period	Tonnage captured or salvaged	Tonnage built	Total gain	Tonnage lost (a)	+ or —	Tonnage available
8/12/41	—	—	—	—	—	5,996,657
8/12/41 to 31/12/42	672,411	272,963	945,374	1,123,156 (241 ships)	— 177,782	5,818,875
1/1/43 to 31/12/43	109,028	769,085	878,113	1,820,919 (434 ships)	— 942,806	4,876,069
1/1/44 to 31/12/44	35,644	1,699,203	1,734,847	3,891,019 (969 ships)	—2,156,172	2,719,897
1/1/45 to 15/8/45	5,880	559,563	565,443	1,782,140 (701 ships)	—1,216,697	1,503,200 (c)
	822,963	3,300,814	4,123,777	8,617,234 (2,345 ships) (b)	—4,493,457	

*Notes:*

The table excludes all ships of less than 500 tons gross weight.

(a) Of this the tanker tonnage lost was:

8/12/41 to 31/12/42	9,538 (2 ships)
1/1/43 to 31/12/43	169,491 (23 ships)
1/1/44 to 31/12/44	754,889 (131 ships)
1/1/45 to 15/8/45	351,028 (103 ships)

Total 1,284,946 (259 ships or 15 per cent of total losses).

(b) In addition 1,966,521 tons of naval shipping (687 ships) were sunk, making the total tonnage lost 10,583,755.

(c) Of this tonnage only some 557,000 was operable.

For every ton of merchant shipping the Japanese were able to build, approximately 2.6 tons were lost. From 1943 onwards a vicious circle developed: inability to bring in raw materials because of the loss of shipping caused a sharp decline in steel output, which in turn limited the construction of ships. Despite the great effort in 1944 which brought merchant shipping output to some four times the 1937-38 level (i.e. before naval construction caused a sharp diminution in the tonnage of merchant shipping built), the situation had reached a crisis even before the close blockade of 1945, which virtually isolated Japan from the Asian mainland.<sup>1</sup>

Until the end of February 1945 less than one per cent of the shipyards had been damaged by air attack, but by that date the shortage of steel had reduced the rate of ship construction to one-third of the 1944 peak. From March 1945 the damage shipyards received during air attack on urban areas accelerated the decline.

In addition to her merchant fleet of steel ships, Japan had in 1941 18,789 wooden ships, totalling 1.1 million tons. These ships served as fishing vessels, cargo vessels for inter-island transport (mainly of coal), lighters in large ports and, at times, as small tankers. Attempts were made by the Communications Ministry, which retained control of this type of ship, to increase production, but output never reached large figures. During the war years 386,000 tons of wooden ships were constructed, but here again construction failed to keep pace with sinkings. At the end of the war there were only some 244,000 tons of these ships left, of which 105,000 tons were serviceable.

Of the total Japanese shipping sunk, submarines accounted for 55 per cent, carrier-borne aircraft for 16 per cent, U.S.A.A.F. and R.A.F. land-based aircraft for 10.25 per cent, U.S. Navy and Marine land-based aircraft for 4.25 per cent, mines for 9.25 per cent, surface vessels for 1 per cent and miscellaneous causes for 4.25 per cent.

## SECTION 5

### *The Aircraft Industry*

The low capacity of the Japanese aircraft industry during the war years is shown by a comparison with that of Britain, the United States and Germany. The production figures were:

	1941	1942	1943	1944	1945 to 15th August
Great Britain	20,100	23,600	26,200	26,500	—
United States	19,433	49,445	92,196	100,752	—
Germany	11,766	15,556	25,527	39,807	—
Japan	5,088	8,861	16,693	28,180	11,066

<sup>1</sup> See Chapter XVI.

The trend in the type of Japanese aircraft produced is shown in the following table, the figures in brackets being percentages of the yearly production:

Year	Fighter	Bomber	Reconnais- sance	Trainer	Others <sup>1</sup>	Total
1941	1,080(21)	1,461(29)	639(13)	1,489(29)	419(8)	5,088
1942	2,935(33)	2,433(27)	967(11)	2,171(25)	355(4)	8,861
1943	7,147(43)	4,189(25)	2,070(13)	2,871(17)	416(2)	16,693
1944	13,811(49)	5,100(18)	2,147(8)	6,147(22)	975(3)	28,180
1945 (to 15th Aug.)	5,474(49)	1,934(17)	855(8)	2,523(23)	280(3)	11,066

<sup>1</sup> Flying-boats, transport aircraft, gliders, etc.

Although most Japanese aeronautical engineers were trained abroad and were in touch with technical advances being made, their research was far behind that of European countries and the United States, and its application to production lagged even farther behind. Even after Japan began to prepare for war she relied heavily on the United States for plans, models and techniques. Many of the Japanese aero-engines and propellers used during the war had been produced from American designs sold under licence in pre-war years, and most of the aircraft used were development of American aircraft. It is not therefore surprising that, cut off from overseas sources, Japanese aircraft design failed to develop during the war and the fighting value of her aircraft quickly became inferior to that of the Allies.

On the outbreak of war the Japanese thought that their ZEKE fighter and BETTY bomber (both naval aircraft)<sup>2</sup> would be a match for British and American aircraft likely to be met in the Far East, but experience showed that they not only lacked fire-power but were also highly inflammable. To replace them the navy developed fifty-three basic models with 112 variations, while the army produced thirty-seven basic models with fifty-two variations; all these types were not, however, in production at any one time.

This plethora of types did not assist production, and the rivalry between the army and navy and the refusal of each to trust the aircraft industry produced near chaos. For instance, when a foreign aircraft was captured or new information obtained, the army and navy insisted on studying it first and then passed it on to the industry. Furthermore, when the model or information was passed to the industry, only one manufacturer was chosen and the information given had to remain a secret from all other companies in the industry. This was carried so far that cases occurred in which both the army and navy turned over identical foreign aircraft to different companies for secret investigation, development and production.

<sup>2</sup> See Volume II, page 487.

The poor production record of the aircraft industry was partly due to inefficient direction of labour. The army conscripted skilled labour regardless of the effect this had on the industry; in the spring of 1944 its demands became so excessive that the industry protested to the Government, saying that the demand for aircraft could not be met unless the drain on skilled manpower was halted. As a result, some key personnel were released by the Services and returned to the industry. The Services in addition detailed a number of soldiers for six months temporary duty with aircraft manufacturers; these men were unskilled and could therefore be employed only as labourers, but their presence in the factories created considerable unrest since they were better clothed and drew far better rations than the highly-skilled regular civilian workers. In February 1945 the aircraft industry employed 2,020,000 workers, of whom about a third were female; of the total, about twenty-eight per cent were regular employees, twenty-five per cent conscripted labour, thirty-five per cent students and twelve per cent soldiers. The difficulty of producing the high precision and intricate mechanisms of an aircraft with such a labour force is apparent.

No attempt was made until 1942 to determine the raw material required for the aircraft production programme. As has been stated in the section dealing with steel production, shortages of chrome, nickel, cobalt, tungsten, vanadium and molybdenum led to a serious decline in the quality of alloy steels used in aircraft production and particularly in aircraft engines.

The monthly production of aircraft reached its peak of 2,572 in September 1944; by March 1945 it had fallen by a third to 1,713. The monthly production of aircraft engines reached its peak of 4,530 in March 1944 and by March 1945 had fallen some sixty-one per cent to 1,787. These heavy falls were due mainly to lack of planning and direction and interference in the industry by the Services, both of which resulted in diversification of effort, to a shortage of skilled labour and to the shortage of alloy steels. Between March and July 1945 monthly production of aircraft fell another twenty-three per cent from 1,713 to 1,131 and of engines another twelve per cent from 1,787 to 1,257. The fall after March 1945 was due to the same circumstances which were operating in 1944, but these were aggravated by the Allied air offensive which began in earnest in March 1945. This caused the dispersal of the industry and its labour, and resulted in a considerable increase in absenteeism together with some damage to plant and machinery.

## SECTION 6

### *The Motor Vehicles Industry*

This industry did not exist in Japan until about 1930. By 1937 the Government, as part of their preparations for war, prohibited the import of motor vehicles from the end of 1938 in order to force Japanese industrialists to increase production. The production and import of vehicles

from 1937 to 1941 were as under :

	1937	1938	1939	1940	1941
Domestic Production	25,642	30,880	41,308	42,547	47,901
Imports	32,939	18,593	—	—	—
Total	58,581	49,473	41,308	42,547	47,901

On the outbreak of war the Japanese army had 62,500 lorries, and its losses overseas during the war amounted to some 71,000. At the end of the war it had in Japan some 51,000, of which only 26,000 were roadworthy. There were 64,000 lorries and 27,000 buses in civilian use on the 1st January 1941, but requisitions by the Services, normal losses, lack of maintenance, the cessation of production of buses in 1941 and of saloon cars at the beginning of 1944, and fuel difficulties had reduced these numbers to 22,800 lorries and 8,100 buses by the end of 1944, and to 17,000 and 4,700 by the end of the war.

The decline in the output of motor vehicles during the war years arose from the shortage of steel. Confronted with many conflicting demands on steel, the authorities placed the motor industry low in the order of priority, and the army, preoccupied with its own need for motor vehicles, failed to appreciate the needs of industry. It was not till 1945 that efforts were made to step up production. American air attacks had no effect on the motor industry for it was never a primary bombing target, and it was not till the 14th August 1945 that a motor vehicle factory was damaged. Nevertheless vehicle output had fallen to thirty-nine per cent of the 1941 peak by the second quarter of 1944, and to eighteen per cent by the end of March 1945. After March 1945, when the incendiary attacks on urban areas disrupted Japan's economic life, output fell off even more rapidly.

As a result of the growing shortage of vehicles local transportation broke down in 1945. Long hauls in Japan had always been carried out largely by rail. The road system in the country was therefore undeveloped and in some areas rudimentary: throughout the country only about 8,000 miles could be classed as major trunk roads, and the remainder were for the most part unmetalled second-class town or village roads. Furthermore, owing to lack of manpower and material, even the major trunk roads had not been maintained. When dispersion of industries from urban areas was forced upon Japan in the middle of 1945, the lack of road transport to carry materials, components and finished articles from railway terminals and docks to factories and vice-versa, in some cases over considerable distances, became acutely felt. The situation became so bad that ox or horse transport had to be taken into use.

In addition to the shortage of vehicles there was the shortage of petrol. In 1940 eighty per cent of petrol consumption was civilian but in 1941 drastic economies were introduced. Civilian motor traffic was drastically curtailed, and a drive began to convert essential petrol-driven vehicles to wood or charcoal gas. Civilian consumption was cut from 6.3 million

barrels in 1940 to 1.5 million barrels in 1941 and by 1944 to about a quarter of a million, three per cent of the 1940 figure. Even including petrol used by the Services, consumption in 1944 was only 1.5 million barrels. By July 1945 even army vehicles had been converted from the use of petrol, of which stocks were negligible, to wood or charcoal gas.

After the middle of 1945 so serious was the shortage of transport that most of the formations allotted to the defence of Japan had ceased to be mobile.

## SECTION 7

### *Miscellaneous Minor Industries Affecting the Living Conditions of the Civilian Population*

Compared with the problems which the Japanese civilian had to face in 1944-45 because of the shortage of food and shelter,<sup>1</sup> the shortage of many less important items of civilian use was annoying but not vital, with the possible exception of medical supplies. Nevertheless, the general pattern (decline in supply and larger military consumption of the dwindling resources) meant that the civilian population had to use substitutes or do without. This tended to reduce their morale and their will to support the war effort.

**Matches.** Production fell from a peak of 526,701 match tons to 99,016 in 1945, a decline of eighty-two per cent.

**Electric Light Bulbs.** Output fell from 167 millions in 1940-41 to four millions in 1944-45, a decline of ninety-eight per cent.

**Candles.** Production fell from forty-three million pounds in 1940 to one million pounds in 1945.

**Household Fuel.** The consumption of hard coal in Japanese households was negligible, and the main types of fuel used were charcoal, firewood and rentan (a mixture of charcoal, coal and sawdust). The volume of charcoal consumed fell from two billion kilograms in 1940 to 0.7 billion in 1945. The consumption of rentan fell by sixty-five per cent over the period 1940-44, while coal consumed for civilian heating purposes (mainly in office buildings and hospitals) dropped by eighty per cent. As the supply of fuel and the means of delivering it fell, urban residents had to make time-consuming trips to the countryside to obtain firewood and charcoal, as well as food.

**Drugs.** The value of drugs consumed by the civilian population had declined by seventy per cent by 1944. Military consumption of drugs rose in the same period from twenty per cent of the total output to fifty per cent. The main difficulties faced by the pharmaceutical industry were the loss of foreign supplies of drugs, and the deterioration in the quality of the domestic production as control of quality was relaxed to permit production of more drugs from a diminishing supply of raw materials. A severe shortage of vaccines and serums developed, and this increased susceptibility to disease. Certain drugs which had always been imported could not be obtained at all. There was a general decline in health brought about by

<sup>1</sup> See Chapters X and XVI.



undernourishment, insufficient heating and inadequate clothing, and the latter stages of the war were marked by an increase in respiratory diseases.

**Glass.** This industry was largely converted to military purposes. The production of optical glass increased by 500 per cent between 1938 and 1944, but the amount of optical glass allotted to civilian use declined to four per cent of the output. Domestic production of window glass dropped by ninety-eight per cent between 1940 and 1945, while the production of glassware in 1945 was only four per cent of the 1937 output.

**Paper.** In 1939 one-third of Japan's paper and rayon pulp was imported from foreign countries, another third from Sakhalin, Korea and Formosa and the remainder mainly from Hokkaido. As shipping resources dwindled, pulp imports from abroad were stopped and those from the nearest areas sharply reduced. As a result paper production in 1944 was only thirty-seven per cent of its 1940 peak. The share consumed by the army rose from six per cent in 1940 to thirty-six per cent in 1944. These two factors caused the number of newspapers to be reduced from some 5,000 to seventy-five, size was reduced to four pages and circulation by a quarter. The production of wrapping, writing and toilet paper and paper screens fell by seventy-seven per cent between 1942 and 1944.

# APPENDIX 12

## Skeleton Order of Battle of the Japanese China Expeditionary Force

### April 1945

North China Area Army	Directly under area army	63rd Division 1st, 8th I.M.B.s 2nd Independent Infantry Brigade 3rd and 7th Independent Garrison Units
	1st Army	69th and 114th Divisions 3rd I.M.B. 10th and 14th Independent Infantry Brigades 5th Independent Garrison Unit
	12th Army	110th, 115th and 117th Divisions 3rd Armoured Division 4th Cavalry Brigade 92nd I.M.B. 6th, 13th, 14th and 16th Independent Garrison Units
	43rd Army	59th Division 5th and 9th I.M.B.s 1st Independent Infantry Brigade 9th, 11th and 12th Independent Garrison Units
	Mongolian Garrison Army	118th Division 2nd I.M.B. 4th Independent Garrison Unit
6th Area Army	Directly under area army	47th Division
	11th Army	3rd, 13th, 34th and 58th Divisions 22nd and 88th I.M.B.s
	20th Army	64th, 68th and 116th Divisions 81st, 82nd, 86th and 87th I.M.B.s 2nd Independent Garrison Unit
	34th Army	39th and 132nd Divisions 17th I.M.B. 5th, 7th, 11th and 12th Independent Infantry Brigades
	23rd Army	27th, 40th, 104th, 129th, 130th and 131st Divisions 19th and 23rd I.M.B.s 8th and 13th Independent Infantry Brigades Hong Kong Defence Force
	13th Army	60th, 61st, 65th, 70th, 133rd and 161st Divisions
	6th Army	62nd, 89th, 90th and 91st I.M.B.s 6th Independent Infantry Brigade 1st Independent Garrison Unit

*Notes:*

1. By mid-June 69th Division had been transferred from 1st Army to 13th Army, and 65th, 70th and 133rd Divisions had been transferred from 13th Army to 6th Area Army; see Appendix 10.

2. During June and July 59th, 63rd and 117th Divisions from North China Area Army and Headquarters 34th Army and 39th Division from 6th Area Army were transferred to Korea and Manchuria.

## APPENDIX 13

### Tonnages Delivered to China Theatre from India, August 1944—October 1945

#### A. By Air, Road and Pipeline <sup>1</sup>

<i>Month</i>	<i>By Air</i>	<i>By Road</i>	<i>P.O.L. by Pipeline</i>	<i>Total</i>
August 1944	29,092	—	—	29,092
September	29,625	—	—	29,625
October	35,131	—	—	35,131
November	39,004	—	—	39,004
December	34,777	—	—	34,777
January 1945	46,482	—	—	46,482
February	42,469	1,111	—	43,580
March	48,944	1,509	—	50,453
April	46,478	4,198	439	51,115
May	51,462	8,435	5,530	65,427
June	58,219	6,985	5,187	70,391
July	73,682	5,900	11,601	91,183
August	63,162	4,284	10,894	78,340
September	39,775	4,308	12,418	56,501
October	8,646	1,332	12,228	22,206

#### B. Vehicles Delivered to China Theatre along the Ledo Road February – October 1945

<i>Month</i>	<i>Vehicles</i>	<i>Trailers</i>
February 1945	1,333	609
March	1,152	745
April	2,342	1,185
May	4,682	1,103
June	4,901	964
July	4,745	828
August	2,652	647
September	3,060	408
October	916	50

<sup>1</sup>Figures in short tons (2,000 lb.).

# APPENDIX 14

## Incendiary Attacks on Japanese Secondary Cities and Towns, June—August 1945

Target	Date	Population	Square miles destroyed	Percentage of total area destroyed
Kagoshima . . .	17/6/45	190,250	2.11	44.1
Omura . . .	"	177,000	0.217	4.1
Hamamatsu . . .	"	165,000	2.44	70.0
Yokkaichi . . .	"	102,000	1.23	60.0
Toyohashi . . .	19/6/45	142,700	1.70	52.0
Fukuoka . . .	"	323,200	1.37	21.5
Shizuoka . . .	"	212,200	2.25	66.0
Okayama . . .	28/6/45	163,560	2.13	63.0
Sasebo . . .	"	206,000	0.97	48.0
Moji . . .	"	139,000	0.302	26.9
Nobeoka . . .	"	79,426	0.52	36.0
Kure . . .	1/7/45	277,000	1.30	40.0
Kumamoto . . .	"	211,000	1.00	20.0
Ube . . .	"	100,600	0.42	23.0
Shimonoseki . . .	"	196,600	0.51	36.0
Takamatsu . . .	3/7/45	111,200	1.40	78.0
Kochi . . .	"	106,650	0.92	48.0
Himeji . . .	"	104,250	1.216	63.3
Tokushima . . .	"	119,600	1.70	74.0
Chiba . . .	6/7/45	92,000	0.86	43.4
Akashi . . .	"	90,000	0.81	57.0
Shimizu . . .	"	68,600	0.71	50.0
Kofu . . .	"	102,400	1.30	65.0
Sendai . . .	9/7/45	233,630	1.22	27.0
Sakai (Osaka) . . .	"	182,150	1.02	44.0
Wakayama . . .	"	195,200	2.10	52.5
Gifu . . .	"	172,340	1.93	74.0
Utsunomiya . . .	12/7/45	87,868	0.94	34.2
Ichinomiya . . .	"	70,800	0.01	0.8
Tsuruga . . .	"	31,350	0.77	68.0
Uwajima . . .	"	52,100	0.14	14.0
Numazu . . .	16/7/45	53,165	1.40	89.5
Oita . . .	"	61,000	0.555	25.2
Kuwana . . .	"	41,850	0.63	77.0
Hiratsuka . . .	"	42,150	1.04	44.2
Fukui . . .	19/7/45	98,000	1.60	84.8
Hitachi . . .	"	82,700	0.88	64.5
Choshi . . .	"	61,200	0.38	33.8
Okazaki . . .	"	84,070	0.65	68.0
Matsuyama . . .	26/7/45	66,300	1.22	73.0
Tokoyama . . .	"	38,400	0.47	37.0

Target	Date	Population	Square miles destroyed	Percentage of total area destroyed
Omuta (2nd attack) .	26/7/45	177,000	2.05	38.0
Tsu . . . . .	28/7/45	68,625	0.84	57.0
Aomori . . . . .	"	100,000	1.06	64.0
Ichinomiya (2nd attack)	"	70,800	0.99	75.0
Uji Yamada . . . . .	"	52,555	0.36	39.0
Ogaki . . . . .	"	56,100	0.48	40.0
Uwajima . . . . .	"	52,100	0.53	52.0
Hachioji . . . . .	1/8/45	62,280	1.12	80.0
Toyama . . . . .	"	127,860	1.87	99.5
Nagaoka . . . . .	"	67,000	1.33	65.5
Mito . . . . .	"	66,300	1.70	65.0
Saga . . . . .	5/8/45	50,400	0.02	1.5
Macbashi . . . . .	"	87,000	1.00	42.5
Nishinomiya-Mikage (Kobe)	"	111,800	2.80	29.6
Imabari . . . . .	"	60,000	0.73	76.0
Yawata . . . . .	8/8/45	261,300	1.22	21.0
Fukuyama . . . . .	"	56,653	0.88	73.3
Kumagaya . . . . .	14/8/45	49,000	0.27	45.0
Isezaki . . . . .	"	40,000	0.166	17.0

*Summary :*

Number of cities attacked . . . . . 58  
 Area destroyed . . . . . 63.75 square miles  
 Average percentage of urban areas destroyed . . . 51 per cent

## APPENDIX 15

### The Potsdam Declaration, 26th July 1945

(1) We—the President of the United States, the President of the National Government of the Republic of China, and the Prime Minister of Great Britain, representing the hundreds of millions of our countrymen, have conferred and agree that Japan shall be given an opportunity to end this war.

(2) The prodigious land, sea and air forces of the United States, the British Empire and of China, many times reinforced by their armies and air fleets from the west, are poised to strike the final blows upon Japan. This military power is sustained and inspired by the determination of all the Allied Nations to prosecute the war against Japan until she ceases to resist.

(3) The result of the futile and senseless German resistance to the might of the aroused free peoples of the world stands forth in awful clarity as an example to the people of Japan. The might that now converges on Japan is immeasurably greater than that which, when applied to the resisting Nazis, necessarily laid waste to the lands, the industry and the method of life of the whole German people. The full application of our military power, backed by our resolve, *will* mean the inevitable and complete destruction of the Japanese armed forces and just as inevitably the utter devastation of the Japanese homeland.

(4) The time has come for Japan to decide whether she will continue to be controlled by those self-willed militaristic advisers whose unintelligent calculations have brought the Empire of Japan to the threshold of annihilation, or whether she will follow the path of reason.

(5) Following are our terms. We will not deviate from them. There are no alternatives. We shall brook no delay.

(6) There must be eliminated for all time the authority and influence of those who have deceived and misled the people of Japan into embarking on world conquest, for we insist that a new order of peace, security and justice will be impossible until irresponsible militarism is driven from the world.

(7) Until such a new order is established *and* until there is convincing proof that Japan's war-making power is destroyed, points in Japanese territory to be designated by the Allies shall be occupied to secure the achievement of the basic objectives we are here setting forth.

(8) The terms of the Cairo Declaration [<sup>1</sup>] shall be carried out and Japanese sovereignty shall be limited to the islands of Honshu, Hokkaido, Kyushu, Shikoku and such minor islands as we determine.

(9) The Japanese military forces, after being completely disarmed, shall be permitted to return to their homes with the opportunity to lead peaceful and productive lives.

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<sup>1</sup> See page 172.

(10) We do not intend that the Japanese shall be enslaved as a race or destroyed as a nation, but stern justice shall be meted out to all war criminals, including those who have visited cruelties upon our prisoners. The Japanese Government shall remove all obstacles to the revival and strengthening of democratic tendencies among the Japanese people. Freedom of speech, of religion, and of thought, as well as respect for the fundamental human rights shall be established.

(11) Japan shall be permitted to maintain such industries as will sustain her economy and permit the exaction of just reparations in kind, but not those which would enable her to re-arm for war. To this end, access to, as distinguished from control of, raw materials shall be permitted. Eventual Japanese participation in world trade relations shall be permitted.

(12) The occupying forces of the Allies shall be withdrawn from Japan as soon as these objectives have been accomplished and there has been established in accordance with the freely expressed will of the Japanese people a peacefully inclined and responsible government.

(13) We call upon the government of Japan to proclaim now the unconditional surrender of all Japanese armed forces, and to provide proper and adequate assurances of their good faith in such action. The alternative for Japan is prompt and utter destruction.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> U.S. Department of State, *Occupation of Japan*, Appendix 3.

## APPENDIX 16

### The Instrument of Surrender Signed at Tokyo on the 2nd September 1945

We, acting by command of and on behalf of the Emperor of Japan, the Japanese Government and the Japanese Imperial General Headquarters, hereby accept the provisions set forth in the declaration issued by the Heads of the Governments of the United States, China and Great Britain on 26 July 1945, at Potsdam, and subsequently adhered to by the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, which four powers are hereafter referred to as the Allied Powers.

We hereby proclaim the unconditional surrender to the Allied Powers of the Japanese Imperial General Headquarters and of all Japanese armed forces and all armed forces under Japanese control wherever situated.

We hereby command all Japanese forces wherever situated and the Japanese people to cease hostilities forthwith, to preserve and save from damage all ships, aircraft, and military and civil property and to comply with all requirements which may be imposed by the Supreme Commander for the Allied Powers or by agencies of the Japanese Government at his directions.

We hereby command the Japanese Imperial General Headquarters to issue at once orders to the Commanders of all Japanese forces and all forces under Japanese control wherever situated to surrender unconditionally themselves and all forces under their control.

We hereby command all civil, military and naval officials to obey and enforce all proclamations, orders and directives deemed by the Supreme Commander for the Allied Powers to be proper to effectuate this surrender and issued by him or under his authority and we direct all such officials to remain at their posts and to continue to perform their non-combatant duties unless specifically relieved by him or under his authority.

We hereby undertake for the Emperor, the Japanese Government and their successors to carry out the provisions of the Potsdam Declaration in good faith, and to issue whatever orders and take whatever action may be required by the Supreme Commander for the Allied Powers or by any other designated representative of the Allied Powers for the purpose of giving effect to that Declaration.

We hereby command the Japanese Imperial Government and the Japanese Imperial General Headquarters at once to liberate all allied prisoners of war and civilian internees now under Japanese control and to provide for their protection, care, maintenance and immediate transportation to places as directed.

The authority of the Emperor and the Japanese Government to rule the state shall be subject to the Supreme Commander for the Allied Powers



who will take such steps as he deems proper to effectuate these terms of surrender.

Signed at Tokyo Bay, Japan, on the second day of September, 1945.

[Here follow the signatures of the Japanese representatives.]

Accepted . . . for the United States, Republic of China, United Kingdom, and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, and in the interests of the other United Nations at war with Japan.

[Here follow the signatures of the Supreme Commander for the Allied Powers and of representatives of the United Nations.]<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> U.S. Department of State, *Occupation of Japan*, Appendix 8.

## APPENDIX 17

### The Imperial Rescript Issued by the Japanese Emperor after the Signature of the Instrument of Surrender

Accepting the terms set forth in the Declaration issued by the heads of the Governments of the United States, Great Britain and China on July 26th, 1945 at Potsdam and subsequently adhered to by the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, We have commanded the Japanese Imperial Government and the Japanese Imperial General Headquarters to sign on Our behalf the Instrument of Surrender presented by the Supreme Commander for the Allied Powers and to issue General Orders to the Military and Naval Forces in accordance with the direction of the Supreme Commander for the Allied Powers. We command all Our people forthwith to cease hostilities, to lay down their arms and faithfully to carry out all the provisions of the Instrument of Surrender and the General Orders Issued by the Japanese Imperial Government and the Japanese Imperial General Headquarters hereunder.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> U.S. Department of State, *Occupation of Japan*, Appendix 9.

## APPENDIX 18

### General Order No. 1 to General D. MacArthur 15th August 1945

(Issued by the President of the United States of America  
on behalf of the Allied Powers)

1. The Japanese Imperial General Headquarters by direction of the Emperor and pursuant to the surrender to the Supreme Commander for the Allied Powers of all Japanese armed forces by the Emperor, hereby orders all of its Commanders in Japan and abroad to cause the Japanese armed forces under their command to cease hostilities at once, to lay down their arms, to remain in their present locations and to surrender unconditionally to Commanders acting on behalf of the United States, the Republic of China, the United Kingdom and the British Empire and the Union of Socialist Soviet Republics, as indicated hereafter or as may be further directed by the Supreme Commander for the Allied Powers. Immediate contact will be made with indicated Commanders or their designated representatives, subject to any change in detail prescribed by the Supreme Commander for the Allied Powers, and their instructions will be completely and immediately carried out.

(a) The senior Japanese Commander and all ground, sea, air and auxiliary forces within China (excluding Manchuria), Formosa and French Indo-China north of 16 degrees north latitude shall surrender to Generalissimo Chiang Kai-shek.

(b) The senior Japanese Commander and all ground, sea, air and auxiliary forces within Manchuria, Korea north of 38 degrees north latitude and Karafuto shall surrender to the Commander-in-Chief of the Soviet Union forces in the Far East.

(c) The senior Japanese Commander and all ground, sea, air and auxiliary forces within the Andamans, the Nicobars, Burma, Thailand (Siam), French Indo-China south of 16 degrees north latitude, Malaya, Borneo, the Netherlands Indies, New Guinea, the Bismarcks and the Solomon Islands shall surrender to the Supreme Allied Commander, South-East Asia Command, or Commanding General, Australian Forces,—the exact breakdown between Mountbatten and Australia to be arranged between them. Details of this paragraph will then be prepared by the Supreme Commander for the Allied Powers.

(d) The senior Japanese Commander and all ground, sea, air and auxiliary forces in the Japanese mandated islands, the Ryukyu Islands, the Bonins and other Pacific Islands shall surrender to the Commander-in-Chief, United States Pacific Fleet.

(e) The Japanese Imperial General Headquarters, its Senior Commanders and all ground, sea, air and auxiliary forces in the main islands of Japan, the minor islands adjacent thereto, Korea south of 38 degrees north latitude and the Philippine Islands shall surrender to the Commander-in-Chief, United States Army Forces in the Pacific.

(f) The above indicated Commanders are the only representatives of the Allied Powers empowered to accept surrenders and all surrenders of Japanese forces shall be made only to them or to their representatives.

The Japanese Imperial General Headquarters further orders its Commanders in Japan and abroad to disarm completely all forces of Japan or under Japanese control wherever they may be situated and to deliver intact and in safe and good condition all weapons and equipment at such time and at such place as may be prescribed by the Allied Commanders indicated above. (Pending further instructions the Japanese Police force in the main island of Japan will be exempt from this disarmament provisionally. The police force will remain at their posts and shall be held responsible for the preservation of law and order. The strength and arms of such a police force will be prescribed.)

2. The Japanese Imperial General Headquarters shall furnish to the Supreme Commander for the Allied Powers within (time limit) of receipt of this order complete information with respect to Japan and all areas under Japanese control as follows:

- (a) Lists of all land, air and anti-aircraft units showing locations and strengths in officers and men.
- (b) Lists of all aircraft, military, naval and civil, giving complete information as to the number, type, location and condition of such aircraft.
- (c) Lists of all Japanese and Japanese-controlled naval vessels, surface and submarine and auxiliary naval craft, in or out of commission, and under construction, giving their position, condition and movements.
- (d) Lists of all Japanese and Japanese-controlled merchant ships of over 100 gross tons, in or out of commission, and under construction, including merchant ships formerly belonging to any of the United Nations which are now in Japanese hands, giving their position, condition and movement.
- (e) Complete and detailed information, accompanied by maps, showing locations and layouts of all mines, minefields, and other obstacles to movements by land, sea or air, and safety lanes in connection therewith.
- (f) Locations and descriptions of all military installations and establishments, including airfields, seaplane bases, anti-aircraft defences, ports and naval jiggers, storage depots, M.R.P.T. [sic] depots, permanent and temporary land and coast fortifications, fortresses and other fortified areas.
- (g) Location of all camps and other places of detention of United Nations P.O.W. and civilian internees.

3. Japanese armed forces and civil aviation authorities will ensure that all Japanese military, naval and civil aircraft remain on the ground, on the water or aboard ships until further notification of the disposition to be made of them.
4. Japanese or Japanese-controlled naval or merchant vessels of all types will be maintained without damage and will undertake no movements pending instructions from the Supreme Commander for the Allied Powers. Vessels at sea will immediately render harmless and throw overboard explosives of all types. Vessels not at sea will immediately remove explosives of all types to safe storage ashore.
5. All Japanese or Japanese-controlled military or civil authorities will ensure that:
  - (a) All Japanese mines, minefields and other obstacles to movements by land, sea and air, wherever located, be removed according to the instructions of the Supreme Commander for the Allied Powers.
  - (b) All aids to navigation be re-established at once.
  - (c) All safety lanes be kept open and clearly marked pending accomplishment of (a) above.
6. Responsible Japanese and Japanese-controlled military and civil authorities will hold intact and in good condition pending further instructions from the Supreme Commander for the Allied Powers the following:
  - (a) All arms, ammunition, explosives, military equipment, stores and supplies and other implements of war of all kinds and all other war materials (except as specifically prescribed in Section 4 of this order).
  - (b) All land, water and air transportation and communication facilities and equipment.
  - (c) All military installations and establishments, including airfields, seaplane bases, anti-aircraft defences, ports and naval bases, storage depots, permanent and temporary land and coast fortifications, fortresses and other fortified areas together with plans and drawings of all such fortifications, installations and establishments.
  - (d) All factories, steel plants, shops, research institutions, laboratories, testing stations, technical data, patents, plans, drawings and inventions designed or of local produce or to facilitate the production or use of all implements of war and other material, and property used by or intended for use by any military or para-military organisation in connection with its operations.
7. The Japanese Imperial General Headquarters shall furnish to the Supreme Commander for the Allied Powers, within (time limit) of receipt of this order, complete lists of all the items specified in paragraphs (a), (b) and (d) of Section 6 above, indicating the number, type and locations of each.
8. The manufacture and distribution of all arms, ammunition and implements of war will cease forthwith.
9. With respect to United Nations P.O.W. and civilian internees in the hands of Japanese or Japanese-controlled authorities:
  - (a) The safety and well-being of all United Nations P.O.W. and civilian internees will be scrupulously preserved, to include the administrative and supply service essential to provide adequate food,

shelter, clothes and medical care until such responsibility is undertaken by the Supreme Commander for the Allied Powers.

(b) Each camp or other place of detention of United Nations P.O.W. and civilian internees, together with its equipment, stores, base records, arms and ammunition will be delivered immediately to the command of the senior officer or the designated representative of P.O.W. and civilian internees.

(c) As directed by the Supreme Commander for the Allied Powers, P.O.W. and civilian internees will be transported to places of safety where they can be accepted by the Allied authorities.

(d) The Japanese Imperial General Headquarters will furnish to the Supreme Commander for the Allied Powers, within (time limit) of receipt of this order, complete lists of all United Nations P.O.W. and civilian internees, including their locations.

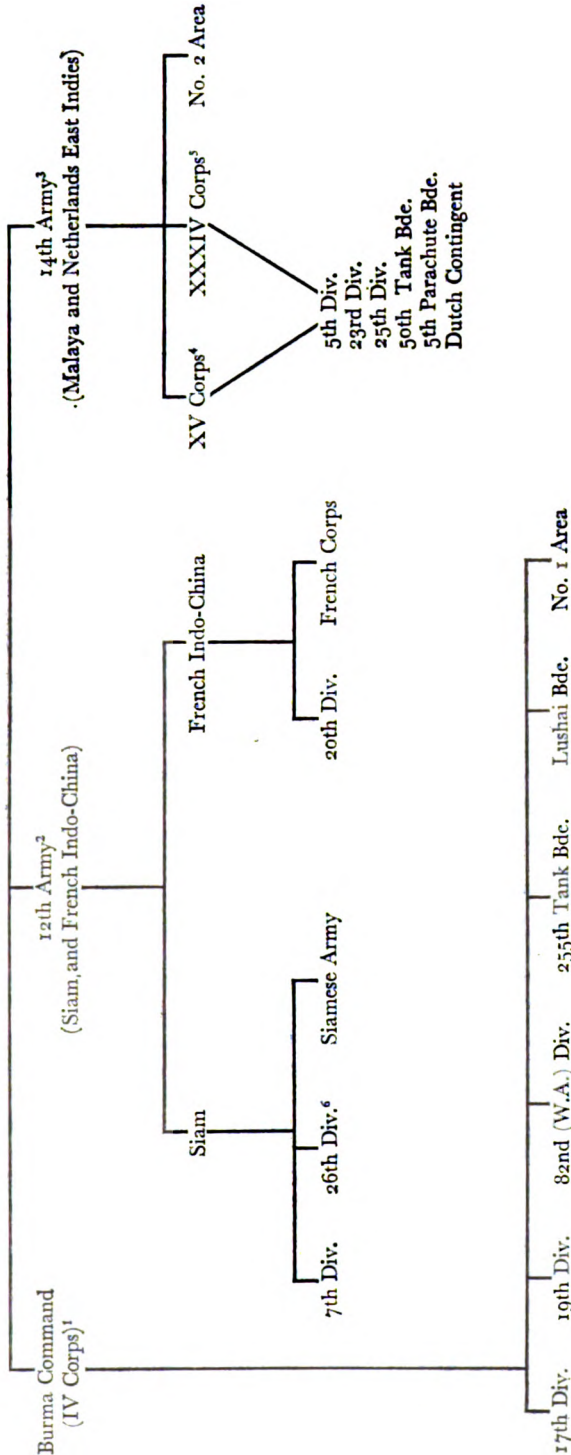
10. All Japanese and Japanese-controlled Military and civilian authorities shall aid and assist the occupation of Japan and Japanese-controlled areas by the forces of the Allied Powers.

11. The Japanese Imperial General Headquarters and appropriate Japanese officials shall be prepared, on instructions from the Allied occupational Combat Commanders, to collect and deliver all arms in possession of the Japanese civilian population.

12. This and all subsequent instructions issued by the Commander for the Allied Forces or other Allied Military Authorities will be scrupulously and promptly obeyed by Japanese and Japanese-controlled military and civil officials and private persons. Any delay or failure to comply with the provision of this or subsequent orders, and any action which the Supreme Commander for the Allied Powers determines to be detrimental to the Allied Powers, will incur drastic and summary punishment at the hands of the Allied Military Authorities and the Japanese Government.

## Appendix 19

## Proposed Deployment of A.L.F.S.E.A., September 1945



Notes: <sup>1</sup> IV Corps closed on the 1st October and began disbandment.

<sup>2</sup> 12th Army became Burma Command on the 1st November.

<sup>3</sup> 14th Army became Malaya Command on the 1st November.

<sup>4</sup> XV Corps H.Q. became Netherlands East Indies Command on the 1st October.

<sup>5</sup> XXXIV Corps closed on the 1st November and began disbandment.

<sup>6</sup> 26th Division did not go to Siam but sailed in the first week of October from Madras to Sumatra.

The dates given are the actual dates formations began or ceased to function. Disbanding H.Q.s existed on paper until later dates to allow for disposal of equipment and posting of officers.

## APPENDIX 20

### The Instrument of Surrender of Japanese Forces under the Command or Control of the Supreme Commander, Japanese Expeditionary Forces, Southern Region, Within the Operational Theatre of the Supreme Allied Commander, South-East Asia, Signed at Singapore on the 12th September 1945

1. In pursuance of and in compliance with:

(a) The Instrument of Surrender signed by the Japanese plenipotentiaries by command and on behalf of the Emperor of Japan, the Japanese Government, and the Japanese Imperial General Headquarters at Tokyo on 2nd September, 1945;

(b) General Order No. 1, promulgated at the same place and on the same date;

(c) The Local Agreement made by the Supreme Commander, Japanese Expeditionary Forces, Southern Regions, with the Supreme Allied Commander, South-East Asia at Rangoon on 27th August, 1945;

to all of which Instrument of Surrender, General Order and Local Agreement this present Instrument is complementary and which it in no way supersedes, the Supreme Commander, Japanese Expeditionary Forces, Southern Regions (Field-Marshal Count Terauchi) does hereby surrender unconditionally to the Supreme Allied Commander, South-East Asia (Admiral the Lord Louis Mountbatten) himself and all Japanese sea, ground, air and auxiliary forces under his command or control and within the operational theatre of the Supreme Allied Commander, South-East Asia.

2. The Supreme Commander, Japanese Expeditionary Forces, Southern Regions, undertakes to ensure that all orders and instructions that may be issued from time to time by the Supreme Allied Commander, South-East Asia, or by any of his subordinate Naval, Military or Air Force Commanders of whatever rank acting in his name, are scrupulously and promptly obeyed by all Japanese sea, ground, air and auxiliary forces under the command or control of the Supreme Commander, Japanese Expeditionary Forces, Southern Regions, and within the operational theatre of the Supreme Allied Commander, South-East Asia.

3. Any disobedience of, or delay or failure to comply with, orders or instructions issued by the Supreme Allied Commander, South-East Asia, or issued on his behalf by any of his subordinate Naval, Military or Air Force Commanders of whatever rank, and any action which the Supreme



Allied Commander, South-East Asia, or his subordinate Commanders, acting on his behalf, may determine to be detrimental to the Allied Powers, will be dealt with as the Supreme Allied Commander, South-East Asia, may decide.

4. This Instrument takes effect from the time and date of signing.

5. This Instrument is drawn up in the English language, which is the only authentic version. In any case of doubt as to intention or meaning, the decision of the Supreme Allied Commander, South-East Asia, is final. It is the responsibility of the Supreme Commander, Japanese Expeditionary Forces, Southern Regions, to make such translation into Japanese as he may require.

Signed at Singapore at 0341 hours (G.M.T.) on 12th September 1945.

(Sd.) SEISHIRO ITAGAKI

for *Supreme Commander,*

*Japanese Expeditionary Forces,*

*Southern Regions.*

Field-Marshal Count Terauchi's Seal.

(Sd.) LOUIS MOUNTBATTEN

*Supreme Allied Commander,*

*South-East Asia.*

## APPENDIX 21

### Outline Order of Battle R.A.F., Malaya, 1st October 1945

*Air Vice-Marshal The Earl of Bandon*

902 Wing:	Tengah	152 (F.) Squadron	Spitfire
		155 (F.) Squadron	Spitfire
903 Wing:	Kallang	31 (Tpt.) Squadron	Dakota
905 Wing:	Kuala Lumpur	60 (F.B.) Squadron	Thunderbolt
		81 (F.B.) Squadron	Thunderbolt
		131 (F.B.) Squadron	Thunderbolt
		258 (F.B.) Squadron	Thunderbolt
		656 (Air O.P.) Squadron	Auster
Station H.Q.: Seletar		11 (F.R.) Squadron	Spitfire
		17 (F.) Squadron	Spitfire
		84 (L.B.) Squadron	Mosquito
		89 (N.F.) Squadron	Mosquito
		110 (L.B.) Squadron	Mosquito
		205 (Fg.Bt.) Squadron (detachment)	Sunderland
185 Wing:	Penang	230 (Fg.Bt.) Squadron (detachment)	Sunderland
		27 (A.J.R.) Squadron (detachment)	Beaufighter

Abbreviations: F.—Fighter; N.F.—Night Fighter; F.B.—Fighter-Bomber; F.R.—Fighter-Reconnaissance; Fg. Bt.—Flying-Boat; L.B.—Light Bomber; Tpt.—Transport; Air O.P.—Air Observation Post; A.J.R.—Air Jungle Rescue.



APPENDIX 23

Outline Order of Battle  
R.A.F., Netherlands East Indies  
31st December 1945  
*Air Commodore C. A. Stevens*

904 Wing:	Batavia	60 (F.B.) Squadron	Thunderbolt
		81 (F.B.) Squadron	Thunderbolt
		47 (L.B.) Squadron (detachment)	Mosquito
		84 (L.B.) Squadron	Mosquito
		110 (L.B.) Squadron (detachment)	Mosquito
		681 (P.R.) Squadron (detachment)	Spitfire
		155 (F.) Squadron	Spitfire
		31 (Tpt.) Squadron	Dakota
		656 (Air O.P.) Squadron	Auster

*Note:*

1. Air Headquarters R.A.F. was located at Batavia alongside Headquarters Allied Land Forces, Netherlands East Indies.
2. R.A.F. squadrons operated as required for various periods from airfields in Java and Sumatra.
3. Abbreviations: F.B.—Fighter-Bomber; L.B.—Light Bomber; P.R.—Photographic Reconnaissance; F.—Fighter; Tpt.—Transport; Air O.P.—Air Observation Post.

## APPENDIX 24

### Text of H.M. Queen Wilhelmina's Radio Proclamation of the 6th December, 1942 Outlining Plans for the Creation of a Commonwealth of the Netherlands, Indonesia, Surinam and Caracao

A political unity which rests on this foundation moves far towards a realization of the purpose for which the United Nations are fighting, as it has been embodied, for instance, in the Atlantic Charter, and with which we could instantly agree, because it contains our own conception of freedom and justice for which we have sacrificed blood and possessions in the course of our history.

I visualize, without anticipating the recommendations of the future conference, that they will be directed towards a commonwealth in which the Netherlands, Indonesia, Surinam and Caracao will participate, with complete self-reliance and freedom of conduct for each part regarding its internal affairs, but with the readiness to render mutual assistance.

It is my opinion that such a combination of independence and collaboration can give the Kingdom and its parts the strength to carry fully their responsibility, both internally and externally. This would leave no room for discrimination according to race or nationality; only the ability of the individual citizens and the needs of the various groups of the population will determine the policy of the government.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Netherlands Indies Government Information Service, *The Indonesian Problem: Facts and Factors* (Batavia, 1947).

## APPENDIX 25

### Location of Formations and Moves Ordered by A.L.F.S.E.A. on the 8th and 9th December 1945 to Implement S.E.A.C. Policy for Occupation Areas

(a) Location of formations already in position and required to remain in them pending further orders:

5th Indian Division	Java	
23rd Indian Division	Java	
26th Indian Division	Sumatra	(less one brigade in Java)
25th Indian Division	Malaya	
17th Indian Division	Burma	} Pending amalgamation and reduction to one division Pending repatriation
19th Indian Division	Burma	
82nd (W.A.) Division	Burma	
1st Indian Armoured Brigade	Burma	
Lushai Brigade	Burma	
50th Indian Armoured Brigade	Malaya/Java	
3 Commando Brigade	Hong Kong	

(b) Moves ordered on the 8th/9th December 1945:

2nd Division: Headquarters and 6th Brigade to move from India to Malaya about the 13th December 1945; 5th Brigade to remain in India for eventual move to Japan; 4th Brigade and 2nd Reconnaissance Regiment to remain in Malaya.

5th Parachute Brigade: to move to Java (Batavia) on relief in Malaya by a brigade of 2nd Division.

7th Indian Division: Headquarters and two brigades to move from Siam to Malaya from the 12th to 27th December 1945; one brigade group of five battalions to remain in Siam.

20th Indian Division: Headquarters and 100th Brigade to move from French Indo-China to Malaya not before late January 1946;<sup>1</sup> 32nd and 80th Brigades to move to British North Borneo and Celebes to relieve Australians.

150th Indian Brigade: to move from India to Hong Kong from the 14th to 17th December 1945.

16th Cavalry: to move from French Indo-China to Malaya (less one squadron, which rejoined the regiment in Malaya in February 1946).

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<sup>1</sup> In January 1946 their destination was changed to India.

## APPENDIX 26

### Skeleton Order of Battle Dutch Troops in the Netherlands East Indies July 1946

HEADQUARTERS: BATAVIA

(Lieut.-General S. H. Spoor)

#### JAVA

Area	Formations	Remarks
Batavia	H.Q. 'B' Division 'U', 'V', 'W' Brigade Groups	Each of four European battalions, less one battalion of 'W' Group in the Outer Islands.
Sourabaya	H.Q. 'A' Division 'X' Brigade Group Marine Brigade	Four European battalions Three European battalions.
Semarang	'T' Brigade Group (under 'A' Division)	Four European battalions.
Lombok & Bali	Two European battalions	Former prisoners-of-war raised in Siam.

#### SUMATRA<sup>1</sup>

Sabang Island	One European company	From a battalion in Singapore.
Bangka Island	One European battalion	From 'T' Group which had five battalions.
Billiton Island	One European company	From a battalion in Singapore.

#### THE OUTER ISLANDS

Four European battalions One Papuan battalion Five European companies Thirty-five Indonesian companies.	One from 'W' Group, Batavia.
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<sup>1</sup> There were no Dutch troops on the mainland of Sumatra until the arrival of 'C' Division from Holland in October/November 1946.

## APPENDIX 27

### The Repatriation of Japanese Surrendered Personnel in South-East Asia

When Japan surrendered on the 15th August 1945 there were over five million Japanese, Formosan and Korean service men and civilians outside Japan, who became known as Japanese surrendered personnel (J.S.P.). Of this number about 740,000 (comprising 633,000 Japanese service personnel, 93,000 civilians and some 14,000 Formosan and Korean troops) were located in the enlarged S.E.A.C. Theatre.

When hostilities ended the Supreme Commander, South-East Asia (Mountbatten) became responsible to the Supreme Commander for the Allied Powers (MacArthur) for the disarming, concentration and eventual repatriation of these 740,000 J.S.P. in S.E.A.C., as well as for some 20,000 J.S.P. in Hong Kong.

As soon as each territory was occupied British and Australian forces began to disarm the Japanese forces, but complete disarmament was not at first carried out in southern Indo-China, Siam (on the Burma-Siam railway), Java and Sumatra when it was found necessary to use Japanese troops to preserve law and order, and to prevent local political organizations from looting arms and ammunition from military installations. There was also some difficulty in Java in contacting and controlling Japanese military units in the interior because of lack of communications and the fact that some Japanese were pro-Indonesian.<sup>1</sup>

As soon as disarmament had been carried out and the need to use Japanese troops to maintain law and order diminished, all J.S.P. were concentrated in convenient areas in preparation for their eventual repatriation, the areas selected being as far as possible within easy reach of ports. In Burma all J.S.P. were concentrated in the Moulmein area of Tenasserim. Since it was politically inadvisable for J.S.P. to remain in the Andaman Islands, Nicobar Islands and Malaya (except for those retained as labour), concentration areas were prepared on Rempang Island (and later on the neighbouring Kallang Island) in the Rhio Archipelago, to which all J.S.P. in these areas (except again those retained for labour) were moved in the autumn of 1945.<sup>2</sup> J.S.P. in Siam and southern French Indo-China were concentrated by December 1945 in suitable areas convenient for the ports of Bangkok and Saigon,<sup>3</sup> and those in Java and Sumatra, Bali, Lombok and Madura were moved, as it became possible and convenient, to Rempang and Kallang Islands during 1946.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> On the 1st May 1946 some 25,500 Japanese troops were in Indonesian hands in central and east Java, and of these about 15,000 were believed to be disarmed. There were some 10,300 armed Japanese troops in west Java and about 28,100 in Sumatra carrying out duties under orders of A.F.N.E.I. Another 1,600 were guarding dumps in other parts of S.E.A.C.

<sup>2</sup> See Chapter XXV.

<sup>3</sup> See Chapter XXVII.

<sup>4</sup> See Chapters XXVIII—XXX.



By October 1945 the Australians had concentrated the J.S.P. in Borneo at Kuching, Jesselton and Balikpapan, those in Celebes at Makassar and Menado and those in Dutch New Guinea at Manokwari and Sarong.

In mid-September 1945 the American Chiefs of Staff ruled that all merchant shipping recovered from the control of the Japanese was to be used for the repatriation of Japanese nationals and for the maintenance of a minimum Japanese economy. MacArthur was therefore instructed to take control of all recovered merchant ships and arrange that the Japanese Government manned and operated them.

The tonnage of Japanese merchant shipping recovered was comparatively small and quite insufficient for the tasks required of it. It was found that of the 23,000 tons of shipping allotted to S.E.A.C. only 14,800 tons were suitable for an ocean voyage to Japan, the remainder being fit for only coastal traffic. It was estimated that with this shipping it would take about five years to repatriate all J.S.P. from S.E.A.C., but MacArthur later allotted an additional 9,000 tons of ocean-going shipping which would reduce the period of repatriation from five to some three years, provided that this tonnage was made available by February 1946.

At the end of December 1945 Mountbatten told the Chiefs of Staff of the position and pointed out that political, economic and military repercussions of retaining large numbers of J.S.P. in S.E.A.C. for a long period were considerable. He therefore suggested that the provision of shipping for repatriation purposes should be accepted as a United Nations commitment in the global allocation of shipping. He then decided to begin the repatriation of J.S.P. in February 1946 with such shipping as he had at his disposal, since by that date their concentration (except for those in the Netherlands East Indies) would have been completed.

Early in January 1946 it was learned that the United States had made 100 Liberty ships (manned by Japanese) available for the repatriation of overseas Japanese. These ships were to be used for long hauls, while smaller ships were to be used for the shorter hauls such as from north China and Korea. By this means it was expected that the repatriation of J.S.P. in the American area of responsibility would be completed in August 1946. Since it was politically, financially and economically impossible to retain large numbers of J.S.P. in S.E.A.C. for a period of at least three years, the Chiefs of Staff approached MacArthur through the British Staff Section in Tokyo to obtain further assistance in shipping to repatriate the J.S.P. from S.E.A.C. MacArthur agreed that the long period for repatriation from S.E.A.C. was unacceptable but, since he could give no more assistance, he suggested that the British Government should provide S.E.A.C. with a lift of 26,000 tons of shipping of sufficient endurance to reach Japan. In this way the period of repatriation would be reduced to one and a half years. Since the shortage of British shipping made this allotment impossible, the Chiefs of Staff instructed the British Joint Staff Mission in Washington on the 28th February to ask the American Chief of Staff to provide a further 65 Liberty ships to be crewed by British and Dutch seamen and paid for by Japan.

After considerable discussions the American Chiefs of Staff agreed in mid-April that the aim should be to clear all J.S.P. from S.E.A.C. and

Australia Command by the end of 1946. To make this possible MacArthur was to make available some of the Liberty ships then being used for repatriation from China and organize the repatriation from S.E.A.C. and Australia Command. The American War Department would meet the operating costs up to the 30th June 1946, provided that Britain fuelled and victualled the ships for each round voyage, but after that date any Liberty ships required would have to be hired at the rate of 240 dollars a day. This offer was gratefully accepted.

In accordance with this ruling MacArthur organized three lifts for S.E.A.C.: the first from the 15th April to the 15th May to carry 319,000 J.S.P., the second from the 15th May to the 30th June to carry 120,000, and the third from the 15th June to the 15th August to carry 136,000, making a total of 575,000. The number of J.S.P. still to be repatriated from S.E.A.C. on the 13th April was 688,738 but, since the Chiefs of Staff had agreed to 103,000 being retained as labour in Burma, Malaya, Siam and the Netherlands East Indies, the lift was sufficient to complete the evacuation, making allowance for those imprisoned for indiscipline or war crimes and for deaths and desertions. By late August 1946, when the shipping provided by MacArthur was withdrawn, all had been repatriated except for those retained for labour, 11,000 in Sumatra and some 3,000 sick for whom hospital ships would be required. Those who remained in Sumatra were repatriated from September to November 1946.

On the 1st December 1946, when S.E.A.C. was abolished, there were still 98,000 Japanese retained for labour, including 13,500 in the Netherlands East Indies for whom the Dutch authorities had accepted full responsibility. There were some 3,700 suspected war criminals, of whom some 2,700 were shortly to be released and 1,000 had still to be tried.

The Japanese retained for labour were repatriated in monthly lifts from June to December 1947, thus completing the evacuation of all J.S.P. from South-East Asia with the exception of a number of suspected or convicted war criminals.

APPENDIX 28  
Chronological Table, 1940—1945

Year and Month	Western Theatre of War	Far East
1940 April	Germany invades Denmark and Norway.	
May	Germany invades Holland, Belgium and France. Mr. Churchill becomes Prime Minister. Evacuation of British Expeditionary Force from Dunkirk begins.	
June	Norwegian campaign ends. Italy declares war on Britain and France. France capitulates.	
July	Battle of Britain begins.	Burma Road closed for three months.
August		British troops withdrawn from Shanghai and Tientsin.
September		Japanese troops occupy northern Indo-China. Japan signs Tripartite Pact with Germany and Italy.

Year and Month	Western Theatre of War	Far East
1940 October	Italy invades Greece.	Commanders of three Services submit joint tactical appreciation on defence of Malaya. H.Q. 11th Indian Division and 6th Indian Brigade Group arrive in Malaya. Defence Conference held at Singapore attended by Commonwealth representatives and an American observer. Sir Robert Brooke-Popham appointed Commander-in-Chief, Far East, with Headquarters at Singapore.
November		Sir Robert Brooke-Popham and staff arrive at Singapore.
December	Wavell launches offensive in Western Desert. Italian armies routed.	
1941 January	Bardia and Tobruk captured by Middle East forces.	Japan begins mediation in Siam/Indo-China dispute. Chiefs of Staff agree that garrison for Malaya should be 26 battalions (including 3 for Borneo) and 336 first line aircraft. Five fighter squadrons to be formed in 1941. The Prime Minister objects to diversion of forces to the Far East.
February	German troops arrive in North Africa.	Anglo-Dutch-Australian Defence Conference at Singapore. Headquarters and one brigade of 8th Australian Division arrive at Singapore.

Year and Month	Western Theatre of War	Far East
1941 March	Lend-Lease Bill signed by President of United States. Naval battle of Cape Matapan. Germans launch first counter-offensive in North Africa.	H.Q. 9th Indian Division with 15th and 22nd Brigades (but without artillery) arrive at Singapore. Secret discussions by British and American staffs produce joint basic plan (A.B.C.1) in the event of war by both Powers with Germany, Italy and Japan.
April	Germany invades Greece and Yugoslavia. Germans in North Africa reach Tobruk which is besieged. Yugoslavia capitulates. Greek Government asks Britain to withdraw forces from Greece. Iraqi revolt.	Japan signs Neutrality Pact with Russia. American, Dutch and British Defence Conference held at Singapore (recommendations not accepted by United States). Japan decides to extend her control over Southern Region without resort to arms, unless her existence threatened by trade embargoes or encirclement, and to open discussions in Washington to find a peaceful solution to the Pacific.
May	Iraqi forces attack on R.A.F. airfield at Habbaniya repulsed. Basra occupied by Indian troops. Evacuation of British troops from Greece completed. Germany invades Crete. Iraqi revolt collapses.	Peace Treaty between Siam and Indo-China signed in Tokyo. Lt-General A. E. Percival assumes command as G.O.C. Malaya.
June	British forces withdraw from Crete. British and Free French forces enter Syria. Germany invades Russia. Sir Stafford Cripps and Military Mission go to Moscow.	Japanese efforts to persuade Netherlands East Indies to increase supplies of oil and to give concessions fail. Japanese mission withdrawn. United States announce controls over oil exports. Japan decides not, for the time being, to join with Germany in an attack on Russia, but to adhere to Tripartite Pact.

Year and Month	Western Theatre of War	Far East
1941 July	Armistice signed in Syria.	<p>Japan decides to establish a Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere regardless of international developments.</p> <p>Japan begins to place nation on war footing.</p> <p>Japanese Government resigns. Prince Konoye forms new Cabinet with Admiral Toyoda replacing Mr. Matsuoka as Minister for Foreign Affairs.</p> <p>Japanese troops occupy southern French Indo-China.</p> <p>United States, Britain and the Netherlands freeze all Japanese assets, thus bringing all trade with Japan to an end.</p>
August	The Prime Minister and the President meet and confer at Newfoundland rendezvous. Atlantic Charter agreed. British and Russian troops enter Persia. Hostilities cease on 29th.	<p>President unable to announce American support of Britain in event of war in Far East with Japan.</p> <p>Percival, supported by C.-in-C. Far East, demands increased garrison for Malaya and for seizure of Singora in Siam.</p> <p>The President warns Japan.</p> <p>Konoye proposes a meeting with the President.</p>
September	Despatch of Beaverbrook Mission to Moscow to discuss aid for Russia.	<p>Prime Minister's desire to send small fast naval squadron to Singapore opposed by Admiralty and dropped.</p> <p>President declines meeting with Konoye pending satisfactory preliminary discussions.</p> <p>Japan decides to complete military preparations for war by end of October, to endeavour by diplomatic efforts to persuade U.S.A. to agree to her minimum demands and, if no reasonable hope of their being met by early October, to take the decision to go to war at the appropriate moment.</p> <p>27th Australian Brigade Group and 22nd Indian Brigade Group arrive at Singapore.</p> <p>Mr. Duff Cooper arrives at Singapore and holds conference.</p>

Year and Month	Western Theatre of War	Eastern Theatre of War
1941 October	<p>Statement as result of Beaverbrook Mission that Russia should be provided with almost all her huge demands for war material.</p> <p>Several convoys carry large quantities of tanks and aircraft to Russia.</p> <p>Moscow under siege.</p>	<p>Canadian Government agree to British request to send two battalions to reinforce Hong Kong.</p> <p>Konoye Cabinet falls. General Tojo forms new cabinet.</p> <p>The Prime Minister sends the <i>Prince of Wales</i> and <i>Repulse</i> to Singapore.</p>
November	<p>British launch an offensive in Western Desert ('Crusader').</p> <p>General Sir Alan Brooke succeeds General Sir John Dill as C.I.G.S.</p> <p>The <i>Ark Royal</i> (carrier) and <i>Barham</i> sunk in Mediterranean.</p> <p>Russia begins a counter-offensive.</p>	<p>Three artillery regiments and an anti-tank regiment from Britain arrive at Singapore.</p> <p>Japanese Government decide that all military forces should be ready for war by 1st December and that, should no accord have been reached with the United States by 25th November, a decision to go to war would be taken.</p> <p>Plans A and B submitted to the United States. U.S.A. reject Plan A on 15th November and Plan B on 26th.</p>
December	<p>Russians launch general counter-offensive.</p> <p>First Washington Conference (Arcadia). The Combined Chiefs of Staff formed.</p>	<p>Japan raids Pearl Harbour, invades Siam, Malaya, Hong Kong, Burma, North Borneo, the Philippines and Pacific Islands.</p> <p>Britain and United States declare war on Japan.</p> <p>The <i>Prince of Wales</i> and <i>Repulse</i> sunk off east coast of Malaya.</p> <p>Hong Kong surrenders to Japanese.</p> <p>Penang and northern Malaya abandoned.</p> <p>Mr. Duff Cooper appointed Resident Minister for Far Eastern Affairs at Singapore.</p> <p>Decision to form American-British-Dutch-Australian (A.B.D.A.) Command to conduct war in Far East.</p>

Year and Month	Western Theatre of War	Eastern Theatre of War	
		Pacific Theatre	South-East Asia Theatre
1942 January	Germans launch second counter-offensive in Western Desert.	Japanese invade New Guinea.	A.B.D.A. Command formed with Wavell as Supreme Commander. Japanese invasion of Netherlands East Indies begins. British army in Malaya forced to withdraw to Singapore Island.
February	Russian counter-offensive halted.	Japanese invade Timor and New Britain.	The fall of Singapore. British forces in Burma suffer disaster at Sittang Bridge. Japanese invade Sumatra and Java. Naval battle of Java Sea. A.B.D.A. Command dissolved.
March		Japanese troops land at Buka in Solomon Islands. United States secure line of communication through Pacific to Australia. United States navy raid Japanese-held islands in the Pacific.	Netherlands East Indies surrender. British forces evacuate Rangoon and begin retreat northwards. Japanese troops occupy Andaman Islands.
April		Doolittle air raid on Japan. United States forces on Bataan Peninsula surrender. Japanese troops land on Bougainville in Solomons. MacArthur sets up headquarters in Australia.	Mandalay evacuated and Lashio occupied by Japanese. Japanese naval forces enter Indian Ocean; air attacks on Colombo and Trincomalee; air raids on east Indian ports; attacks on shipping.



Year and Month	Western Theatre of War	Eastern Theatre of War	
		Pacific Theatre	South-East Asia Theatre
1942 May	Germans launch third counter-offensive in Western Desert. First 1,000-bomber air raid on Cologne. British troops land in Madagascar.	Naval battle of Coral Sea. United States forces at Corregidor surrender. Japanese occupy Tulagi and begin construction of airfield on Guadalcanal in Solomons.	Japanese occupy Akyab. British forces withdraw from Burma into India.
June	Tobruk captured by Germans.	Naval battle of Midway. Japan invades the Aleutian Islands.	
July	German Western Desert offensive held at El Alamein. Germans capture Sebastopol and Rostov.	Japanese land at Buna in Papua and prepare land offensive towards Port Moresby.	
August	Dieppe raid. General Alexander succeeds General Auchinleck as C-in-C. Middle East. General Montgomery assumes command of 8th Army in Western Desert. The Prime Minister meets Stalin in Moscow.	United States forces seize Tulagi and airfield on Guadalcanal. Japanese attempt to recapture Guadalcanal begins. Naval battle of Savo Island.	
September	Battle of Alam Halfa in Western Desert; German forces withdraw.	Australian forces check Japanese drive on Port Moresby.	

Year and Month	Western Theatre of War	Eastern Theatre of War	
		Pacific Theatre	South-East Asia Theatre
1942 October	8th Army takes the offensive in Western Desert; battle of El Alamein.	Japanese offensive in Guadalcanal fails. Naval battle of Santa Cruz.	First British offensive in Arakan begins.
November	German forces in Western Desert routed. Tobruk and Benghazi recaptured. British/American forces land in North Africa; Algiers, Oran and other ports occupied. German troops enter unoccupied France. French warships at Toulon scuttled. Campaign in Madagascar ends. Russians begin counter-offensive at Stalingrad and on central front.	Naval battle of Guadalcanal. Attempts by Japanese to reinforce Guadalcanal fail. In Papua Japanese forced back to cover Buna and Gona.	In Arakan British/Indian troops occupy Bawli Bazar.
December	8th Army captures El Aghaila position and continues pursuit of German forces towards Tunisia.	In Papua Australian troops capture Gona.	In Arakan British/Indian troops occupy Maungdaw and Buthidaung and begin land advance towards Akyab.
1943 January	Casablanca Conference. Siege of Leningrad raised. 8th Army captures Tripoli.	Japanese resistance in Papua ends. Japanese begin evacuation of Guadalcanal.	British offensive in Arakan brought to a halt north of Akyab. Japanese begin to reinforce Arakan.
February	German forces at Stalingrad capitulate.	Japanese complete evacuation of Guadalcanal.	First Chindit operation launched.

Year and Month	Western Theatre of War	Eastern Theatre of War	
		Pacific Theatre	South-East Asia Theatre
1943 March	8th Army captures Mareth Line.	Destruction of Japanese convoy in Battle of Bismarck Sea. Failure of Japanese air offensive on Allied bases in Solomon Islands, New Guinea and Papua.	Japanese launch counter-offensive in Arakan. British withdrawal in Arakan begins.
April	British/American forces from west and 8th Army from south close in on Tunis.		General Slim with XV Corps takes command in Arakan and plans phased withdrawal.
May	Second Washington Conference (Trident). Tunis and Bizerta captured. Germans and Italians finally evicted from North Africa.	Attu in the Aleutians recaptured by U.S. forces.	Maungdaw, Buthidaung and the Tunnels area in Arakan evacuated; the first Arakan campaign ends. First Chindit operation ends.
June		Allied offensive to capture New Georgia in Solomons and the Huon Peninsula in New Guinea begins.	F.M. Sir Archibald Wavell appointed Viceroy of India; is succeeded as C.-in-C. in India by General Sir Claude Auchinleck.
July	Allied forces invade Sicily. Mussolini resigns and is arrested.		

Year and Month	Western Theatre of War	Eastern Theatre of War	
		Pacific Theatre	South-East Asia Theatre
1943 August	First Quebec Conference (Quadrant). Russians recapture Kharkov. Resistance in Sicily ends.	U.S. forces reoccupy Kiska in the Aleutians. U.S. forces capture New Georgia and Munda airfield. U.S. forces land on Villa Lavella.	Decision to increase Chindits to six brigades and form Special Force under command of General Wingate. Admiral Lord Louis Mountbatten appointed Supreme Allied Commander, South-East Asia.
September	Allied forces invade southern Italy. Italy surrenders. Allied forces land at Salerno. German troops occupy Rome.	Campaign in central Solomons ends. Lae and Salamaua in New Guinea captured. Japanese decide to fall back to new defensive zone from New Guinea through Marianas to the Kuriles.	
October	Naples occupied. Italy declares war on Germany. Second Moscow Conference. Russian offensive gathers strength.	U.S. forces occupy Treasury Island off Bougainville. Allied forces in New Guinea begin clearance of Huon Peninsula.	Mountbatten arrives in India, visits Chungking. IV Corps moves a division into Kabaw Valley. XV Corps makes close contact with enemy in Arakan.
November	Russians retake Kiev. Cairo Conference (Sextant) begins (22nd). Teheran Conference with Russians (28th).	U.S. forces capture Gilbert Islands. U.S. forces land on Bougainville. Japanese form 'General Escort Command' to protect shipping from submarine attack; losses already some 2½ million tons. U.S. carrier aircraft attack Rabaul.	South-East Asia Command formed. Second Arakan campaign begins. Japanese capture Fort White. IV Corps consolidates in Tiddim and Tamu area. XV Corps drives in Japanese outposts in Arakan.

Year and Month	Western Theatre of War	Eastern Theatre of War	
		Pacific Theatre	South-East Asia Theatre
1943 December	Cairo Conference (Sextant) ends (4th-7th). Russian offensive continues with success.	U.S. forces occupy western end of New Britain.	XV Corps in Arakan begins envelopment of Maungdaw-Buthidaung defences.
1944 January	Allied forces land at Anzio. Allied forces take general offensive in Italy. Blockade of Leningrad lifted.		81st (W.A.) Division moves into Kaladan valley. Maungdaw captured. XV Corps poised to assault Tunnels area.
February	Russian offensive drives Germans westwards; Estonian border crossed.	Huon Peninsula cleared. U.S. forces land on Admiralty Islands. New Zealand troops occupy Green Island. Marshall Islands captured. Japanese Combined Fleet withdraws to Singapore from Truk. American carrier aircraft raid Truk.	Japanese offensive in Arakan begins on the 4th and is defeated by the 25th; XV Corps resumes offensive. 81st (W.A.) Division driven back in Kaladan valley. 16th L.R.P. Brigade marches into Burma from Ledo.
March	Russian offensive continues successful advance.	Admiralty Islands secured. Japanese counter-offensive on Bougainville defeated. Emirau Island occupied. Rabaul and its large garrison isolated.	Buthidaung and the Tunnels captured by XV Corps in Arakan. Chinese/American forces clear Hukawng Valley. 77th and 111th L.R.P. Brigades flown into Burma. Japanese Imphal offensive begins. Battle to extricate 17th Division on Tiddim Road. Reinforcements for IV Corps flown in. Special Force fails to take Indaw. Imphal Road cut.



Year and Month	Western Theatre of War	Eastern Theatre of War	
		Pacific Theatre	South-East Asia Theatre
1944 April	Russians recapture Odessa.	Hollandia and Aitape in New Guinea occupied by U.S. forces.	Withdrawal of IV Corps to Imphal plain completed. XXXIII Corps begins to concentrate at Dimapur. Siege of Kohima (3rd to 18th). Air lift to Imphal begins (18th). Japanese Imphal offensive brought to a halt. Japanese attack Special Force at White City. Japanese open 'Ichi-Go' offensive in China to clear Peking-Hankow railway and American airfields in south-east China.
May	Allies begin offensive in Italy.	U.S. forces occupy Sarmi-Wakde Island area in New Guinea and invade Biak Island.	Myitkyina airfield captured by N.C.A.C. (17th). Battles of Imphal and Kohima continue; 14th Army takes the offensive. Stilwell's attempt to capture Myitkyina by <i>coup de main</i> fails. Chinese Yunnan armies take offensive and cross Salween River but held by Japanese. Special Force abandons White City and moves north.
June	Allies enter Rome. Allies land in Normandy.	U.S. forces land on Saipan in the Mariana Islands. The naval battle of the Philippine Sea.	Chinese/American forces capture Kamaing. 77th L.R.P. Brigade captures Mogaung. Imphal Road reopened; the battle for Imphal ends.

Year and Month	Western Theatre of War	Eastern Theatre of War	
		Pacific Theatre	South-East Asia Theatre
1944 July	Plot to assassinate Hitler. Russians recapture Minsk.	U.S. forces occupy Saipan, Guam, Tinian; campaign for Mariana Islands ends. In New Guinea U.S. forces occupy Neomfor and Cape Sansapor; the campaign for New Guinea ends. Tojo Cabinet in Japan resigns. Koiso Cabinet formed.	Japanese 15th Army, driven from Imphal plain, begins withdrawal to Chindwin. XXXIII Corps begins pursuit to Chindwin.
August	Allies land on south coast of France between Toulon and Nice. Paris liberated.		Myitkyina captured. Special Force withdrawn to India. Mountbatten visits London to discuss plans for reoccupation of Burma in 1945.
September	Second Quebec Conference (Octagon). Airborne offensive at Arnhem.	U.S. forces capture Morotai and the Palau Islands, and occupy Ulithi Atoll.	Mountbatten receives new directive. Japanese offensive on Salween front fails. Japanese appoint new commanders in Burma.
October	British troops land in Greece.	U.S. forces land on Leyte in the Philippines. The naval battle of Leyte Gulf. Kamikaze attacks begin. Australian troops begin to take over from U.S. troops in Bougainville, New Britain and New Guinea; takeover completed by December.	Stilwell relieved of his appointment at Chiang Kai-shek's request. Japanese resume 'Ichi-Go' offensive in south-east China. Decision to postpone amphibious operations against Rangoon. The 14th Army to capture Mandalay-Pakokku line and XV Corps to take Akyab. Chinese/American forces to advance on Bhamo and Yunnan armies on Lashio. 14th Army recaptures Tiddim.

Year and Month	Western Theatre of War	Eastern Theatre of War	South-East Asia Theatre
1944 November		<p>Pacific Theatre</p> <p>U.S. begin heavy bombing attacks on Japan from the Mariana Islands air bases.</p>	<p>Japanese decide to withdraw across the Irrawaddy beginning 1st December. Reorganization in S.E.A.C.; A.L.F.S.E.A. formed. Lieut.-General Sir Oliver Leese replaces General Sir George Giffard. American C.B.I. Theatre divided into China theatre and Burma-India Theatre. Wedemeyer replaces Stilwell. 14th Army captures Kalemno. 14th Army crosses Chindwin at Sittaung.</p>
December	<p>Germans launch Ardennes counter-offensive.</p>	<p>The campaign for Leyte ends with withdrawal of Japanese forces. U.S. forces seize Mindoro.</p>	<p>Indaw and Katha occupied by N.C.A.C. 14th Army captures Kalewa and establishes bridgehead east of Chindwin River. Slim (14th Army) realizes that Japanese are in process of withdrawing across the Irrawaddy and changes his plan. Bhamo captured. Two American-trained Chinese divisions transferred from Burma to China. Third Arakan campaign begins. XV Corps advances towards Akyab. Japanese 'Icho-Go' offensive in south-east China ends.</p>



Year and Month	Western Theatre of War	Eastern Theatre of War	
		Pacific Theatre	South-East Asia Theatre
1945 January	Russians enter Warsaw.	U.S. forces invade Luzon.	Yeu and Shwebo occupied. 14th Army establishes bridgeheads across Irrawaddy at Thabeikkyin and Kyaukmyaung; Monywa occupied. Wanting occupied. Akyab occupied. XV Corps make landings on Ramree Island, Myebon, Kangaw and Ruywa. IV Corps advances up Myittha Valley on Pakokku.
February	Yalta Conference (Argonaut).	U.S. forces invade Iwojima. Campaign on Luzon virtually ends.	14th Army establishes bridgeheads across Irrawaddy at Nyaungu, Myinmu and Ngazun. Attack on Meiktila and Mandalay begins. Myitson captured. Ledo Road to China opened; first convoy reaches Kunming on 4th.
March	Allies cross the Rhine.	Iwojima captured. Intensive incendiary and bombing raids on Japan begin.	Meiktila captured. Japanese counter-offensive to recapture Meiktila defeated. Mandalay captured. Mars Force (American) transferred from Burma to China. Mongmit, Mogok, Monglong, Lashio, Hsipaw and Kyaukse occupied. New air base at Akyab comes into full operation.

Year and Month	Western Theatre of War	Eastern Theatre of War	
		Pacific Theatre	South-East Asia Theatre
1945 April	German armies in Italy surrender.	U.S. forces land on Okinawa. Battle between <i>Kamikazs</i> and Allied fleets off Okinawa. Koiso Cabinet resigns. Suzuki Cabinet formed.	14th Army pursues defeated Japanese armies; Battles of the Irrawaddy and Rangoon Road. Pyawbwe, Toungoo, Pegu and Allannmyo recaptured. New air base at Ramree begins operations.
May	Germany surrenders.	Australians land at Tarakan in Dutch Borneo. Japanese begin withdrawal from parts of south China.	Rangoon recaptured by amphibious attack. Promie occupied. Japanese 28th Army surrounded in Pegu Yomas. The Battle of Sittang begins.
June		The campaign for Okinawa ends. Australians reoccupy Labuan, Brunei and Seria oilfields in British Borneo.	Kalaw occupied.
July	Potsdam Conference (Terminal). British, American and French troops enter Vienna.	Liberation of the whole of the Philippine Archipelago completed. Blockade of Japan absolute. American and British fleets bombard Japanese coastal towns. Issue of Potsdam Declaration to Japan. Australian troops land at Balikpapan in Dutch Borneo.	The Battle of Sittang; the break-out by 28th Army.

Year and Month	Western Theatre of War	Eastern Theatre of War	
		Pacific Theatre	South-East Asia Theatre
1945 August		Atomic bombs dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Russia declares war on Japan and invades Manchuria. Japan surrenders. Suzuki Cabinet resigns. Higashikuni Cabinet formed.	S.E.A.C. Theatre enlarged to include part of South-West Pacific Area. Local surrender agreement signed at Rangoon on the 28th. British naval forces enter Hong Kong on the 30th.
September		Japan signs the Instrument of Surrender on the 2nd.	British forces reoccupy Penang, Malaya and Singapore. Japanese <i>Southern Army</i> surrenders to Supreme Commander, South-East Asia at Singapore on the 12th.

## APPENDIX 29

### Outline Order of Battle, 12th Army 15th August 1945

(became Burma Command, 1st October 1945)

*Lieut.-General Sir Montagu Stopford*

Brigadier General Staff

*Brigadier E. F. E. Armstrong*

#### Army Troops

##### Armour

255th Indian Tank Brigade *Brigadier R. Younger*  
116th Regiment R.A.C. (Gordon Highlanders)  
5th (Probyn's) Horse  
7th Light Cavalry  
8th K.G.Vs' O. Light Cavalry  
9th (Royal Deccan) Horse  
16th Light Cavalry (armoured cars)  
4/4th Bombay Grenadiers  
3rd Armoured Delivery Regiment

##### Artillery

*Brigadier J. D. Shapland*

4th Field Regiment, R.A.  
27th Field Regiment, R.A.  
1st Medium Regiment, R.A.  
87th Medium Regiment, R.A.

61st Army Group, R.A. (A.A.) *Brigadier J. M. Kerr*  
1st Indian Light Anti-Aircraft Regiment  
1st Indian Heavy Anti-Aircraft Regiment  
2nd Indian Light Anti-Aircraft Regiment  
5th Indian Light Anti-Aircraft Regiment

##### Infantry

1st Burma Rifles  
1st Karen Rifles  
2nd Karen Rifles

5TH INDIAN INFANTRY DIVISION  
(to Singapore and Java)

*Major-General E. C. R. Mansergh*

Artillery

*Brigadier E. G. Loder-Symonds*

- 4th Indian Field Regiment
- 5th Indian Field Regiment
- 24th Indian Mountain Regiment
- 5th (Maharatta) Anti-Tank Regiment

Divisional Infantry

- 17th Dogra Machine-Gun Battalion
- 1/3rd Madras Regiment (H.Q. battalion) (replaced Jammu and Kashmir Infantry I.S.F. in June 1945)
- 3/9th Jat Regiment (reconnaissance battalion)

Infantry

- 9th Indian Infantry Brigade
- 2nd West Yorkshire Regiment
- 3/2nd Punjab Regiment
- 1st Burma Regiment

*Brigadier H. G. L. Brain*

- 123rd Indian Infantry Brigade
- 2/1st Punjab Regiment
- 1/17th Dogra Regiment
- 3/9th Gurkha Rifles (replaced 7th York and Lancaster Regiment in July 1945)

*Brigadier E. J. Denholm Young*

- 161st Indian Infantry Brigade
- 1/1st Punjab Regiment
- 4/7th Rajput Regiment
- 3/4th Gurkha Rifles (replaced 4th Royal West Kent Regiment in August 1945)

*Brigadier E. H. W. Grimshaw*

## 20TH INDIAN INFANTRY DIVISION

(to French Indo-China)

*Major-General D. D. Gracey*

## Artillery

*Brigadier J. A. E. Hirst*

- 114th Field Regiment, R.A.
- 2nd Indian Field Regiment (replaced 9th Field Regiment, R.A. in June 1945)
- 23rd Indian Mountain Regiment

## Divisional Infantry

- 9th Jat Machine-Gun Battalion
- 2/8th Punjab Regiment (reconnaissance battalion)
- 9/12th Frontier Force Regiment (H.Q. battalion)

## Infantry

- |  |                                    |
|--|------------------------------------|
| 32nd Indian Infantry Brigade           | <i>Brigadier E. C. J. Woodford</i> |
| 9/14th Punjab Regiment                 |                                    |
| 4/2nd Gurkha Rifles                    |                                    |
| 3/8th Gurkha Rifles                    |                                    |
| 80th Indian Infantry Brigade           | <i>Brigadier D. E. Taunton</i>     |
| 4/17th Dogra Regiment                  | <i>Lieut.-Colonel D. L. Betts</i>  |
| 1/19th Hyderabad Regiment <sup>1</sup> | (offg. from 26.7.45 to 16.8.45)    |
| 3/1st Gurkha Rifles                    |                                    |
| 100th Indian Infantry Brigade          | <i>Brigadier C. H. B. Rodham</i>   |
| 14/13th Frontier Force Rifles          |                                    |
| 1/1st Gurkha Rifles                    |                                    |
| 4/10th Gurkha Rifles                   |                                    |

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<sup>1</sup> Renamed 1st Kumaon Regiment in December 1945.

82ND WEST AFRICAN DIVISION

(repatriated to Africa)

*Major-General H. C. Stockwell*

Artillery

*Brigadier J. H. H. Willans*

- 22nd (W.A.) Anti-Tank Regiment
- 102nd (W.A.) Light Regiment
- 42nd (W.A.) Mortar Regiment

Divisional Reconnaissance Battalion

- 82nd (W.A.) Reconnaissance Regiment

Infantry

- 1st (W.A.) Infantry Brigade
- 1st Nigeria Regiment
- 2nd Nigeria Regiment
- 3rd Nigeria Regiment

*Brigadier C. R. A. Swynnerton*

- 2nd (W.A.) Infantry Brigade
- 1st Gold Coast Regiment
- 2nd Gold Coast Regiment
- 3rd Gold Coast Regiment

*Brigadier F. W. Clowes*

- 4th (W.A.) Infantry Brigade
- 5th Nigeria Regiment
- 9th Nigeria Regiment
- 10th Nigeria Regiment

*Brigadier A. H. G. Ricketts*  
*Brigadier N. C. Stockwell*  
 (offg. from 14.8.45)

## APPENDIX 29

## IV CORPS

(disbanded 31.10.45; Headquarters closed 30.9.45)

*Lieut.-General Sir Frank Messervy**Lieut.-General F. I. S. Toker (Acting)*

Brigadier General Staff

*Brigadier E. H. W. Cobb*

Corps Artillery

*Brigadier G. Goulder*

52nd Heavy Anti-Aircraft Regiment, R.A.

44th Light Anti-Aircraft Regiment, R.A.

1st Survey Regiment, R.A.

## 7TH INDIAN INFANTRY DIVISION

(to Siam)

*Major-General G. C. Evans*

Artillery

*Brigadier J. R. Lupton*

136th Field Regiment, R.A.

139th Field Regiment, R.A.

25th Indian Mountain Regiment

8th (Mahratta) Anti-Tank Regiment

Divisional Infantry

2nd Baroda Regiment, I.S.F. (H.Q. battalion)

13th Frontier Force Rifles Machine-Gun Battalion

7/2nd Punjab Regiment (reconnaissance battalion)

Infantry

33rd Indian Infantry Brigade

*Brigadier J. S. Vickers*

1st Queen's Royal Regiment

4/15th Punjab Regiment

4/1st Gurkha Rifles

89th Indian Infantry Brigade

*Brigadier I. C. A. Lauder*

1/11th Sikh Regiment

3/6th Gurkha Rifles (replaced 2nd King's Own Scottish Borderers  
in June 1945)

4/8th Gurkha Rifles

114th Indian Infantry Brigade

*Brigadier H. W. Dinwiddie*1st Royal Battalion 9th Jat Regiment (replaced 2nd South Lanca-  
shire Regiment in July 1945)

4/14th Punjab Regiment

4/5th Royal Gurkha Rifles



17TH INDIAN INFANTRY DIVISION  
(absorbed 19th Division)

*Major-General W. A. Crowther*

**Artillery**

*Brigadier F. St. D. B. Lejeune*

129th Field Regiment, R.A.  
82nd Anti-Tank Regiment, R.A.  
1st Indian Field Regiment  
21st Indian Mountain Regiment

**Divisional Infantry**

6/15th Punjab Regiment (H.Q. battalion)  
6/7th Rajput Regiment (reconnaissance battalion)  
9/13th Frontier Force Rifles (Machine-Guns)

**Infantry**

48th Indian Infantry Brigade      *Brigadier J. A. R. Robertson*  
1st West Yorkshire Regiment  
4/12th Frontier Force Regiment  
1/7th Gurkha Rifles

63rd Indian Infantry Brigade      *Brigadier M. R. Smeeton*  
9th Border Regiment  
7/10th Baluch Regiment  
1/10th Gurkha Rifles

99th Indian Infantry Brigade      *Brigadier M. V. Wright*  
1st East Yorkshire Regiment  
1st Sikh Light Infantry  
1/3rd Gurkha Rifles

**APPENDIX 29**

**19TH INDIAN INFANTRY DIVISION**  
 (amalgamated with 17th Division and disbanded)

*Major-General T. W. Rees*

**Artillery**

*Brigadier J. H. Beattie*

115th Field Regiment, R.A.  
 33rd Anti-Tank Regiment, R.A.  
 4th Indian Field Regiment  
 20th Indian Mountain Regiment

**Divisional Infantry**

1st Assam Regiment (H.Q. battalion)  
 11th Sikh Machine-Gun Battalion  
 1/15th Punjab Regiment (reconnaissance battalion)

**Infantry**

62nd Infantry Brigade	<i>Brigadier J. R. Morris</i>
2nd Welch Regiment	
3/6th Rajputana Rifles	
4/6th Gurkha Rifles	
64th Indian Infantry Brigade	<i>Brigadier J. G. Flewett</i>
2nd Worcestershire Regiment	
5/10th Baluch Regiment	
1/6th Gurkha Rifles	
98th Indian Infantry Brigade	<i>Brigadier C. I. Jerrard</i>
2nd Royal Berkshire Regiment	
8/12th Frontier Force Regiment	
4/4th Gurkha Rifles	

**INDEPENDENT BRIGADE**

22nd (East African) Brigade	<i>Brigadier R. F. Johnstone</i>
1st King's African Rifles	
3rd Northern Rhodesian Regiment	
1st Rhodesian African Rifles	

STATIC COMMANDS FOR INTERNAL SECURITY  
AND ADMINISTRATION

505 DISTRICT (MEIKTILA)

*Major-General A. H. J. Snelling*

25th Gurkha Rifles

2nd Burma Regiment

455 Sub-Area (Magwe)  
4th Jammu and Kashmir Infantry, I.S.F.

551 Sub-Area (Kalewa)  
1st Chin Rifles  
2nd Chin Rifles

552 Sub-Area (Mandalay)

553 Sub-Area (Myitkyina)  
1st Kachin Rifles  
2nd Kachin Rifles

SOUTH BURMA DISTRICT (RANGOON)

*Major-General G. W. Symes*

7th York and Lancaster Regiment

No. 1 Area (Rangoon) *Brigadier L. J. Woodhouse*  
4th Border Regiment  
4th Royal West Kent Regiment  
1st Coorg Regiment, I.S.F.  
25th Burma Regiment

6th Infantry Brigade (Insein) *Brigadier W. G. Smith*  
1st Royal Welch Fusiliers  
1st Royal Berkshire Regiment  
2nd Durham Light Infantry

Lushai Brigade (Prome) *Brigadier P. C. Marindin*  
1st Bihar Regiment  
6/19th Hyderabad Regiment  
1st Chamar Regiment

## APPENDIX 30

### Prisoners-of-War in Japanese Hands

The Hague Convention of 1907 concerning the laws and customs of war, which was ratified by Japan, laid down, among other things, that prisoners-of-war must be humanely treated, that (except for officers) they could be made to work, but not excessively and not on anything connected with the operations of war, that they should be treated, as regards rations, quarters and clothing, on the same footing as the troops who captured them and that they should be subject to the laws, regulations and orders in force in the army of the State in whose power they were. Since, by European standards, the rations and living conditions of a Japanese soldier were poor and the methods of discipline and punishment in the Japanese Army were almost mediaeval in their brutality, these last two provisions made it probable that the life of a prisoner in their hands would not be pleasant, but the belief held by the Japanese that to be taken prisoner, rather than commit suicide, was the ultimate and unthinkable dishonour turned this probability into a certainty.

Japan did not ratify the much more detailed 1929 Geneva Convention on the treatment of prisoners-of-war, but early in 1942 she said she would observe its terms *mutatis mutandis* and take account of national and racial customs (on a basis of reciprocity) when supplying prisoners with food and clothing. This statement proved to be of no value and almost every standard of conduct laid down in both Conventions was ignored. Almost without exception prisoners in Japanese hands found themselves forced to sign certificates promising not to escape, deprived of the food, drugs and medical care necessary to maintain a reasonable standard of health or, in many cases, to keep them alive, crowded into insanitary and primitive camps, subjected to gross physical punishment and used as a vast and expendable labour force.

Although a P.O.W. Information Bureau was set up in Tokyo in January 1942, the lists of prisoners it supplied were slow in coming through and incomplete, and no information was provided on prisoners in many areas. Delegates of the International Committee of the Red Cross (I.C.R.C.) were not recognized in the southern occupied territories (which included Singapore, Siam, French Indo-China and the Netherlands East Indies) until August 1945,<sup>1</sup> with the result that they were able to do little officially to help prisoners in those areas and visit none of the camps.

<sup>1</sup> A few days before the Japanese Government gave its agreement on the 8th August 1945 to the appointment of Dr. M. Vischer as the Red Cross delegate in Borneo, the I.C.R.C. learnt that he, with his wife, had been arrested in Borneo on a charge of conspiracy against the Japanese Government and executed in December 1943. See the Report of the International Committee of the Red Cross on its Activities during the Second World War, September 1, 1939—June 30, 1947 (Geneva, 1948), Volume I, General Activities, pps. 444-5.

Representatives of the Protecting Power (Switzerland) were also severely handicapped in their endeavours. For the prisoners in Burma no means of help could ever be devised. The I.C.R.C. delegation in Japan was recognized in January 1942, but was informed of and allowed to visit less than half of the camps found to exist in Japan, Formosa, Korea and Manchuria at the end of the war; permits, difficult to obtain, had to be renewed for each visit and the necessary travel permits were not always granted. The average duration of the visits allowed to forty-two camps in these countries was two hours, of which one hour was allowed for conversation with the camp commandant and the other for visiting quarters and interviewing representatives of the prisoners in the presence of the Japanese, but these conditions varied according to the camp and the timing of the visit. Camp commandants frequently refused to answer delegates' questions on the grounds that they had received no authority to give information. The delegate in Hong Kong was recognized in June 1942, since that area was no longer regarded as a zone of military operations, but during his visits to the camps there he was hurried round on a predetermined course and the Japanese took severe measures to prevent any communication between him and the prisoners. At no time was the Red Cross allowed to give help to, enquire about, or visit camps containing Indian troops, who were considered by the Japanese to be not prisoners but members of the Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere. Indian prisoners, always parted from their British officers and kept in separate camps, were subjected to brutal treatment to persuade them to join the *Indian National Army*.

The Japanese allowed no neutral ship to enter territorial waters around Japan or any of the countries she occupied, and would agree to relief supplies being sent to a neutral port only in ships used to exchange Japanese and Allied diplomats and civilians. Two shiploads of supplies were sent in this way in 1942 and two in 1944; they were then taken on board Japanese ships for onward shipment and, since their issue was made by local Japanese authorities, little check on their distribution could be made. In November 1944 a fifth consignment of supplies, sent from America in a Russian ship, was taken aboard a Japanese ship at a Siberian port, but in April 1945 the *Awa Maru*, which had been granted unconditional safe passage for both her outward and return voyages, was torpedoed by an American submarine while sailing back to Japan after distributing part of these supplies in the southern territories. Thereafter the Japanese refused to entertain any further plans for relief supplies to be sent to the East. Prisoners in Japan, Formosa, Hong Kong, Manchuria and Korea received more of these supplies than did prisoners in Singapore, Siam, Sumatra and Borneo, but the amounts issued varied from camp to camp, and some camps in countries to which supplies were sent received none. No supplies reached Celebes and Burma, and very little, if any, reached Java. For the local purchase of supplies, where possible, some twenty-one million Swiss francs were transferred through Geneva but, owing to the rate of exchange imposed by the Japanese Government, these funds lost part (and sometimes a large part) of their purchasing power.

*Burma*

The main camp for prisoners captured in Burma was Rangoon Central Gaol, which, in separate blocks, held British, Indians and Chinese and, as time progressed, an increasing number of American, British and Dominion aircrews for whom much the worst treatment was reserved.<sup>1</sup> From September 1942 prisoners were called on to do work such as stevedoring, constructing trenches and gun-pits and repairing motor transport. On the 25th April 1945 a so-called working party of about 440 of the white prisoners marched north out of Rangoon, headed by the Japanese camp commandant and his staff. On the morning of the 29th east of Pegu, an area under heavy R.A.F. attack, the Japanese made off. To avoid air attacks the prisoners scattered but on the 30th were contacted by Indian troops who collected them and took them to safety. When the Japanese evacuated Rangoon at the end of April 1945, 698 prisoners (of whom 117 were British and 474 Indian) were left in the gaol, and the senior British prisoner (a wing-commander in the R.A.A.F.) assumed charge in the city until 36th Brigade arrived on the 3rd May. Evacuation of the prisoners by air to India began on the 5th.

*Malaya and Singapore*

Nearly 1,200 British and Australian prisoners captured during the fighting on the Malayan mainland were confined in a gaol in Kuala Lumpur until October 1942, when 400 were sent north to Siam and the rest to Singapore. Thereafter camps on the mainland contained only Indian prisoners, of whom some 3,500 were found at the end of the war at Kuala Lumpur, Port Dickson, Penang, Sungei Patani, Ipoh and Kluang.

When Singapore capitulated on the 15th February 1942, more than 50,000 British and Australian and 35,000 Indian troops became prisoners-of-war. Two days later, carrying rations for ten days and the minimum of equipment, the British and Australian prisoners marched out of the city to the Changi area in the north-east of the island (which pre-war had housed part of the British garrison) and thereby lost contact with the Indian troops, who were sent to separate camps. Many of the Indians eventually left the island, mainly in forced labour battalions for islands in the south-west Pacific.

Within a few weeks of the capitulation, parties of prisoners moved out of Changi to working camps on the island where they, among other tasks, cleared war damage, disposed of mines, built roads and a shrine to Fallen Warriors at Bukit Timah, and worked at the docks. In April 1942 working drafts began to leave for Japan, Korea, Formosa, Borneo and the Burma-Siam Railway, and in August Lieut.-General A. E. Percival and all officers of the rank of Colonel and above, with five senior civilians (including Sir Shenton Thomas, Governor of the Straits Settlement), were transferred to Formosa. On the 2nd September, as a punitive measure for refusing to sign certificates saying that they would not escape, the

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<sup>1</sup> The Japanese tended to look upon captured aircrews as 'war criminals' rather than prisoners-of-war.

prisoners in Changi were moved to the barrack square at Selerang where, until they agreed to sign under duress on the 5th, 15,400 men lived under a marked degree of overcrowding and discomfort.

By May 1943 the number of prisoners in Changi had dropped to around 6,500, most of whom were officers and those too incapacitated by war wounds and serious illness to be drafted for labour elsewhere, and that month the camp site was moved to the Selerang Barracks area. In September 1943 working parties with coolie labour began building two intersecting airstrips for a new airfield in the south-west of the Changi area. To make way for Japanese air units round the airfield the prisoners (with the return of two drafts from Siam now numbering over 11,000) were moved again in May 1944, this time to Changi Gaol which had originally been built for 650 civil prisoners. The main part of the large camp hospital was transferred to Kranji in the north of the island. The civilian internees housed in the gaol were in their turn moved to a camp at Sime Road. Movement out of Changi began once more in mid-1945, when parties of prisoners were dispersed to camps all over the island and in Johore Bahru, where they were used to dig tunnels and defence works.

To overcome the problem of coping with enormous numbers of prisoners-of-war the Japanese made Changi camp responsible for its own internal administration, organisation and discipline. The pre-war Malaya Command and staff organization was therefore kept as far as possible and the camp divided itself into separate formation areas, which were divided from each other by barbed wire. This autonomy remained more or less unaffected until 1944, when separate areas and formations finally disappeared, a combined and simplified British and Australian camp staff was formed, officers (except in major camp installations) were separated from men and allowed to wear badges of rank (which had been prohibited in June 1942), courts-martial became illegal and prisoners under sentence were ordered to be handed over to the Japanese. To avoid complying with this last order, sentences of detention were altered to stoppage of pay.

A Mastiff team was dropped on Changi airfield on the 30th August 1945 and linked up with a Force 136 party which arrived from the Malayan mainland on the same day. A R.A.P.W.I. team arrived at Singapore by sea on the 5th September along with the first flight of 5th Division, to find some 37,280 prisoners (including 6,700 British, 5,500 Australians and about 16,000 Indians) and 4,760 internees on the island. Evacuation began two days later and by the end of the month was almost complete.

### *Sumatra*

Many of the ships and small boats which sailed south from Singapore in the last days before the island surrendered were sunk or captured, and about a thousand of the survivors (including women and children) were collected by the Japanese on Bangka Island, off the coast of Sumatra. Towards the end of February 1942 the military prisoners began to leave for Palembang on the mainland.

Prisoners in the Palembang area (numbering about 1,600 Dutch, British and Australians in September 1942) were housed in various camps

at various times, such as a Dutch school, a Chinese school and the Chinese Chamber of Commerce, and eventually in a permanent and primitive camp in an old orange grove some distance from the town. Working parties were sent to lengthen the runway of the Palembang airfield, to load and unload ships at the docks, to repair transport and prepare searchlight positions. In November 1943 nearly 1,600 Dutch and British prisoners from Java arrived at Pangkalin Balai, some 30 miles from Palembang, to build a new airfield, and were joined later by 200 more Dutch from Java. Although the airfield was unfinished in May 1945 they were transferred to Palembang, some in time to be included in a draft of 1,400 prisoners shipped later that month to Singapore.

In May 1942, 500 British prisoners in a camp at Padang, on the west coast of Sumatra, were formed into the British (Sumatra) Battalion and shipped to Burma, where they did airfield work before joining the huge labour force working on the Burma-Siam Railway. The prisoners remaining at Padang were later transferred north to Medan from where, in March 1944, 500 British, Dutch and Australian prisoners were sent into the mountains to build a road. Some months later they were moved to a camp at Pakanbahru, in central Sumatra, where they joined prisoners from Java.

At the end of August 1945 four Force 136 parties began to search for camps on the island and were joined by four more parties in early September. By the end of September some 4,980 prisoners (including 1,030 British, 940 Indians and 300 Australians) had been evacuated to Singapore by air and L.C.I. (L).

### *Java*

For many of the 12,000 British and Australian troops who became prisoners in Java on the 8th March 1942 the first weeks of captivity were fairly easy; most of them remained concentrated, with a degree of freedom, in the areas where they were captured in the western half of the island until about the end of March, when their dispersal to camps in the Bandoeng, Batavia and Sourabaya areas began. Survivors of Allied ships sunk off Java were collected at various places on the coast and eventually sent to Batavia and Sourabaya. Camp accommodation ranged from Dutch barracks and a native prison to schools, a reformatory and a fairground, and work included repairing and building airfield runways, stevedoring, shifting bomb dumps, hand-weaving rope and string and repairing transport.

From August 1942 large numbers of prisoners began to leave the island for Japan, Borneo, the Burma-Siam Railway and Sumatra, many of them staging at Changi. In April 1943, 6,150 British and Dutch prisoners were sent, crowded into ships carrying petrol and ammunition, to Flores and the Molucca Islands to build airfields. Working and living conditions on these islands were among the worst experienced by prisoners in the Far East.

On the 8th September 1945 a Force 136/Mastiff team was dropped on Batavia, and a R.A.P.W.I. team disembarked at the port on the 15th.



Evacuation of the 6,000 prisoners (of whom 1,240 were British and 380 Australian) began almost immediately.

*The Burma-Siam Railway and French Indo-China*

To provide a safer line of communication to Burma than the long and exposed sea route to Rangoon by way of Singapore and the Strait of Malacca, the Japanese in mid-1942 decided to build a single-line metre gauge railway, some 250 miles in length, from Non Pladuk in Siam to Thanbyuzayat in Burma, where it would link with the existing Moulmein-Ye railway. Preliminary work on the Siamese section of the railway began in early July 1942 when an advanced party of 3,000 prisoners arrived from Changi to prepare base camps at Banpong and Kanburi, and major transfers of prisoners from Singapore and the Netherlands East Indies began in October. That month prisoners, transferred earlier from Singapore and the Netherlands East Indies to work on airfields at Victoria Point, Mergui and Tavoy, began constructing the Burmese section south from Thanbyuzayat. In October 1943 the two sections of the railway joined some miles south of Three Pagodas Pass, by which time about a fifth of the 61,000 prisoners and a much higher number of coolies were dead.<sup>1</sup> At the end of 1943 the survivors of 'F' and 'H' Forces, which had left Singapore in April and May 1943, began to return to the island, and by March 1944 the bulk of the other prisoners were concentrated in six main camps in Siam, from where groups were sent along the railway line to maintain it and, in 1945, to build roads in Burma and defensive positions at Three Pagodas Pass. Between April and June 1944, 10,000 prisoners were collected at Saigon in French Indo-China for shipment to Japan, but because of the scarcity of shipping many were still there at the end of the war. Others, sent south to Singapore, began leaving by sea for Japan in July 1944. When the war ended there were about 4,990 prisoners (including 2,300 British) in the Saigon area and 29,000 (including 13,300 British) in eleven camps in Siam. Until R.A.P.W.I. teams arrived in Bangkok and Saigon on the 7th and 8th September 1945, the task of contacting and succouring them was undertaken by 'E' Group, Force 136 and O.S.S. parties, and their evacuation, mainly to Rangoon and, for the Australians, to Singapore began on the 28th August.

*Borneo*

In mid-March 1942 a camp for about 340 British and Indian prisoners was opened in the former barracks of 2/15th Punjab Regiment, a few miles south of Kuching in Sarawak. In October, 1,800 British prisoners arrived from Java, 830 of them being sent on to Jesselton, and in April 1943 'E' Force (1,040 prisoners) arrived from Singapore, the British component remaining at Kuching and the Australian going on to Berhala Island, off Sandakan in British North Borneo. In August 1944, 200 British prisoners from Kuching were transferred to Labuan Island in Brunei Bay. By 1943

<sup>1</sup> An estimated number of 270,000 coolies, impressed in Malaya, Burma, and Siam, helped to build the railway.

Kuching camp contained British, Indian, Australian, Dutch and Indonesian prisoners and internees in ten separate compounds. Prisoners worked at an airfield seven miles out of Kuching and, on occasions, in timber yards on the Sarawak River. The 9th Australian Division, which landed on Labuan Island in June 1945, began dropping supplies to the camp on the 30th August 1945, and the relieving force arrived on the 11th September. Evacuation of the 1,392 prisoners found in the camp (including 882 British, 178 Australians and 45 Indians) and 632 internees began next day to Labuan, where a transit camp and hospital had been set up; from there the British and Indian prisoners were sent to Singapore, the first leaving by sea on the 14th October.

The 830 British prisoners who went to Jesselton in October 1942 repaired and maintained the airfield there until April 1943, when the 770 survivors were transferred to Sandakan. There they joined 'B' Force, a party of 1,496 Australians sent from Singapore in July 1942 to build an airfield, and more Australians arrived in July 1943 when the 520 men of 'E' Force were transferred from Berhala Island. In August of that year, after the Japanese had uncovered an elaborate intelligence system built up by the Australian prisoners with the help of local civilians and former members of the British North Borneo Constabulary, most of the officers in the camp were sent to Kuching. After their departure there were about 2,500 prisoners at Sandakan, and in June 1944 a hundred of the British prisoners left for Labuan. In February 1945 the Japanese decided to move the surviving Sandakan prisoners, apparently to Jesselton, although none was taken farther than Ranau, a village about 160 miles west of Sandakan. About 970 left in two groups in February and May, but only six Australians, who managed to escape on the march or from Ranau, survived. All the prisoners left behind at Sandakan (about 230) died.

There were no survivors from the 300 British prisoners sent in 1944 from Kuching and Sandakan to build an airstrip on Labuan Island.

Indian prisoners, transferred from Kuching and Singapore, were sent to camps in the Miri-Lutong-Seria area, where they worked in the oilfields. Since the Japanese destroyed the rolls of prisoners in this area it is impossible to say how many there were in north Borneo, but Australian forces recovered 404 and managed to confirm the deaths of 57, while 128 Indian prisoners were recovered in Dutch Borneo.

#### *Celebes*

Makassar prisoner-of-war camp in south Celebes was under Japanese naval administration, and in March 1942 contained 1,800 Dutch, a few Australians captured in Timor and 940 British and 167 American survivors of ships sunk in the Battle of the Java Sea. Working parties went to Makassar docks, built trenches and concrete foundations for A.A. gun sites and made various types of hand grenades and mortars; a permanent party for airfield work was kept at Maros, some fifteen miles from the camp, and, for nine months in 1943, 200 British prisoners worked near Kendari on the eastern side of the island, reclaiming swampy ground. Drafts for Japan left the camp in 1942, and in October 1943 a large proportion of the officers was transferred to Java, followed by most of the

remaining officers and a large party of sick prisoners in July 1945. The advanced guard of 21st Australian Brigade arrived at Makassar on the 21st September 1945, and within a few days the 460 or so prisoners found in the camp (mainly British) were evacuated by sea to Australia.

### *Hong Kong*

At first the 5,000 British, 3,800 Indian and 1,600 Canadian troops captured in Hong Kong were concentrated in North Point camp on the island, which had originally been built to house Chinese refugees, and at Shamshui Po, a two-battalion hutted camp built in 1936 for British troops on the mainland north of Kowloon.

Within a week or two of the capitulation, the Indian troops were removed to a separate camp at Kowloon. Many of them were later transferred to Hainan Island, and to Canton from where a steady trickle managed to escape into free China. In April 1942, by which time a number of prisoners had escaped from Shamshui Po, the officers were removed to a separate camp in Argyle Street, Kowloon. They remained there until May 1944, when they were moved back to a separate part of Shamshui Po. North Point camp was closed about the end of September 1942.

The first prisoners to be sent to Japan from Hong Kong left in early September 1942, followed at the end of the month by a draft of 1,800 crowded into the holds of the *Lisbon Maru*, which was damaged by a torpedo off the Chinese coast and sank on the 2nd October. About 980 were eventually rescued and were taken on to Japan; of the rest three managed to reach land and make their way to Chungking. During 1943 and early 1944 some 2,400 more prisoners were shipped to Japan, and all senior officers were transferred to Formosa in August 1943.

In October 1942 a British clandestine unit across the Chinese border at Weichow managed to contact the prison camps in Hong Kong, a contact which was maintained and developed with a view to facilitating the escape of prisoners. In mid-June 1943 the Japanese arrested one of the Chinese agents in Hong Kong and arrests among prisoners and civilians followed. One Indian and three British prisoners were executed, and three British prisoners were sentenced to fifteen years imprisonment, being joined in Stanley Gaol by four prisoners arrested in September 1943 and sentenced to five years imprisonment for constructing and secretly using a wireless set in Argyle Street camp. The seven men were transferred to a military prison in Canton in June 1945 and returned to Hong Kong on the 21st August.

An Australian recovery team arrived at Hong Kong on the 30th August 1945 with units of the British Pacific Fleet, and the first repatriation ships left for Manila on the 6th September. A British R.A.P.W.I. team arrived on the 11th September.

### *Formosa*

The senior military and civil officers from Singapore disembarked at Takao in south Formosa on the last day of August 1942,<sup>1</sup> and after a week

<sup>1</sup> See page 534.

in a nearby camp were transferred to Karenko camp on the east coast, which already contained senior American officers captured in the Philippines. Here they were later joined by the Governors of Hong Kong, the Netherlands East Indies and British Borneo and officers from Java. In April 1943 about eighty of the most senior prisoners were transferred south for a few weeks to a small camp at Tamazato before returning to Karenko, and in June the sixteen Governors and Generals moved to a special camp at Moksak, near the capital, Taihoku. In June the prisoners at Karenko were transferred inland to a camp at Shirakawa, where they were joined by officers from Hong Kong. In October and November 1944 all senior military and civil officers were sent to Manchuria.

Most of the other British prisoners sent to Formosa arrived from Malaya in late 1942 and were distributed among Taichu and Heito camps in the south-west, Karenko in the east, and Taihoku and Kinkaseki in the north. Their work included copper-mining, quarrying and farming.

In early September 1945 American contact teams landed in Formosa, and on the 5th began evacuating the 1,260 prisoners found on the island (of whom 1,150 were British) by sea to Manila.

### *Korea*

Once their voyage was over, the conditions experienced by the comparatively small number of British and Australian prisoners sent to working camps in Korea were tolerable compared with those of others in Japanese hands. Prisoners who arrived from Singapore in late September 1942 were sent to camps at Seoul and nearby Jinsen, some being transferred to Manchuria in November 1942 and others in the autumn of 1943 to Konan, 150 miles north of Seoul. At Seoul and Konan prisoners worked in local factories; at Jinsen they helped to excavate for a dock and later worked in a railway-wagon assembly yard.

An Allied reconnaissance team was dropped at Seoul about the 19th August 1945, but was forced by the Japanese to return to base. By arrangement with the Russians a contact team was flown in in mid-September and found about 470 British and 50 Australian prisoners, who were repatriated by way of Manila.

### *Manchuria*

The officers who left Formosa in late 1944 for Manchuria were taken to Tchen Tchai Tung on the edge of the Gobi Desert, about 180 miles north-west of Mukden. In December the Governors and Generals were moved to a small camp at Hsian, a hundred miles north-east of Mukden, and the prisoners remaining in Tchen Tchai Tung were transferred to Mukden in May 1943, where Americans from the Philippines and British and Australians from Singapore had been since the end of 1942.

The original camp at Mukden was a primitive wooden barracks in the grounds of the University, but in July 1943 the prisoners were moved to a camp beside an electric power station. Working parties were sent to local

machine-tool and steel factories, and from 1944 drafts of prisoners moved out to small branch camps to work in other factories.

An American contact team from General Wedemeyer's Headquarters in Chungking was dropped at Mukden on the 16th August 1945, and at first encountered some obstruction from the Japanese. Russian troops arrived on the 20th and, with their assistance, the Americans began evacuating the 1,550 prisoners (of whom 239 were British and 46 Australian) partly by air to China but mostly, from the 10th September, by train to Darien and thence by sea to Manila. Another American team was dropped at Hsian on the 19th August and a few days later the Governors and Generals were taken by Russian motor convoy to Mukden, from where they flew to Chungking and on to Calcutta.

### *Japan*

Nearly all the prisoners transported to Japan from the Far East and the Pacific were sent as labour for heavy industry (such as steel or smelting works), docks, shipyards, mines and quarries, and were therefore mainly concentrated in industrial areas on the four islands. They were housed in newly-built camps, workers' dormitories, warehouses and some, for a time, in a baseball stadium. American teams and British teams from the British Pacific Fleet began contacting the prison camps in the early days of September 1945 and by the 26th all prisoners (including over 9,000 British and 2,600 Australians) had been evacuated to Manila or direct to Australia.

# APPENDIX 31

## Battle Casualties, British and Commonwealth Land Forces, South-East Asia, December 1941—November 1946

A: OPENING PHASES (December 1941–May 1942)

Campaign	Rank and Nationality	Killed	Wounded	Missing & P.O.W.s	Total
Hong Kong <sup>1</sup> (8–25/12/41)	British/Indian Officers	49	15	312	376
	B. and I.O.R.s <sup>2</sup>	248	124	6,599	6,971
	Canadian Officers	22	} 290	74	96
	Canadian O.R.s	264		1,315	1,869
	Local Forces Officers	14		196	210
	Local Forces O.R.s	198		2,126	2,324
	Total	795	429	10,622	11,846
Malaya <sup>1</sup> (8/12/41–15/2/42)	British/Indian Officers	122	113	2,429	2,664
	B.O.R.s	260	64	35,463	35,787
	I.O.R.s	265	726	60,162	61,153
	Australian Officers	104	60	844	1,008
	Australian O.R.s	1,685	1,246	14,551	17,482
	Local Forces Officers	3	7	745	755
	Local Forces O.R.s	7	14	13,606	13,627
	Total	2,446	2,230	127,800	132,476
Java & Sumatra <sup>1</sup> (14/2/42–8/3/42)	British Officers	1	—	267	268
	B.O.R.s	8	1	5,449	5,458
	Australian Officers	1	3	110	114
	Australian O.R.s	35	57	2,626	2,718
	Total	45	61	8,452	8,558
Borneo (2/15th Punjab) (24/12/41–9/3/42)	British/Indian Officers	24	} Killed, wounded and missing	}	524
	B.O.R.s	3			
	I.O.R.s	497			
1st Burma (25/12/41–12/5/42)	British/Indian Officers	133	126	115	374
	B.O.R.s	348	605	647	1,600
	I.O.R.s	769	1,738	5,555	8,062
	Burma Army	249	126	3,052	3,427
	Total	1,499	2,595	9,369	13,463

Grand Total:

166,867 (4,785 killed, 5,315 wounded, 156,243 missing and P.O.W., plus 524 killed, wounded and missing in Borneo).

<sup>1</sup> In these campaigns a proportion of the killed and wounded was included in the missing and P.O.W. figures.

<sup>2</sup> British and Indian Other Ranks.

B: BURMA (October 1942–August 1945)

Campaign	Rank and Nationality	Killed	Wounded	Missing	Total
1st Arakan <sup>1</sup> (23/10/42–15/5/43)	Officers	44	118	52	214
	B.O.R.s	266	730	449	1,445
	I.O.R.s	606	2,041	751	3,398
	Total	916	2,889	1,252	5,057 <sup>1</sup>
1st Chindit (February –June 1943)	Officers	4	5	47	56
	B.O.R.s	14	3	376	393
	I.O.R.s	10	9	670	689
	Total	28	17	1,093	1,138
Decisive Battles (1/10/43–31/12/44)	Officers	355	774	56	1,185
	B.O.R.s	1,788	5,262	536	7,586
	I.O.R.s	3,207	12,264	1,516	16,987
Period includes Ngakyedauk, Imphal, Kohima and operations of 36th Division in N.C.A.C.	A.O.R.s <sup>2</sup>	316	1,240	130	1,686
	Total	5,666	19,540	2,238	27,444
2nd Chindit (Special Force) (May–August 1944)	Officers	95	170	24	289
	B.O.R.s	656	1,133	364	2,153
	I.O.R.s	211	721	39	971
	A.O.R.s <sup>2</sup>	72	278	23	373
	Total	1,034	2,302	450	3,786
Reconquest of Burma (1/1/45–25/8/45)	Officers	316	644	13	973
	B.O.R.s	965	2,954	135	4,054
	I.O.R.s	1,796	6,706	194	8,696
	A.O.R.s <sup>2</sup>	470	1,690	47	2,207
	Unspecified O.R.s <sup>2</sup>	1,636	5,394	61	7,091
	Total	5,183	17,388	450	23,021

*Grand Total:*

60,446 (12,827 killed, 42,136 wounded and 5,483 missing).

<sup>1</sup> For the sake of simplification 965 casualties suffered during operations in the 1942 monsoon and from the 15th May 1943 to the end of September have been included in the 1st Arakan figures.

<sup>2</sup> African Other Ranks.

<sup>3</sup> No breakdown between B.O.R.s, I.O.R.s and A.O.R.s was made in casualty returns from the 1st April 1945 (when the pursuit to Rangoon began) to the 25th August (when the battle of the break-out ended). Most of these casualties were Indians, since no British formations were involved and fighting in Arakan, where the African troops were, had virtually ceased.

## C: POST-WAR OPERATIONS

Country	Rank and Nationality	Killed	Wounded	Missing	Total
French Indo-China (8/9/45-30/3/46)	Officers	5	1	—	6
	O.R.s	21	72	—	93
	Total	26	73	—	99
Java (8/9/45-30/11/46)	Officers	41	107	9	157
	B.O.R.s	22	62	14	98
	I.O.R.s	537	1,251	297	2,085
	Total	600	1,420	320	2,340
Sumatra (10/10/45-30/11/46)	Officers	5	} 243	—	} 303
	O.R.s	50		5	
	Total	55	243	5	303

*Grand Total:*

2,742 (681 killed, 1,736 wounded and 325 missing).

D: TOTAL BATTLE CASUALTIES, DECEMBER 1941-NOVEMBER 1946: 230,055 (18,293 killed, 49,187 wounded, 162,051 missing and P.O.W., plus 524 killed, wounded and missing in Borneo).



## APPENDIX 32

### Code Names Used in The Text

#### *Allied*

Alpha	Plan for concentrating Chinese troops for the defence of Kunming.
Anakim	First plan for the reoccupation of Burma.
Argonaut	Conference in Malta and the Crimea, January-February 1945.
Axiom	Mission sent by Mountbatten to London and Washington in February 1944.
Beta	Offensive by Chinese troops to capture Kweilin, Liuchow and a port on the Chinese coast.
Bibber	Occupation of Siam.
Birdcage	Plan to drop leaflets on known P.O.W. camps to notify the Japanese surrender.
Capital	Capture and consolidation of the general line Pakokku-Lashio-Mandalay and exploitation southwards towards Rangoon.
Culverin <sup>1</sup>	Occupation of northern Sumatra.
Dracula <sup>1</sup>	Amphibious and airborne operation for the capture of Rangoon.
Epilogue	Reduction of formations within S.E.A.C.
Mailfist <sup>1</sup>	The capture of Singapore.
Masterdom	Occupation of French Indo-China.
Mastiff	Plan to drop medical supplies, food and Red Cross relief teams on known P.O.W. camps after the Japanese surrender.
Modified Dracula	<i>Ad hoc</i> amphibious and airborne operation for the capture of Rangoon, May 1945.
Octagon	The second Quebec Conference, September 1944.

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<sup>1</sup> These operations were not carried out.

Python	War Office scheme for repatriating British troops after a stated period of service overseas.
Quadrant	The first Quebec Conference, August 1943.
Roger <sup>1</sup>	Occupation of Phuket Island.
Sextant	The Cairo Conference, November-December 1943.
Stanza	Rehabilitation and opening of Rangoon port and the establishment there of an advanced base for 14th Army's maintenance during the monsoon.
Terminal	Conference at Potsdam, July-August 1945.
Trident	The second Washington Conference, May 1943.
Zipper	The invasion of Malaya.

*Japanese*

ICHI-GO	Offensive in China, 1944.
KETSU-GO	Plan for the defence of Japan against invasion.
TEN-GO	Plan for offensive against Allied fleets and convoys approaching the Ryukyu Islands and Japan.

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<sup>1</sup> This operation was not carried out.





