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THE TENTH AIR FORCE

1 JANUARY - 10 MARCH 1943

Prepared by
ASSISTANT CHIEF OF AIR STAFF
INTELLIGENCE
HISTORICAL DIVISON

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The original of this monograph and the documents from which it was written are in the USAF Historical Division, Archives Branch, Bldg. 914, Maxwell Air Force Base, Alabama.

Prepared by
Assistant Chief of Air Staff, Intelligence
Historical Division
November 1944

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Chapter I

DEVELOPMENTS IN THE CHINA-BURMA-INDIA THEATER

In January 1943 Brig. Gen. Clayton L. Bissell, Commanding General of the Tenth Air Force since 18 August 1942, faced many of the same problems and difficulties which had confronted Maj. Gen. Lewis H. Brereton upon his arrival in India the preceding February to command the newly created American air force in the China-Burma-India Theater. Although much of the spade work for the establishment and development of an effective combat air unit in the Far East had been done, the accomplishments of the Tenth Air Force during 1942 were small in comparison with those of the air forces in other major theaters of operation. Basic policies had largely been determined, and far-reaching strategic plans had been mapped out, but the major part of the task still lay ahead.[1]

While the general tactical situation in the China-Burma-India Theater, under command of Lt. Gen. Joseph W. Stilwell since its creation in February 1942, had by and large remained unchanged, the strategic position had improved immeasurably. The first units of the American air force had arrived in India during the darkest weeks of 1942, when German drives toward Suez and the Caucasus and the Japanese advance in Burma threatened to catch the Indian subcontinent in the jaws of a huge pincer. The loss of India would have completed the isolation of China, and this double catastrophe might well have disastrously changed the course of the war. By

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1 January 1943, however, both German drives had been turned back, and Allied counter-drives had removed all immediate danger to India from the west. In the east the Japanese had completed the occupation of central and southern Burma but had made no serious attempt to cross the rugged and roadless expanse along the Burma-India frontier. In the Indian Ocean, too, the situation had greatly improved. The heavy units of the Japanese fleet which had threatened to deny the use of normal sea lanes to Indian ports had withdrawn in April 1942 and never returned. Although the presence of the enemy at Rangoon, Singapore, and in the Andaman Islands restricted Allied shipping activity in the Bay of Bengal, convoys were able to reach the ports in western India, and coastwise shipping from Ceylon to Calcutta had been resumed. Thus in 1943 the Americans in Asia had a feeling of security which had not been present in 1942, and could go about their work with the assurance that whatever they accomplished would be of permanent value to the total war effort.

This feeling of security and permanence which had resulted from the general improvement in the strategic situation, however, could not remove, or even minimize, the many basic problems which had to be faced within the theater. Logistical difficulties, which stemmed from the great distances separating the locale of operations from the chief source of supplies, were destined to continue as the chief handicap in the way of successful operations.[2] Distance alone, however, constituted only a small part of the gigantic problem involved in the transportation of war materials to support American

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activities in the Far East. A critical shortage of merchant vessels and the huge demands from theaters holding a higher priority required attention in shaping all plans for future action.

Transportation within the theater had been vastly improved during the preceding months but the problem had not been fully overcome. Increased docking space at the western ports, the reopening of the huge port of Calcutta, and provision of storage facilities at various ports had made possible a more efficient handling and reshipment of goods received. The use of Calcutta had also greatly relieved the strain on trans-Indian railroads, and increased air transportation had been of value, but there remained difficult problems in moving supplies into Assam and thence to China. Assam, as the focal point of the air transport line into China, had assumed a place of importance completely out of proportion to its peacetime status. As a result, its inefficient, narrow-gauge rail lines and slow, clumsy, river-transport system had proved incapable of meeting the increased demands placed upon them.

The supply line from India to China, which had occupied much of the time and thought of the staff of the Tenth Air Force during the preceding six months, remained a cause for greatest anxiety among the Americans. While the actual operation of the air transport service was no longer a responsibility of General Bissell's force, the protection of the ferry and its installations was still an important part of its mission.[3] More important yet was the fact that

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the China Air Task Force was wholly dependent upon the ferry for the supplies necessary to its continued operations from Chinese bases. Since the support of China had been considered the most important part of the mission of the Tenth Air Force, the failure of the air ferry was tantamount to failure to carry out the mission of the AAF in the Asiatic theater.

The most serious problems, therefore, were logistical, but there were many other obstacles which stood in the way of efficient operations, most of them obstacles of such a nature that they could never be removed. Extremes of heat and cold, dust and rain, fog and high humidity, would always be present, and only through experience and the improvement of equipment could operational hazards be cut to a minimum and general health conditions improved. Valuable experience had been gained during 1942, but it was apparent that natural conditions would continue to render air operations much more difficult than in some other theaters.

To a casual observer it might have appeared that the general tactical situation in Asia was for the most part not unlike that of the preceding year. Since the spring of 1942 there had been no spectacular battles, no reconquered territory, and no massing of land armies along the frontiers. The mission of the Tenth Air Force and the relation of its Commanding General to the Theater Commander had not been altered. The all-important ground supply line into China had not been opened. Yet there were many concrete evidences that considerable progress had been made in preparation for aerial

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warfare. Completion of new airdromes in eastern India had enabled the Tenth Air Force to deploy its meager forces to better advantage than had been possible only a few weeks before. Increasingly numerous alternate landing fields provided havens for planes returning from distant missions in such condition that they could not reach their home fields. Repair and supply depots had been established at strategic points and were slowly but surely increasing the efficiency of their services. The aircraft strength of the AAF in the theater was for the first time great enough to offer a serious challenge to Japanese air ascendancy over Burma. Certainly the prospects for operations of the American air units in India and China were brighter than they had been at any previous time.

From the time he assumed command of the Tenth Air Force, General Bissell had realized that there were certain conditions existing within the theater which would have to be corrected before maximum operational efficiency could be achieved. He had attacked these problems with energy and persistence and had enjoyed considerable success. Nevertheless, the condition of morale continued to cause concern. In a report on the air forces in the Asiatic theater late in 1942, General Bissell had stated that morale was at a low level, especially because of the stagnation of promotions among junior officers and a general shortage of organizational equipment.[4]

The arrival of replacements in grades above second lieutenant plus the limitations placed by T/O's had made it impossible to promote numerous second lieutenants whose combat experience and proved

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ability certainly merited recognition. Revision of T/O's and the activation of four combat squadrons in the theater had partially remedied the pr[illegible]motions but had not made it possible to advance all de[illegible]enants. A request from General Bissell that [illegible] junior officers be allowed without regard to T[illegible], and a counter proposal was made from Wash[illegible]rienced junior officers be returned to the Unit[illegible]n the training program where promotions could [illegible]t difficulty. General Bissell disapproved of th[illegible] his efforts to obtain promotions in the fiel[illegible]uary 1943, General Arnold on a visit to the th[illegible]of the necessity of T/O revision and that pend-[illegible] temporary expedient should be adopted. As a [illegible] Force was permitted to give advancement to 50 [illegible] regardless of T/O limitations.[5]

[illegible]ny chance of repetition of the difficulty and to prove [illegible]n in the theater that the popular conception that "There'll be no promotion this side of the ocean" was in error, General Bissell asked that in the future all officer replacements be sent to the theater in grade of second lieutenant unless higher ranking officers were specifically requested. His argument, that the arrival of inexperienced officers in grades higher than those of men with considerable combat experience was detrimental to morale, was valid, and the policy he proposed was adopted.[6]

Concurrently the problem of shortage of organizational equipment was attacked with no less energy and persistency but with a

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lesser degree of success. This was no mere question of policy, however, but had its origins in a shortage of materiel which could not immediately be overcome. Since personnel carriers from the outset had been more readily obtainable than cargo vessels it had been the practice to send organizations to theaters of operation, their equipment following when suitable freighters became available. Units were therefore forced to begin operations without many of the necessary tools. The War Department had been repeatedly and emphatically reminded of this condition, and attention especially had been called to the hardships growing out of the need for motor vehicles.

A request for vehicles made by General Bissell on 25 January gives an indication of the extent of the shortage in his air force. He asked for immediate shipment of 13 sedans, 28 ambulances, 338 jeeps, 26 command cars, 73 carryalls, 39 weapons carriers, 5 trucks (1½-ton), 4 truck tractors (1½-ton), 256 trucks (2½-ton), and 6 trucks (4-ton). These vehicles, he said, were urgently needed because of the extreme dispersion of units, the unreliability of commercial transportation, and the necessity of being ready to handle expansion and/or temporary reinforcement.[7] In reply General Marshall stated that the movement would require about 5,000 shipping tons and would therefore have to be sent out in small shipments over a period of several months in order not to interfere with the normal flow of supplies and TBA equipment for new units moving into the theater.[8] Obviously the existing shortage could not be overcome

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for several months.

Officials in the War Department were well aware of the unfortunate situation and of the serious effects that its continuance might have, but they were helpless to alleviate the condition until more cargo vessels became available.[9] The choice seemed to be one of continuing the current procedure or of allowing personnel to remain in the zone of the interior while shipping space for organizational equipment was accumulated. Of the alternatives the former was more acceptable, and for a time the existing policy would have to continue. As a possible way to prevent the condition from reaching a critical point in the future the War Department proposed a plan by which there would eventually be built up in India a pool of equipment from which units arriving later could be supplied. In any case it was evident that the ultimate solution lay in the ability to provide more shipping space to the Asiatic theater.[10]

As a further measure to insure stability of morale among his troops General Bissell exerted pressure for improvement of mail service to the theater, and to stop the waylaying of air cargoes intended for his force. Periodicals seem to have been one of the prizes most often sought by looters. The habit of appropriating air cargoes at points along the transport line was not peculiar to one theater, but the Tenth Air Force was at the end of the longest line and its cargoes were therefore more likely to be molested. On 11 January General Bissell reported that the failure to receive second class mail was affecting morale and requested that an

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inspector be assigned to ascertain what corrective action could be taken.[11] Three days later General Stratemeyer replied that corrective action was being taken, and that in addition an air inspector would investigate and determine the responsibility for past deficiencies.[12] The following day he cabled General Bissell that five dispatches of second class mail had left the port of embarkation in November and five more in December. He went on to say that Maj. Gen. Raymond A. Wheeler had reported each week in December that mail conditions east of Karachi were normal. In view of General Wheeler's further assertion of 2 January that practically all Christmas mail had reached the troops on time, General Stratemeyer requested that General Bissell give specific cases of delay or loss of second class mail as a basis for investigation.[13] This was evidently done since General Stratemeyer, on 30 January, admitted that shipments to the theater had apparently been pilfered or diverted en route.[14] Remedial measures seem to have been effective, for on 22 March Brig. Gen. Benjamin G. Ferris, at rear echelon headquarters of USAF in CBI, reported from New Delhi that, in the period from 1 to 15 March, 228 pouches of letters had been delivered by air and that 1,560 sacks of parcel post were delivered by the SS David Stone on 11 March. He added that the volume of V-mail was rapidly increasing and that the service was excellent.[15]

Shortage of equipment and personnel as well as the peculiar characteristics of some of the regions in which operations were carried out presented the various commanders of the Tenth Air Force with many puzzling problems. One of the most perplexing of these

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was that of providing the best possible air warning system for AAF installations in Assam. Early in 1942 General Brereton, then commander of the Tenth, had concluded that the only workable net would consist of small self-supporting units operating portable radio sets far up in the Naga Hills to the east. Because of the ruggedness of the terrain these outposts would have to be supplied from the air. It was believed that radar would be ineffective because the airfields were so close to the hills, and later tests proved that this assumption was essentially correct. Meanwhile a few portable transmitters were obtained and small detachments were placed at almost inaccessible points in the hills. General Bissell was in accord with General Brereton's views and endeavored to add more reporting stations.

Late in October 1942 a series of Japanese attacks on the Dinjan area had indicated that the system as it then existed was entirely unsatisfactory. It was believed, however, that the failure of the net to give sufficient warning was due to the limited number of outposts rather than to unsoundness of the general plan.[16] A few additional ground observer teams were deployed but General Bissell was still not at all confident that the system was equal to its task. He therefore asked on 2 November that 15 SCR 177 sets and 45 operators be shipped to India so that the net could be greatly extended, but only 5 sets and 15 operators were authorized. On 6 January General Marshall reported that the five SCR 177 sets had departed from the United States by air.[17] On 25 January, however, they still had not arrived,

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and General Bissell requested that they be traced.[18] On 28 January General Marshall notified him that the sets had left Miami by air on 25 December, and that they were being assigned a higher priority to expedite delivery.[19] Almost a month later General Bissell reported that Air Transport Command had informed him that the sets were still at Natal.[20]

Meanwhile, on 14 January General Bissell had received a cable from General Stratemeyer stating that the desirability of assignment of air warning units to the Tenth Air Force was recognized, and suggesting that the T/O be drawn up for battalions of three self-contained companies, each company to be equipped with four mobile radar sets and to include about 12 observer teams equipped with suitable radio transmitters.[21] General Bissell replied that there was great need for such air warning units but asserted that each observer team should be large enough to maintain itself in isolated stations, and that messing and medical requirements must be provided to meet such employment.[22] General Stratemeyer then said that under the plan which he had proposed the observer units were to consist of only three men each and therefore could not be capable of maintaining themselves. He agreed that the groups operating the radar sets should be self-supporting but considered it uneconomical from the point of view of personnel and materiel to provide self-maintaining ground observer units.[23] A few days later General Bissell stated that the air warning units to which he had referred were not radar units but ground observers equipped with radio transmitters. He

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again insisted that the nature of the topography of the region precluded successful use of radar, and that the only possible effective air warning net would be one composed of self-supporting ground observer teams.[24]

While the question as to what type of net would eventually be adopted was still unsettled, the judgment of General Bissell was vindicated when the warning net consisting of only 14 ground observer posts with 7 SCR 177 and 7 SCR 188 radio transmitters gave sufficient warning of two Japanese air attacks on the Dinjan area late in February, the second of which was turned back with heavy losses.[25] Still not satisfied, General Bissell repeated his request for 15 additional transmitters and 45 operators. Of the 15 operators and 5 sets previously authorized, all the operators had arrived but only parts of 2 of the sets had been received.[26]

A few days thereafter General Ferris added the weight of his opinion to the contention of General Bissell. He stated that the situation at Dinjan required that the Tenth Air Force immediately supplement the air warning net so that 24 observer posts could be operated. He also maintained that each self-supporting unit should have 10 men.[27]

On 5 March General Marshall, in reply to the message he had received from General Ferris, presented a plan calling for relaying of messages from the outlying posts to nearer stations at which plottings could be made and telephone messages sent to areas which seemed likely to be the objects of enemy attacks. This plan would

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have the advantage of using smaller transmitters with shorter range, many of which were already available in the theater.[28] General Bissell then explained that, under existing circumstances, the most distant observer posts would have to be placed too near the potential targets to allow time for plotting and relaying of messages. Such a system, he said, would never allow enough time for the slow-climbing P-40's, charged with defense of the area, to gain sufficient altitude for successful interception. It was his plan to equip each outpost with a transmitter powerful enough to send warnings directly to the areas likely to be attacked. Furthermore, he believed that 24 observer units equipped with sets of 150-mile range could provide sufficient warning for Assam-based fighters to make Japanese attacks too costly to be continued. He concluded with the statement: "I have lived with this problem for about a year and know that the personnel and materiel requested are the absolute minimum to do the job."[29] On 17 March Brig. Gen. Gordon P. Saville, Director of Air Defense, wrote General Bissell that results of Signal Corps tests indicated that radar was unsuited to the terrain in question and agreed that effective air warning could best be obtained from ground observers reporting by radio. He thought, however, that radar sets might be used to supplement the ground observer posts.[30]

On the surface it would appear that the difference in opinion was due to a lack of understanding by officials in Washington of the conditions faced in the theater. Yet this was not the case. At the time of General Stratemeyer's suggestion that radar units

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be used, the final tests proving that radar equipment would not be effective in the region had not been completed. Moreover, had it been possible to use the plan suggested by General Stratemeyer or the one suggested by General Marshall, much of the required equipment could have been obtained from signal units already in the field. On the other hand, to extend the net as proposed by General Bissell required that portable radio transmitters and generators be shipped from the United States. Once more the shortage of shipping space was felt.[31]

Meanwhile, General Bissell and his staff had been greatly disturbed by the civil affairs of India. The failure of the Cripps Mission and the subsequent arrest of Gandhi in August 1942 had led to widespread disorders and serious delays in transportation and construction.[32] Throughout the remainder of the year the situation was grave, a civil disobedience campaign resulting in 60,229 arrests, 940 deaths, and 1,630 wounded.[33] This, however, was only one of the causes for uneasiness. The Japanese raids in the Dinjan area in October had led to a general exodus of native workers from the region, while the more recent raids on Calcutta in late December had caused an estimated 350,000 natives to leave the city.[34] Because of the defection of laborers and the damaging results of widespread sabotage, efforts of the American forces were hampered to such an extent that it was believed necessary to bring in American labor troops and guards. If this procedure became mandatory, labor troops and guards would possibly displace higher priority personnel badly

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needed by the Tenth Air Force.

During January, as the panic at Calcutta subsided, the labor situation showed some improvement, and the incidence of sabotage slowly declined.[35] The general uneasiness of the populace was not entirely allayed, however, before a threatened food shortage gave the Indian press an opportunity for further agitation.[36] Flood and cyclone damage had reduced the harvest. The normal importation of rice and other foodstuffs from Burma was impossible. Unless other sources of food were found a serious famine threatened. Farmers and speculators began hoarding grain, and city dwellers suffered from hunger.[37] Strikes, arson, train derailments, and bombings once more broke out, and when on 10 February Gandhi went on a 21-day hunger strike, the future of American military activities in India was far from reassuring.[38]

It was feared that Gandhi would not survive the fast and that his death would result in chaos throughout India.[39] Some Americans questioned the wisdom of the British decision to continue Gandhi's incarceration, but the British were convinced that under the circumstances their policy was the wiser.[40] General Wavell believed that Gandhi would survive the fast and that the general situation would improve as a result.[41] In London, Sir Stafford Cripps expressed the opinion that should Gandhi die the civil disobedience campaign would soon cease because of Nehru's inability to hold the Congress Party together.[42] During the last 10 days of February Gandhi's condition was repeatedly reported as being grave, and, when on

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3 March it was announced that the fast had ended, a feeling of relief pervaded the entire country.[43] Recent arrivals of grain shipments from Australia had somewhat relieved the food shortage and prospects for the summer became much brighter.

Meanwhile requests for labor troops had been looked upon favorably in Washington, but action on sending Americans for guard duty at American installations was delayed until the policy of the British was fully determined. The British had accepted the responsibility for security of American air installations in March 1942, but as the number of airdromes used by the U. S. forces increased and internal disorders reached a high peak, they had announced that while they would continue to furnish protection against enemy action, they were no longer able to accept the responsibility for protection against sabotage by disaffected natives. After some persuasion, in which it was pointed out that the sending of guards from the United States would slow down the arrival of combat airmen, the British agreed to accept full responsibility for security.[44] They were not, however, able to provide white troops, and while the Ghurkas had proved entirely reliable as guards they were not numerous enough to provide absolute security.[45] Generals Bissell and Ferris therefore felt that the four military police companies previously requested were still necessary.[46] The War Department was convinced of the need and promised to send the guard units to the theater as soon as possible.[47]

Reports from China in the meanwhile had been far from favorable. Morale in the Chinese Army, which had fought so long without

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the proper weapons, was beginning to fail. The civilian population of unoccupied China was suffering from malnutrition and disease. Although Chiang Kai-shek retained his prestige, there was a constant threat of civil war between his armies and those of the communist guerillas. It was therefore feared that an all-out attack by the Japanese during the spring would bring an end to the war in China. The Chinese press became critical of the small amount of materiel being sent to China.[48]

An announcement on 12 January that at the end of the war Great Britain and the United States would surrender extraterritorial rights in China proved of some help, but there was need for more substantial evidence of continuing support for China's war effort.[49] Assurances given on this point, both by President Roosevelt and Prime Minister Churchill immediately following the Casablanca Conference, were well received by the press of free China.[50]

Clearly there were many disturbing elements in the China-Burma-India Theater to distract the attention of American military leaders, and yet purely military affairs were on the upgrade. It had been found impossible to furnish the Tenth Air Force with a full complement of aircraft for its one heavy bombardment group, one medium bombardment group, and two fighter groups, by October 1942, as had been visualized in the Arnold-Portal agreement of the preceding June.[51] Aircraft strength in the CBI Theater under that agreement was to comprise 252 planes, of which 35 were to be heavy bombers, 57 medium bombers, and 160 fighters. As late as 1 January, however,

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there were present only 32 heavy bombers, 43 mediums, and 184 fighters,[52] and not all of these aircraft were fit for combat operations. Among the heavy bombers were ten early model B-17's that had been in the theater for almost a year. A few of the medium bombers had seen hard usage and badly needed overhauling; while among the 184 fighters were some of the early P-40's brought to the theater by the American Volunteer Group almost 18 months before. As will be seen, the strength of the Tenth Air Force in January 1943 was below that planned for October of the previous year, but the arrival of seven heavy bombers, six mediums, and 18 fighters during January and February gave promise that within a short time all combat squadrons would be furnished with a full complement of operational aircraft.[53]

On 12 January General Bissell was able to report to General Arnold that morale in the Tenth Air Force was "good to excellent and improving," and that promotion and decoration inequalities were being overcome. He cited the shortage of spares and continued looting of supplies along the air ferry as two of the greatest difficulties.[54] He was by no means satisfied with the status of his force, however, and continued his vigorous efforts to make it a full-fledged air force in every sense of the word. As need arose he asked for materiel and personnel to increase its efficiency, at the same time constantly shifting the force on hand in order to make the best use of it. Although obviously disappointed when his requests were refused, he indicated in a letter to General Stratemeyer that he

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was conscious of the fact that the War Department was not always in position to comply with requests from the field. He said: "It has been my practice in the past to work out our own problems in this theater without reference to Washington wherever this has been possible. . . . We are proceeding under the principle that everything possible has been and will be done to give us the support necessary for success."[55]

Despite the fact that some of the requests for materiel and personnel were not immediately approved, the entire situation was different from that which had existed only a few months before. Refusals at that time, when the war materials of the United States were as yet inadequate, had often been final and sometimes rather curt. In 1943, on the other hand, refusals were less frequent, and were generally tempered with acknowledgment of the need. Promises were made to provide whatever was required as soon as it became available. It was not unusual also for the War Department to volunteer information as to the availability of equipment not specifically requested from the theater.[56]

Materiel requests from the Tenth Air Force included a wide variety: improved incendiary bombs, aerial mines, high altitude fighters, precision bombsights for medium bombers, and medium bombers with cannon installed in the nose. On 4 January General Bissell reported that crews had no confidence in the incendiary cluster-type bombs and asked information on recent developments.[57] This was soon followed by another message asking for an incendiary

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bomb which would ignite moist targets such as those to be found in Burma.[58] Work was being done to improve incendiaries, and investigation of the Chinese phosphorous incendiary was in progress, but no effective bomb for that particular type of target was at the time available.[59]

On 13 January General Bissell asked for technical information on aerial mines suitable for use in B-24 and B-25 type aircraft, and also requested the date for availability of self-anchoring floating and magnetic mines.[60] The information was immediately forwarded to him but he was warned that the supply of magnetic mines was limited.[61]

On 8 January he reported that the performance of the P-38 photographic plane, recently received, was excellent but once more expressed a need for at least 12 high-altitude fighters to deal with Japanese reconnaissance biplanes able to operate above the ceiling of the current-type American fighters in the theater.[62] This request was turned down with the familiar reply that high altitude fighters would not be sent because of prior allocations to other theaters.[63] Within a month after the report of the excellent performance of the P-38's, trouble developed with their leakproof tanks and a request was made for a factory tank expert to aid in solving the problem.[64]

For several weeks General Bissell had expressed dissatisfaction over inaccuracy of bombardment in his command. This inaccuracy, especially in the case of medium bombers, was at least partially due to the fact that they were not equipped with precision bombsights, but he also believed that bombardiers were sometimes sent to theaters

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of operation without sufficient training. It had been noted that bombardiers who had passed the required accuracy tests in the United States were unable to requalify under battle conditions in the theater. He had therefore suggested that bombardiers be more thoroughly trained, and that Norden precision sights be installed in all medium bombers of the Tenth Air Force. It was also his opinion that navigators should be trained as bombardiers so that each ship would carry two men capable of accurate bombardment.[65]

The War Department recognized that medium bombers should be equipped with Norden sights, but General Bissell was notified that only enough Nordens were available to equip the heavy bombers. On 10 January a pinpoint target in Burma was attacked by B-24's and B-25's from about the same altitude and under similar conditions. The accuracy of the B-24's was undoubtedly superior to that of the medium bombers. Two days later General Bissell repeated his request for precision sights for B-25's, saying that almost all targets required accurate precision bombing.[66] General Stratemeyer again agreed that precision sights were necessary for best results and at this time promised that shipment would be made in the near future.[67]

On 12 February General Bissell again reported that bombing accuracy in his command was unsatisfactory, and intimated that it was not entirely due to lack of Norden bombsights. He stated that all efforts of supervisory personnel in the theater had not produced sufficient improvement and requested the assignment of a highly qualified bombardier and bombsight expert to his command.[68] Two days

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later General Stratemeyer cabled that Lt. Col. John R. Sutherland, whom he considered one of the outstanding bombardment experts in the AAF, would be dispatched to the theater by air within a week. He expressed the opinion that Colonel Sutherland would be able to give valuable assistance to the supervisory personnel already in the field. He added also that a highly qualified bombardier and bombsight maintenance expert would be dispatched to the Tenth Air Force by 1 March.[69]

Since medium bombers were to be used extensively in the theater, and especially in China, General Bissell was not only anxious to improve their bombing accuracy but also to add to their general utility. On 31 January he informed the War Department that large amounts of enemy supplies were moving by small cargo vessels in coastal waters and along rivers in China. These ships, he said, were extremely hard to hit by bombing but would be highly vulnerable to planes equipped with rapid-firing cannon of 37 millimeters or larger. He therefore strongly recommended that investigation be made of the possibility of installing such guns in the nose of long-range medium bombers. Planes thus equipped, using high explosive and armor-piercing shells could do untold damage to Japanese shipping in China, Burma, Indo-China, and Thailand, especially in places where no top cover was provided by enemy fighters.[70]

Soon afterward General Stratemeyer notified him that it would shortly be possible to send B-25's equipped with one 75-millimeter

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cannon and four fixed guns in the nose, four fixed guns in fuselage blisters, two waist, and two tail guns. He asked that General Bissell set forth his needs so that allocations to the various theaters could be determined.[71] General Bissell expressed pleasure at the prospect of the improvement and asked for assignment of six of the newly equipped planes at the earliest possible date.[72] He was informed that five were being assigned immediately and that others might be sent as the necessity arose.[73]

Since the preceding autumn General Bissell had shown resentment at the fact that the Tenth Air Force had, in effect, been placed in a position of secondary importance, with the newer Ninth Air Force enjoying a higher priority. He had repeatedly expressed his impatience over the delay in the return of planes and personnel which had been sent from India to the Middle East in the summer of 1942,[74] and had bitterly protested to the Air Transport Command over the looting of Tenth Air Force supplies being flown by ATC through other theaters. From time to time incidents had arisen which caused him to give vent to his displeasure, and in January a case came up which could not fail to arouse his anger, for it not only involved an inexcusable error on the part of the ATC, but seemed likely to cost him nine new medium bombers and nine fresh crews.

In tracing a flight of B-25's which had been assigned to the Tenth Air Force he found that by mistake they had been delivered to the Ninth Air Force which was commanded by General Brereton. The

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planes had already been committed to combat and some of them had been damaged. Plans laid by the Tenth Air Force for the use of the aircraft and crews meanwhile were being delayed. Disappointment at their failure to arrive was bitter. In a message to Washington on 31 January General Bissell explained what had happened and demanded that something be done to deliver nine new B-25's and nine fresh crews to the Tenth Air Force at the earliest possible time.[75] General Brereton suggested that the next nine planes and crews allotted to the Ninth Air Force be sent to the Tenth instead, but General Bissell knew nothing of future allotments to the Ninth Air Force and was unwilling to accept this solution without further information as to the date the planes could be expected to arrive in India.[76] Fortunately, however, additional B-25's were due the Ninth Air Force at the time and on 31 January General Marshall notified General Bissell that 9 of the planes allotted to the Ninth would immediately be reallocated to the Tenth, 5 to leave the United States at once and 4 to follow shortly thereafter.[77] At the same time General Stratemeyer cabled General Arnold, who was then in India, that the error had been made by an officer of the Caribbean Wing of the Air Transport Command and that disciplinary action was being taken.[78]

Late in January the air echelon of the First Squadron, 10th Troop Carrier Group arrived in India. It had been assigned to the Tenth Air Force, but as gliders were not to be provided for some weeks it was decided that the planes and crews should be used to

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aid the ATC in moving supplies to China. This air echelon consisted of 13 DC-3 aircraft, 42 officers, and 62 enlisted men, and since other squadrons were scheduled for the theater in the near future there was a clear indication that an exceptional effort was being made to increase the amount of cargo being flown over the hump.[79]

Meanwhile progress was being made in the organization of the air force in the Far East. On 18 February it was reported from New Delhi that in accordance with a letter of the Adjutant General dated 15 January, Headquarters and Headquarters Squadron of the Tenth Air Force, Headquarters of the China Air Task Force, Headquarters of the India Air Task Force, and Headquarters of the Karachi American Air Base had been reorganized.[80] On 1 March General Bissell gave notice of the activation of Headquarters of the Tenth Air Force Service Command, 80th Air Depot Group, 489th Base Headquarters and Air Base Squadron, and 23d Fighter Control Squadron.[81] To this was added on 6 March the activation of the 22d Statistical Control Unit.[82] Permission had been asked to activate an Air Depot Group Headquarters and Headquarters Squadron to be used at the Hindustan plant at Bangalore, but it was refused on the ground that sufficient supervision should be obtained from the numerous American technicians who were already employed there. General Bissell was told, however, that if, in the future, he still thought that the activation was necessary he should resubmit his request.[83]

Activation of new units, some of them drawing their cadres from Headquarters, Tenth Air Force, brought out more clearly the need

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for more officer personnel. General Bissell had already expressed some dissatisfaction as to the officer strength authorized for his force,[84] and on 1 March called attention to a considerable discrepancy between authorized strength and actual strength. Not only was the authorized officer strength insufficient, according to General Bissell, but the Tenth Air Force had been left far below the meager strength actually authorized. The discrepancy in general officer grade was not great, but in field and company grades it was quite large. Authorized strength for the Tenth Air Force in Air Corps officers was 1,315, while actual strength was only 932, a shortage of 383. For all arms and services, including the Air Corps, the authorized strength was 1,633, and only 1,217 were on hand. Thus the total officer personnel shortage in the Tenth Air Force was 416.[85]

By 7 March, almost exactly one year after the arrival of the first air force units in India, the total officer strength of the Tenth Air Force had risen to 1,476, while enlisted strength had grown to 11,469. There were also 42 warrant officers in the force. In addition to these men there were 319 officers and 1,473 enlisted men of the Air Transport Command present in the theater.[86]

Aircraft strength had also shown a slight increase during the months of January and February. This increase was not large enough to arouse great enthusiasm, but it was known that a rather large increase was due during March. Not all the deliveries scheduled for March were to be made to the Tenth Air Force, many being destined

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for the separate air force which was to be created in China. This new air force was to absorb the China Air Task Force, and in this way the Tenth was to lose much of its plane strength. Yet the Tenth Air Force on 1 April had 294 aircraft, 35 more than it had on 1 January, and the total number of aircraft in the China-Burma-India Theater had risen from 259 to 430. The increase in all types was substantial, the 430 planes comprising 84 heavy bombers, 56 medium bombers, and 290 fighters.[87] This was truly a far cry from the few battered B-17's and P-40's available for combat in the theater less than a year before.

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Chapter II

OPERATIONS IN BURMA

The China-based unit of the Tenth Air Force from the beginning of 1943 to the creation of the Fourteenth Air Force on 10 March turned its attention away from the river and coastal ports of China and Indo-China in order to assist the growing effort of the India Air Task Force in the crippling of transportation and the neutralizing of Japanese air power in Burma. The India Air Task Force was faced not only with the long existing necessity of protecting the ferry and of eventually paving the way for the retaking of Burma, but more immediately with the double drive of the Japanese which threatened to push northward from Myitkyina to Ft. Hertz and northeast from Lashio to Kunming. With the help of the China Air Task Force, the IATF endeavored to aid the Chinese armies on the Salween, the Kachin troops in the north, Wingate's raiders in north central Burma, and the diversionary thrust of the British at Akyab by battering the transportation system and airdromes of Burma almost daily during January, February, and March from the west and at times from the east.

Since insufficient gasoline supplies had rendered the air arm in China almost impotent, the burden of operations fell most heavily upon the components of the India Air Task Force which included the 7th Bombardment Group (H) with 3 squadrons of about 30 planes total,

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the 341st Bombardment Group (M) with 3 squadrons and 26 B-25's, the 51st Fighter Group with 2 squadrons and 40 planes, and the 9th Photo Squadron with 7 P-38F4's. To each of these groups Brig. Gen. Caleb V. Haynes assigned that part of the over-all task consonant with the capabilities of its particular type of plane. Because of the long range and heavy bomb load of the B-24's stationed at Pandaveswar and Gaya, they were handed the job of attacking transportation facilities from Mandalay to the Gulf of Martaban and the Andaman Sea, with bombing emphasis centered primarily on the Rangoon area through which most of the Japanese munitions entered Burma. By sinking ships, mining waters, wrecking dock facilities, and blowing up tracks and bridges from Rangoon to Mandalay, the 7th Group (H) helped considerably to disrupt the flow of war freight into the interior of Burma.[1]

With less range but more maneuverability, the 26 B-25's of the 341st Group, using the Indian stations at Chakulia and Ondal as their lay-back bases and Argatala as their forward field, covered bridges, railroad yards, trackage, locomotives, and rolling stock in the Monywa-Mandalay-Gokteik region of central Burma. Those supplies which had succeeded in running the gauntlet from the port of entry at Rangoon to the railhead at Thazi, approximately 275 miles north, were often seriously delayed between Thazi, and Mandalay by bombed-out bridges and tracks—the handiwork of the Mitchells in central Burma.[2]

From the Indian terminus of the aerial ferry in Assam to Kunming, China, bomb-carrying P-40 fighter planes of the 51st

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Fighter Group patrolled that section of Burma extending from Naba in the south to Ft. Hertz near the northern Burmese border. In this area they strafed and bombed villages and installations along the route of the projected Ledo Road from Mogaung northwest toward Dinjan and also along the road that stretched from Myitkyina to Sumprabum. In addition to the protection provided for the ferry and its terminus, these P-40's performed Army "cooperation missions" for the 4th Corps of the British Eastern Army which was battling to halt the northward march of the enemy toward Ft. Hertz. The Warhawks and Kittyhawks escorted transports on food and supply-dropping flights, kept airdromes in northern Burma neutralized, and tried by attacks on locomotives, rolling stock, warehouses, stock piles, railroad yards, and foot bridges in northern Burma to destroy supplies which had seeped through the bomb-pitted rail lines of central Burma.[3]

With the India Air Task Force having assumed aerial responsibility for three fourths of the Burmese territory, the remaining quarter in the eastern section from Bhamo to Lashio rested on the wings of the 11th Bombardment Squadron of the 341st Group (M), the 23d Fighter Group, and the 16th Squadron (51st Fighter Group) of the China Air Task Force. Although the bomber unit had 12 B-25's at its disposal, a lack of gasoline kept the planes grounded most of the time—once for a period of 33 days. For the 73 fighter planes in the 23d there was only enough gas to fly two or three sorties every few days. Still their strafing and bombing missions directed at the subdepots of the Burma Road, small as they were, probably

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OPERATIONAL RANGE
FROM 10TH AIR FORCE BASES
1 JAN - 10 MAR 1943

HEAVY BOMBERS | MEDIUM BOMBERS | FIGHTERS & MED BOMBERS | FIGHTERS & MED BOMBERS

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helped somewhat to hamper the flow of material to the Salween front where the Chinese armies were trying to prevent the establishment of Japanese bridgeheads on the east bank of the river.[4]

These operational spheres, when fitted together, covered with some overlapping, chiefly in central Burma, the whole of the occupied Burmese territory. This brought enemy air bases, lines of communication, bridges, key points in the Japanese system of supplies, concentrations of rolling stock serving Mandalay, Myitkyina, and Lashio, and locomotives whose already inadequate number was still further reduced, under the bomb and gun sights of the Tenth Air Force. By attacking these objectives the Tenth Air Force tried, and, in a very large measure, succeeded in denying the enemy air initiative, in weakening the striking power of its armies, and in bringing comparative security to the aerial ferry.

Since each group had virtually its own aerial battlefield and mission therein, little close operational coordination existed among the various groups of the different sections so far as the execution of the individual raids was concerned. The mission of each section, however, fitted into the general strategy of the whole theater. Therefore, this narrative will deal with each section chronologically for the entire period rather than skipping from one region to another as the raids occurred from day to day.

As concrete evidence of a determination to disrupt the transportation system of Burma, six medium bombers of the 22d Bombardment Squadron (341st Group) opened the 1943 Burma chapter of operations

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on New Year's Day with the first of a series of attacks from Argatala on the railroad bridge across the Myitnge River. Located in central Burma, 10 miles south of Mandalay and just above the junction of the only two rail lines running from southern Burma, the Myitnge Bridge, a four-span, single-track, steel-type construction, 610 feet in over-all length, formed the most vital link in the whole 2,060 miles of rail lines in Burma. Because of its control over all rail traffic from the south into Mandalay, operations officers realized that the snapping of this link would go far in breaking the chain of transportation in Burma. Taking off from Argatala at 1355 hours, the Mitchells dropped 36 x 500-pound bombs from 14,500 feet making four hits each on the north and south approaches of the bridge and three on its southern span. Fourteen of the bombs landed near the adjoining vehicular bridge which had been destroyed by the British in 1942 and never restored by the Japanese. One mile south of the bridge, the bombardiers loosed 11 more on the warehouse area situated in the general vicinity of the Myitnge airdrome.[5]

The next morning (2 January 1943) the Argatala bombers intended to follow up the results of their work on the Myitnge Bridge by striking at the rail center and marshalling yards at Sagaing, a control point for rail lines directly north to Myitkyina and the spur line west to Chaungu and then north to its terminus at Yeu. Instead, the raiders were forced to choose an alternate target, the airfield at Monywa, 75 miles northwest of Sagaing on the Chaungu-Yeu

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branch line. With singular success the planes scored 29 hits on the dispersal area and seven hits on the runway.[6]

Perhaps to compensate for the failure of the B-25's to bomb the rail hub at Sagaing, six B-24's of the 436th Bombardment Squadron and four B-24's of the 9th Bombardment Squadron, all of the 7th Group, in their 1943 debut, flew from their respective bases at Gaya and Pandaveswar two days later with orders to wreck the Mandalay railyards through which all northbound freight passed on its way to Lashio, Myitkyina, and Yeu. The Mandalay region including Sagaing and the Myitnge Bridge formed the heart of the Burmese rail system through which the arteries of transportation branched north, south, east, and west to feed the Japanese war machine fighting on the upper periphery of Burma. At 14,000 feet the Liberator bombardiers sent most of their 54 x 500-pound bombs hurtling into a concentration of cars and tracks in the south half of the target, causing large fires which observers claimed were visible for 70 miles. So effective was the raid that General Bissell on 13 January reported that no traffic was able to move through Mandalay.[7]

While Mandalay was thus being pommeled, another flight of the 9th Bombardment Squadron numbering three B-24D's each loaded with 6 x 500-pound bombs were searching out shipping south of Rangoon. Despite interception by 2 enemy aircraft and thick antiaircraft fire, the heavy bombers caught a 15,000-ton transport with 2 direct hits and 3 near misses as the vessel tried to make its way up the

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Rangoon River from Monkey Point. Billows of smoke poured from the stricken ship as the bombers turned back to their home bases in India.[8] Three days later four Liberators from the same squadron, each with 3 x 1,000-pound bombs tucked inside, left Pandaveswar at 0600 hours in a continuing search for shipping around Port Blair in the Andaman Islands and Moulmein on the Burma mainland southeast of Rangoon. Poor visibility, however, over the target at Moulmein prevented an accurate observation of the bombing results. Apparently nothing in the line of attractive objectives was found around the Andaman Islands. When at last the flight reached its home base, the planes had been in the air 13-1/2 hours.[9]

For the next three days both medium and heavy bombers of the India Task Force remained idle while operations officers busied themselves with the details of another raid on the Myitnge Bridge. Although the previous assault of 1 January had damaged the approaches and the southern span of the bridge, the results nevertheless had not been effective enough to interfere seriously with rail traffic over it. Consequently, a combined attack of B-24's and B-25's in three closely timed flights was planned for 10 January. That morning six B-24's of the 436th Bombardment Squadron (H) with 27 x 500-pound bombs and 15 x 1,000-pound bombs in their racks, took off from Gaya and reached the target at high noon. At 12:35 a second flight composed of 5 B-25's of the 22d Bombardment Squadron (M) from Argatala, followed 10 minutes later by the

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third flight numbering 3 B-25's of the 491st Bombardment Squadron (M), made their bomb runs over the bridge. Three of the 1,000 "pounders" released by the Liberators from 15,000 feet scored direct hits on a bridge span and sent it crashing to the bottom of the Myitnge River. Notwithstanding the fact that the mediums which followed bombed from an altitude of 13,000 feet, they were unable to match the success of the B-24's.[10] Observers credited them only with near misses.

This discrepancy in bombing accuracy may have been due, among other things, to the different type of bombsight used in the Liberators. At least it would seem so from the messages which followed immediately after the raid. General Bissell cabled a request for reconsideration of a decision regarding the furnishing of bombsights for B-25's. "It is impossible," he wired, "to realize full capabilities of aircraft available without precision bombsights as almost all targets require accurate precision bombs." Acting in the absence of General Arnold, then visiting overseas, General Stratemeyer, Chief of Air Staff, concurred in the opinion and granted the request but because of shortages could only promise shipment to the CBI theater in the near future. This was unfortunate because the frequent failures, especially on bridge missions, had a demoralizing effect on the B-25 crewmen.[11]

Five days later, 15 January, six B-24's of the 9th Squadron (H) which had last seen action on 4 January over Mandalay, the

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Andaman Sea, and the Gulf of Martaban, headed out from their Pandaveswar base at 0530 hours toward the Rangoon shipping lanes on another combat search mission. At 97°30' east and 13°30' north the flight spotted a worthwhile target—an enemy escorted convoy of 3 vessels—2 merchant ships, and 1 naval subchaser. Each plane, loaded with 9 x 500-pound bombs, made individual runs over the target through low and ineffective AA fire, sinking one vessel and damaging another for a successful mission.[12]

The following afternoon, 16 January, seven B-24's from the 436th set out from Gaya in the hope of also finding good hunting in the Gulf of Martaban or in the harbor of Rangoon. Because of poor visibility, however, only one ship chanced to locate Preparis Island, the rendezvous point for the flight. After circling the island for an hour, the lone ship gave up the prospect of contacting the other aircraft and returned to its base. Meanwhile, the remaining six planes met at a point 60 miles past the island and proceeded toward the target area where one small ship of about 150 feet in length was missed.[13]

While the Liberators were thus making a determined effort with their sea sweeps to choke off supplies before they reached Burma, the Argatala Mitchells furthered the well-started shattering of rail lines in central Burma by a series of three raids on 16 and 17 January. Railroad yards, repair shops, mainline trackage, and rolling stock at Maymo located on the Mandalay-Lashio rail line and

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at Monywa directly west of Maymo on the Sagaing-Yeu branch line, all of which had assumed greater significance after the destruction of the bridge, suffered repeated blows from 18 B-25's in two days.[14] Since damage to rail lines was easily repairable provided materials were at hand and native labor could be retained on the job, a simultaneous attack on two targets requiring the same type of reconstruction, with a follow-up raid the same or following day usually prevented the restoration of the line for some time.[15]

With the medium bombers having struck two important rail centers on branches stemming northeastward and northwestward out of Mandalay, one flight of four B-24's from Pandaveswar on 19 January turned to Thazi, a junction 80 miles south of Mandalay. At this point a spur running west from Taunggyi crossed the Rangoon-Mandalay trunkline. This railroad, after circling northward through Myingyan, rejoined the main line just south of the Myitnge Bridge. Besides pitting the rail junction with four bomb craters, some of the 36 x 500-pound instantaneously fuzed explosives, unloaded by the B-24's at 14,000 feet, found their mark among the warehouses where the enemy apparently had stored gasoline, judging from the black smoke which filled the air following the raid. By thus hitting this target, the India Air Task Force had succeeded in temporarily wrecking the lines of three rail hubs directly connected with the bombed-out Myitnge Bridge. The second flight of three planes from the 9th Bombardment Squadron (H) led by Lt. Col. C. F.

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Necrasson separated themselves from the Thazi-bound ships and set their course southwest toward Thailand on one of the longest reconnaissance and bombing missions undertaken up to this time. Altogether Colonel Necrasson's flight travelled 2,767 miles to reach Kanchanaburi, Thailand, situated about 75 miles northwest of Bangkok. Reconnaissance pictures taken near the city revealed the construction of a new rail line from Thailand to Burma. The Japanese probably had anticipated the severance of sea lanes to Burma. On their return trip, the Liberators dropped 8 x 500-pound bombs on the Bassein docks from 19,200 feet. Upon reaching their home base one of the pilots, Lt. J. R. Barton discovered a flat tire on the main landing gear of his ship. By shooting out the other tire, he made a very satisfactory landing on two flat tires.[16]

Four days later on 24 January, the 436th Bombardment Squadron (H) lent 4 ships and 1 combat crew to the 492d, a squadron as yet untried in battle, to make up a 9-plane raid on the Sule Pagoda docks and Rangoon. From Gaya, home base for both squadrons, the B-24's of the 492d, in their initial mission, climbed gradually until they reached an altitude of 21,000 feet over the objective. With precision 27 x 500-pound bombs smashed into the wharves, another 27 laid waste a part of the storage area south of the river, and the remaining 27 plummeted seaward toward a 6,000-ton vessel in the harbor. Twenty-five of these bombs overshot the mark, splashing harmlessly into the water beyond the bow of the ship but two landed squarely on the boat. As the last plane completed its bomb run, observers reported that the vessel was burning in

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midstream.[17] Certainly the results warranted the unit historian's remark: "It was a fine send off for the new squadron."[18]

Meanwhile, the Japanese in central Burma, who had been enjoying a 15-day respite from bombings by IATF Mitchells, were suddenly jarred from their feverish repair work by a series of aerial blows on Naba, Mandalay, and the Myitnge Bridge. Since 10 January when the Myitnge Bridge had been blasted into uselessness, the enemy had made desperate attempts to rebuild it. In order to discourage these attempts, two B-25's from the 22d Squadron (M) and three from the 491st, dumped 30 x 500-pound bombs in a train at 50-foot intervals. Although none of the spans was hit, the southern approach was destroyed and, what was even more important, repair work was suspended for some time. Striking again the next day in the same general area with the added force of another bomber, the planes from Argatala tore up rails, wrecked 75 railroad cars, and set fire to the freight houses in the Mandalay rail yards, last visited by American airmen on 4 January.[19] Mandalay by now presented a picture of almost complete ruin with only a few houses left standing. "First Japanese bombing, then demolition by the retreating British troops and subsequent repeated bombing and strafing by allied planes . . . resulted in this devastation which [was] described as worse than the most severely damaged parts of London."[20] Three of the ships continued northward to bomb Naba, a junction of the mainline of the Sagaing-Myitkyina railroad and a very short spur line from Naba to Katha on the Irrawaddy River. The flight

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strafed a moving train, fired an important roundhouse, and damaged rolling stock.

To end the work of the medium and heavy bombers of the IATF in central and southern Burma for the month of January, six B-24's carried out, simultaneously with the Naba-Mandalay mission, another aerial thrust at the Rangoon docks. The 493d Squadron bombers from Pandaveswar scored 9 times on the wharves and 9 times in the target area adjacent to the waterfront installations while sparring with 4 Japanese interceptors, one of which succeeded in damaging a U. S. bomber but not destroying it.[20]

This raid closed the operations book for the first month of 1943. During the period, that part of the task force operating from the Calcutta region against the middle and southern regions of Burma had carried out 17 important missions for an average of about 1 every 2 days. Of these the medium and heavy groups had participated in nine each--the raid of 10 January on the Myitnge Bridge being a joint affair and thus accounting for the discrepancy in totals. With few exceptions each target (the Myitnge Bridge; railyards at Mandalay, Monywa, and Naba; dock facilities at Bassein and Rangoon; and finally shipping in the Andaman Sea, the Gulf of Martaban, and the Rangoon River) had a direct connection with transportation and communications. West of the Rangoon-Mandalay trunkline the RAF had supplemented the aerial work of the Americans. In cooperation with the English ground forces which had established a bridgehead at Akyab, the British patrolled, machine-gunned, and bombed targets

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from Shwebo to Pagoda Point, and from Akyab to Heho, with most of their effort concentrated on the Akyab-Rathedaung region in direct support of their armies. By striking at rail centers such as Myingyan, Meiktila, Toungoo, and Prome, as well as river ports such as Pakkoku and Magwe which had not been touched by the USAAF during the month, the British Blenheims and Hurricanes accelerated the destruction of the Burmese transportation system to which the Tenth Air Force had devoted so much time and energy during January.[21]

During February and March, the Tenth Air Force, with increased tempo continued to press effectively the battle of the Burma bridges, roadways, and railroads in every section of the occupied country. The Liberators, operating every three to four days, with the greater part of the time again devoted to southern Burma, bore down heavily on the Rangoon area where the Mahlwagon marshalling yards, the Ahlone docks, the Pazundaung Bridge, the Rangoon railroad station, the Rangoon River and the Mingaladon airdrome offered some of the richest prizes in the whole transportation system of Burma. Actually, Rangoon was the key which could lock the Burma door to Japanese supplies. By demolishing the transfer and carrying facilities of the port of Rangoon, the Tenth Air Force could go far in eventually helping to starve out the Japanese war machine fighting on the fringes of the country. To effect this, the bomber command ran eight major missions over Rangoon during the next month and a half.

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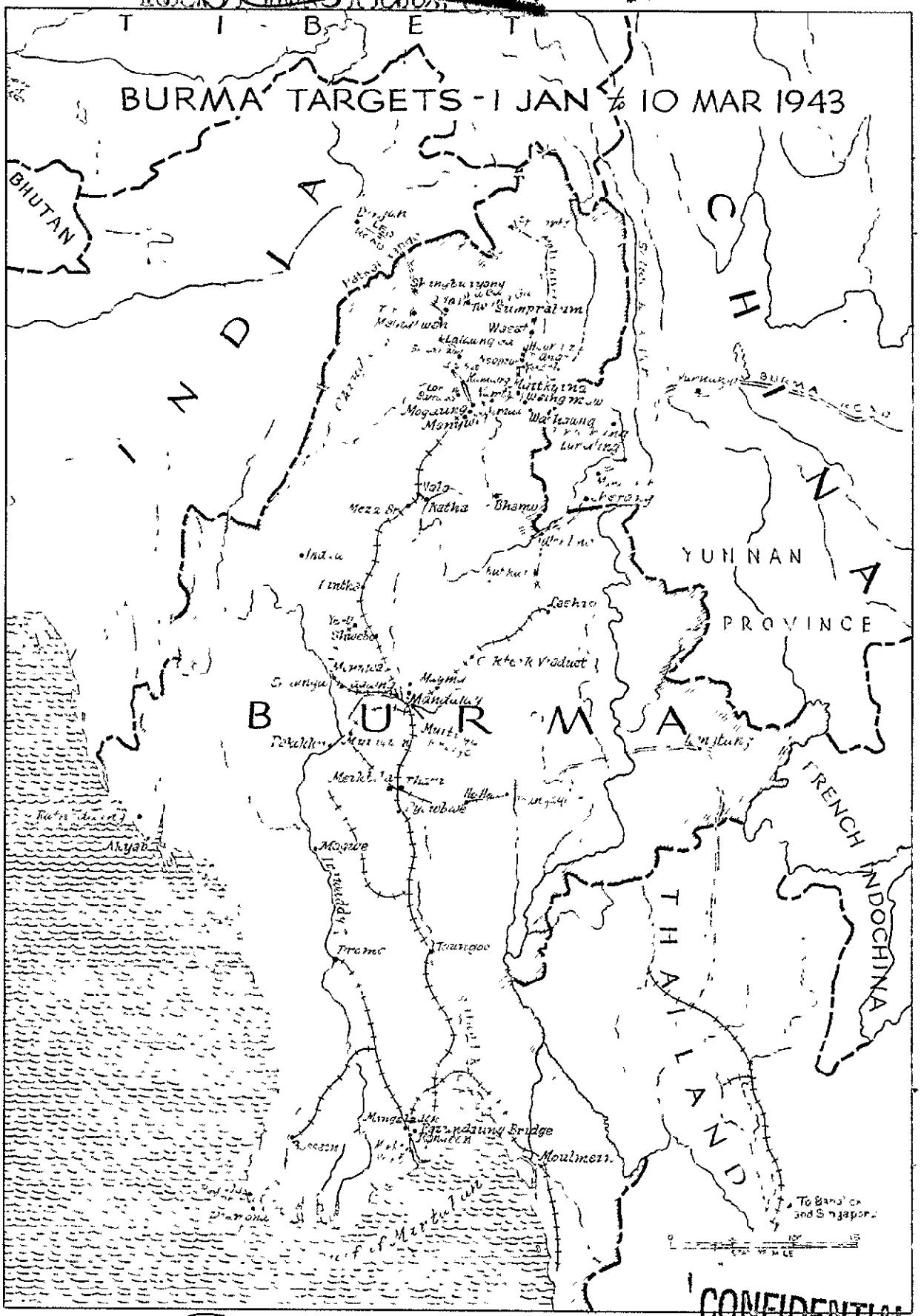

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On the first of February while seven B-24's from Gaya were being thwarted by unfavorable weather in their attempt to reduce Japanese shipping off Port Blair, seven B-24's from Pandaveswar burned up the Arakan tea sheds on the banks of the Rangoon River near the harbor with two well-placed sticks of demolition bombs as a prelude to the 8 February raid. On that mission 18 bombers of the 436th, 492d, and 493d squadrons, attacking in 3 flights of 6 planes each, spread 27 direct hits over the marshalling yards, wrecking the locomotive shops, blowing up the railroad station, but failing to damage the Ahlone docks, the other objective of the raid. Three other bombers from the 492d pitted the Mingaladon runway. To climax this biggest aerial bombardment show to date, 3 Zekes, 2 Mikes, and 1 Nate* tormented the Liberators for 30 minutes--all the way from the target to the coast, killing 1 gunner, wounding another, and damaging 2 B-24's. Five days later the long arm of the 436th Bombardment Squadron (H) once again reached out from Gaya to hand the marshalling yards at Rangoon on aerial drubbing with 34 direct hits by 500-pound bombs. Returning on 5 February, 6 B-24's, 1 less than on the previous raid, made a bomb run over the Rangoon railroad station where 34 x 500-pound bombs ignited a fire visible for 50 miles. Diving into the American formation shortly after the bomb release, five Japanese fighters battled it out with the raiders at the 20,500-foot bombing altitude. During the melee, the

* The Zeke was the Mitsubishi 00, a single-seater fighter; the Mike was the Japanese version of the Messerschmitt ME-109F; the Nate, the Nakajima 97 (also made by Mitsubishi), a single-seater fighter.

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Liberators with no serious damage to themselves destroyed one enemy plane, probably another and damaged a third.[22]

The next mission to Rangoon required more than the usual planning for it was no routine bombing raid. On the night of 22-23 February, 12 Liberators carrying 48 x 1,000-pound British magnetic mines took off for the Rangoon estuary and shipping canal upstream from Elephant Point. Meanwhile, for diversionary purposes, six B-24's from Bishnipur, a new field, and six British Liberators attacked the city of Rangoon and the Mingaladon airdrome. The main formation had winged its way over the sea at 6,000 feet, dropping down to 1,000 feet after passing Pagoda Point. Several miles out in the Gulf of Martaban, the planes turned northward and after a careful search located the assigned target. Displaying great precision, the bombardiers placed all the mines in their predetermined positions, away from shallow water near the shore where they would have been discovered by the Japanese and promptly swept up. Since the bomb bay tanks had been removed in order to permit proper loading, all British airfields were alerted in the event that fuel shortage made impossible a return of the planes to their home bases. The precaution, however, proved unnecessary. All planes, except one British Liberator which was destroyed, returned to their bases. This first mine-laying mission had been a complete success.[23]

In the next four raids on the Rangoon area, the Ahlone docks, shipping in the Rangoon River, the Mingaladon airdrome, the Mahlwagon

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yards, and especially the Pazundaung Bridge felt the weight of the B-24 bombs. Over the Pazundaung Bridge all rail traffic from Rangoon to northern Burma passed, thus making it as inviting a target as the Myitnge Bridge in central Burma. On the 27th of February, 11 B-24's in two flights managed only to straddle it with explosives. Four days later, 1 flight of 7 B-24's splintered a section of the Ahlone docks with 1 direct hit, in addition to smashing a warehouse and adjacent property with other bombs. A second flight of 6 B-24's scored 4 hits on the Mahlwagon Roundhouse while 9 B-24's from the 493d in the major effort of the day made another attempt on the bridge. Although they missed the south span of the bridge, they did succeed in tearing up the southern approach.[24]

On 6 March the bridge was once again the target, this time for three B-24's of the 9th Squadron. Unfortunately, the mission proved abortive. None of the ships reached the target; one selected the airfield at Pagoda Point as a secondary target, another turned back almost immediately after taking off because of engine trouble and the third returned without dropping its bombs. Operating in the same region that day another flight from the 9th Squadron, numbering four bombers, struck at several vessels of 300 to 400 feet in length, with fair results. On their return trip bomber-gunners machine-gunned a light house on Alqueda Reef, a light ship off China Park, and a radio station at Diamond Point.[25] On the 8th, the bombardiers of four B-24's from the 493d after a fruitless search for shipping in the Gulf had to content themselves with bombing the Bassein

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docks and warehouses. Twenty hits were scored.

For the next two days Rangoon enjoyed quiet, then on 10 March two flights again headed southwest toward the area. Five B-24's in the first unit scored 5 probable hits on the Pazundaung Bridge without encountering enemy opposition, but the 4 B-24's in the second wave ran into a stubborn enemy attack 10 minutes after hitting the runways, buildings, and revetments at Mingaladon airport. With 10 to 12 Zekes and 1 Mike, the enemy fought fiercely for 40 minutes employing a new set of tactics,[26] described in a message as follows:[27]

> Some attacks were from head-on passing above or below formation, some from 6 o'clock, and majority of attacks started above, began drop, then in and dispersed in 2 o'clock, direction, breaking off in a tight turn revealing belly of planes. Attack as evidenced as planned by in line formation of attacking planes alongside and out of range. Single attacking plane would be replaced by another with attack coming from either side. Fake passes were not made but attackers let out smoke puffs when coming in.

Spectacular as the enemy tactics appeared, their effectiveness availed the Japanese nothing but losses. When the engagement was finally broken off, 3 Zekes had gone down and 3 or 4 other enemy planes had been damaged. Although one bomber had been hit 15 times, no American losses resulted.

In the same period 1 February-10 March, the medium bombers of the IATF continued to strike at Maymyo, Shwebo, Sagaing, Thazi, and the Myitnge Bridge while adding to these now familiar targets the Gokteik Viaduct, engineering marvel of the Far East. This structure, which spanned a deep gorge between Mandalay and Lashio, was 2,260

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feet long, with a maximum height of 320 feet above a natural bridge on which it crossed a stream 870 feet below rail level.

For a time, however, the Myitnge Bridge continued to claim first attention. Since the January raids on the bridge, the Japanese had raised the knocked-down span from the bottom of the river but had not as yet been able to reestablish traffic over it. Their persistent efforts to restore this bridge clearly indicated that the severance of communications between Rangoon and Mandalay had caused no little embarrassment to the Japanese military machine in Burma. Indeed the enemy had even added a number of antiaircraft units from other theaters to those already guarding it. So on 4 February, lest the enemy resume service over it, the Argatala mediums opened a 2-day offensive by sending 3 B-25's to the bridge and 5 B-25's to the railroad shops nearby. Some of the 40 x 300-pound demolition bombs unleashed from 6,000 feet found their mark in the target area but the results of the second flight's attack on the shops were less gratifying. In the follow-up raid the next day almost 11 tons of explosives rained down as the bomb bay doors of 6 B-25's and 6 B-24's swung open over the bridge. Observers noted several hits in the general area.[28]

While the mediums, after resting for 5 days, focussed their sights on the rolling stock in central Burma, striking first at the Maymyo yards with 4 direct hits on the 10th and then immobilizing 80 freight cars between Shwebo and Sagaing on the 13th, 7 B-24's on the 10th sandwiched in another raid on the Myitnge Bridge. Employing 2,000-pound bombs for the first time in this theater, the

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heavy bombers demolished a span of the bridge on 12 February. Supporting raids on the 14th by B-25's and on the 15th by B-24's failed to add to the damage already visited upon the bridge.[29]

Having broken the bridge at Myitnge, the command felt free on 18 February to make a similar attempt on the Gokteik Viaduct. Since the span carried all rail traffic northeast from Mandalay to the terminus of the Burma Road, its destruction would greatly hamper the supply by the enemy of their troops at Lashio and in western Yunnan. Results of the first raid by 13 B-24's, however, proved unsatisfactory. In the meantime, on the same and following day, the Mitchells were busy bombing rail yards and the terminal at Sagaing. Although foul weather prevented a successful execution of the first raid, the mediums partially compensated for the failure by inflicting heavy damage on the terminal building.[30]

From 24 February to 10 March, except for a damaging attack on the rail hub at Thazi, and two unsuccessful missions on the Myitnge Bridge, one by the heavy and one by the medium bombers, the B-25's spent all of their bombs on the Gokteik Viaduct or alternate targets in the vicinity. In four raids consisting of 43 sorties on 1, 3, 7, and 10 March the American bombers failed to hit the spans. Engine trouble in the American bombers, heavy smoke screens which the Japanese had begun to use both at Myitnge and Gokteik, repeated attacks by Japanese interceptors from wing spots executing the chandelle maneuver first from one side and then the other, and the inherent difficulty of hitting such a small target

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probably accounted for the failure.[31]

At the same time that the Mitchells and Liberators were pounding key points on the road to Mandalay, the China Air Task Force was centering its destructive power on the Burma Road over which the Japanese hauled supplies from two transshipment points at Bhamo and Lashio to their entrenched troops along the west bank of the Salween River in the Yunnan Province of China. The previous freight reached Bhamo from the southern ports of Burma by way of the Irrawaddy River for the entire distance or by rail from Rangoon to Katha and then by water. Those supplies destined for Lashio came principally by rail from Rangoon through Mandalay although it was possible to use river transportation from Rangoon to Mandalay, then rail for the remaining distance eastward. From Bhamo a highway extending eastward across the China border joined, at Wanling (Wanting), the famed Burma Road which ran northward from Lashio. As termini for the rail and water transportation system of Burma, these distribution points fed subdepots along the Lashio-Kunming highway (Burma Road).

By constantly harassing truck convoys traveling these roads and by bombing fuel, ammunition, and food concentrations along the enemy life line, the CATF hoped to sap enemy strength to an extent that would render its advance against the Chinese armies too expensive to maintain. Continuing the process of attrition, so well begun during December 1942, Lt. Col. Bruce Holloway, former AVG pilot and now commanding officer of the 23d Group, in company with another P-40 pilot, opened fire on an enemy convoy creeping along

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the curving road near Loiwing which they spotted on their return from a reconnaissance mission over the Lashio district on 2 January 1942. Covering the highway for 30 miles, they forced 2 trucks over a cliff, destroyed 3 others and severely damaged 2 more. To the north, in the meantime, a P-43 on patrol down the Bhamo-Wanling Road, sent a Japanese interceptor blazing to the ground.[32]

After this flurry of aerial activity, the planes of the China unit remained grounded for five days in order that gasoline supplies might accumulate in quantities sufficient to mount a series of raids on consecutive days from 7 to 10 January. Accordingly, Japanese troops stationed at Mangshih, not far from the Salween River, witnessed on 7 January five P-40's setting fire to 100 to 200 drums of gasoline. The following day six B-25's, in their first mission of the new year, accompanied by 11 P-40's, rocked the warehouse district of Bhamo, "up river" terminal for heavy boat traffic from Mandalay, with 72 x 50-kilo demolition and 60 x 30-pound fragmentation bombs, while their escort peeled off and swept barges in the northern reaches of the Irrawaddy River.[33] Reinforcing their effort the next morning, 9 January, three flights followed the road to Bhamo once again. At Wanling 2 P-43's ripped up 2 trucks; the 5 P-40's in the second wave went on to sweep barges in the Irrawaddy River, at the same time 5 B-25's and 9 P-40's rekindled the dying fires in the Bhamo warehouse district with demolition and fragmentation bombs. After this second raid, pursuit pilots who had dipped low over the city in their strafing

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operations claimed little was left of it except the shells of buildings. Two P-40's closed out the four days of sustained combat by strafing four trucks of troops south of Kutkai on the Lashio-Wanling leg of the Burma Road.[34]

Opening their last string of raids for the month of January after a two-day lull, fighter planes in a clean-up of the previous week's work made Bhamo "practically untenable" as a river port by burning barges, tugs, warehouses, and transfer facilities. In addition, they slashed gasoline drums along the road between Chefang and Mangshih, and killed several Japanese soldiers in a truck near Ho Lu. On 16 January at 0906 hours, however, the Japanese finally retaliated by attacking the American air base at Yunnanyi, refueling station for Kunming, with 18 bombers covered by 20 Zeroes. Discovering the enemy flight 30 miles from their objective, an American patrol ship had flashed a warning to the field. Twelve P-40's were airborne by 0900 hours. Although the enemy caused some slight damage before contact with the Americans, in the ensuing battle fought between 17,000 and 19,000 feet, the bombers found themselves too occupied to drop any more bombs. As the Japanese turned tail, the Americans shot down the two Zeros protecting them, and chased the remainder of the bombers and the top cover flight down the valley picking off one plane after another in a running battle that lasted about twenty minutes. Seven Zeros were definitely destroyed with four other interceptors and one bomber listed as probables. The Americans lost only one P-40.

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Reviewing this battle for newsmen, one pilot observed: "The Zeros were eager to fight for a change, I don't think they had met our fliers before. They seemed pretty good fliers and apparently were flying new equipment."[35]

Hoping to catch the returning Japanese off guard after they had landed at Lashio, General Chennault dispatched 6 B-25's protected by 11 P-40's to that airdrome, where he believed they would land. Unfortunately, the Americans found no ships on the ground there, and so chose the city as an alternative target.[36] This completed the last operation of the 11th Bombardment Squadron (M) of the CATF for 33 days and the last mission of the month for the 23d Fighter Group. In approximately eight raids during January, the China unit had obliterated large sections of Bhamo in four raids, struck Lashio twice, protected the China section of the aerial ferry, and spread the rest of its operations over targets along the Burma Road.

During February and the first 10 days of March, the CATF could do little to abet the strenuous efforts of the India Air Task Force in Burma because of a serious shortage of gasoline. Of the 17 raids mounted from Yunnanyi and Kunming during this period only two were medium bomber attacks. The rest were merely fighter sweeps flown on an average of 1 every 2 days with rarely more than 2 P-40's participating. Concentrating on three sections—the Salween Front, the Burma Road, and the Kengtung area—the fighter planes strafed Tengchung, Lungling, Hwang-Lak, Lameng, Wanling,

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Kutkai, Manshih, Kengtung, Lashio, and Bhamo. Motor convoys, trucks, storehouses, huts, electrical transformers, hangars, planes, fuel dumps, steamrollers, tugs, and any other targets of opportunity were struck.[37]

With American fighter planes concentrated in western China and committed to the Burma sector and the Salween gorge, the Japanese seized the opportunity to bomb the cities and unprotected American bases in central and eastern China. Opening up on 8 February with a 54-plane assault, the enemy sent 22 bombers to an unidentified target southeast of Kweilin, 7 bombers to Kweilin itself, 6 to the Hengyang airdrome, and 10 bombers and 9 fighters to the town of Hengyang. Despite the lack of U. S. interceptor defense, no casualties and relatively little damage occurred according to the Chungking press. At Kweilin the dugout system consisting of natural caves in sugar loaf hills girding the air-strip probably accounted for the lack of casualties. Continuing their operations the next day, enemy bombers struck over a wide-spread area at Liuchow in Kwangsi province, Lungling in Hunan, and Lushih in Honan. The three-day sustained drive ended on 11 February when the foe bombed Kweilin with 17 bombers and 2 fighters and Liuchow with 15 planes.[38]

The Burma section of the aerial ferry route, especially its terminus at Chabua in the Dinjan area, as well as the whole of northern Burma from Naba to Ft. Hertz and from Myitkyina to Dinjan, came under the protecting guns of the 51st Fighter Group of the

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IATF. To insure further the security of the "flying freighters," one to three medium bombers, originally a part of the CATF on detached service at Dinjan but since December 1942 a part of the 22d Bombardment Squadron of the 341st Bombardment Group (M), supplemented the work of the interceptor force. Between them, they kept under strict surveillance the rail line from Naba to Myitkyina and the two roads forking north from Mogaung to Dinjan and from Myitkyina to Ft. Hertz.

New Year's Day found the Dinjan group, or rather one member, Maj. Paul C. Droz, engaged in rescue work. On 31 December 1942, 2d Lt. Willard A. Wendt of the 26th Fighter Squadron, finding it impossible to reach his base, bailed out beyond the mountains while returning from combat over Burma. Before jumping, however, he succeeded in radioing his approximate position, and within a matter of minutes, Major Droz had located him, dropped food, and hastily surveyed the terrain for a possible rescue landing the next day. To the major, such work was not unfamiliar; he had already saved two other men who had previously fallen into a similar predicament. Taking off at dawn in an unarmed two-seater primary trainer, he flew for a hundred miles over jungle-covered mountains and landed on a dangerously small and sandy stretch of the Chindwin River patrolled by Japanese and peopled by tribesmen, many of whom were unfriendly to Americans. For effecting the rescue in the face of such discouraging circumstances, Major Droz was awarded the DFC.[39]

It was not, however, until 4 January that the Dinjan group initiated its 1943 operations with an attack of one B-25 and nine

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P-40's on the railroad yards at Naba, situated on the Rangoon-Myitkyina line and connected with the Irrawaddy River by a spur to Katha. Diving to 100 feet in a low-level attack, the Mitchell sent 2 x 500- and 2 x 300-pound bombs whistling toward the tracks. All, unfortunately, failed to explode except 1 x 300 "pounder" which started several fires. Meanwhile the P-40's strafed cars and stocks with 6,000 rounds of 50-caliber ammunition.[40]

Besides scanning the sky for possible hostile visitors, the American fighter pilots of the 51st in their daily patrols from Dinjan kept the two roads extending north from Mogaung and Myitkyina under keen scouting, for along these roads, which gradually narrowed into foot paths beyond Maingkwan and Sumprabum, the Japanese had established collection points at small villages in order to supply their troops pushing northward against the Kachin levies of the British 4th Corps. In northern Burma, a typical small village consists of 20 to 50 wood or bamboo houses constructed on stilts about six feet off the ground so they will remain reasonably dry during the monsoons. Extremely vulherable to fighter sweeps and dive bombing, these thatched roof distribution centers were accordingly raked several times by the Dinjan P-40's with effective results. Two concerted attacks on 8 and 15 January, with six and nine P-40's doubling as bombers, strafed, bombed, and burned the villages of Chinkranghka, Alam, Weshi, Nsopzup, and Shingbwiyang as well as footbridges at Taipha Ga and Yupang Ga.[41] Mustering even greater fire power, the Dinjan fighters on 18 and 19 January

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hammered Kamaing, Japanese headquarters for that section. In the first raid, executed by 1 B-25 and 5 bomb-carrying fighter planes with a 3-ship top cover, exploding demolition and fragmentation bombs falling well within the target circle "caught the Nips napping." Repeating at 1230 on 19 January, 14 P-40's and 1 B-25 cascaded their bombs on the Japanese headquarters building, barracks, and warehouses from which flames reached out to consume half the town before the fire finally burned itself out. Later native troops fighting for the British in that region reported heavy casualties among the Japanese as a result of this series of successful missions.[42]

For the next few days, during which time two of the Dinjan Mitchells photographed roads and villages north of the rail termini, the Warhawks and Kittyhawks from Assam prepared for their final group of January forays. From the 22d to the 25th, the planes damaged a footbridge at Shadnzup, riddled eight or nine locomotives at Naba, and temporarily blocked a section of the Meza road by blasting a steep embankment alongside, thus bringing to a close operations in the northern section of Burma for January.[43]

During February and March, the Dinjan raiders continued to blow up trucks and locomotives, to derail cars, to block rail lines with bomb-made landslides, to burn parked aircraft and barracks, to create holocausts in the thatched roofed villages of the

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northern roads, and to dive-bomb bridges and strafe other profitable targets. On 5 February 2 P-40's blasted a railway cut 8 miles southwest of Meza, and having established an effective block, proceeded then to rake a halted train of 15 cars. So much punishment had been meted out by the Tenth Air Force on rolling stock in northern Burma that the Japs had now wisely spaced their parked cars at intervals. Over a week later, on 13 February, 12 P-40's completely burned out 12 enemy barracks located near the Japanese headquarters at Lonkin. With the addition of two planes the next day, the airmen with bullets and bombs kindled fires in Maingkwan and destroyed a couple of barracks two miles northwest of the town. Sixteen Curtiss-Wright fighters on 6 February followed the course of the Mali River, completely wrecking Spunginzup. With 90 per cent of the bombs in the target area, 20 parked trucks packed with bridge repair equipment were crushed and 4 great fires turned sections of the ill-fated village into flaming infernos. Nsopzup where large numbers of troops had been quartered suffered from a hail of bullets by the same planes after they had finished their task at Spunginzup. On 18 February five flights of fighters, in groups of three each, roamed at will over the sector selecting all likely targets of opportunity which came within range of their guns. The following day after expending their bombs on Hpungizup, a Japanese headquarters, 19 P-40's buried a 100-foot section of tracks under an estimated 20 feet of dirt in a rail defile south of Meza. On the 20th, 17 P-40's, five acting as top cover, singled

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out the Kain factory at Sahmaw. Eighty per cent of the bombs landed in the target area hitting not only the factory but also oil tanks and trackage serving the establishment. At the same time several P-40's bombed and strafed tools and equipment which had been assembled to dig out the tracks covered as a result of the raid on the previous day.[44]

On 25 February eight P-40's tried their skill at "bridge-busting" 10 miles west of Myitkyina. Diving to 1,500 feet the fighter-bombers knocked out one span of a rail trestle and severely damaged another. At 1030 next morning four P-40's gave a bridge six miles northeast of Pinbaw the same treatment, destroying one span and damaging other parts of the bridge. Warehouses, gas, oil, and ammunition dumps at Waingmaw were left burning by 24 P-40's on the 27th. The last day of the month saw eight P-40's blow up a bridge at Tiangzup.[45]

During the first 10 days of March fighter planes carried out the same routine they had followed in February running off 81 sorties against Nsopzup, Lameng, Indaw, Hkalak La, Wahat, Maingkwan, Kamagno, Manywet, Taipha Ga, Yupang Ga, Lalawng Ga, Wehsi, Langan Ga, and other smaller villages. The only bombing mission in this period occurred on 2 March when 12 B-25's accompanied by 5 P-40's placed 75 per cent of their bombs on targets in Myitkyina.[46]

During the two and one third months American and British bombers and fighters had struck with growing intensity the four quarters of Burma from Pagoda Tip to Taipha Ga and from Myitkyina to

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Akyab, cutting key points in the network of rails and roads, robbing the Japanese of air initiative, protecting the aerial ferry, and aiding Allied ground troops in their efforts to restrain the foe. In all their numerous and widely scattered raids during the period, the RAF and the USAAF met effective Japanese interception on few occasions. Apparently the enemy was continuing to conserve planes in Burma since it rarely took the offensive and almost never offered combat to Allied bombers and fighters. According to estimates the Japanese had only 147 planes of all types in Burma: 81 fighters, 48 light bombers, and 18 heavy bombers.[47] Most of these planes were based east of the Mandalay-Rangoon rail line and south of Namsang, Heho, and Mandalay; specifically at Toungoo (and satellite fields), Mingaladon, Moulmein, and Lampang. From these bases, they had bombed Calcutta, Fenny Field, Chittagong, Ramu, Arakan, and Pathanagar during this period. In every case these raids proved to be more of a nuisance than a menace although Fenny Field was temporarily put out of commission on 17 January when 15 enemy bombers and a corresponding number of fighters attacked.[48]

On the 23d of February, the Japanese, for the first time since October, struck at Chabua with a force of seven bombers and five fighters. Protected by the haze above the base, the enemy completed its mission unopposed by American planes. The field was not damaged but one Indian laborer and one chicken "which could not be persuaded to enter a slit trench were killed." A

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number of grounded transports and fighters were also destroyed. Two days later the Americans gave the Japanese an entirely different reception when they returned to Chabua. Fighting over an area of 300 square miles the P-40's definitely shot down 8 bombers and 6 fighters and probably 14 other planes in what the unit historian aptly described as a "field day." There may even have been more, for observers reported that out of the 46 enemy planes that headed into Chabua only 9 were seen coming back. With this raid on Assam and the earlier raids of the month on Chinese bases in mind, General Chennault told the press he believed the quality of Japanese planes and pilots was deteriorating. Referring to the great losses of the Japs, he said, "That is not the way they used to work."[49]

The Burma operations for the first two months of 1943 had unfolded a pattern of strategic bombing which the Tenth Air Force continued to develop during the remainder of the year. By blanketing the whole of Burma, fighter and bomber planes during this period started the systematic destruction of the transportation and communications network of the enemy-occupied country. Showing great imagination and skill, the fighter pilots refined to a point of near perfection novel methods of harassing enemy supply lines in the northern and eastern section of Burma. While the heavies and mediums enjoyed much success in the bombing of rail installations in central Burma and shipping facilities at Rangoon, they had not as yet worked out an entirely satisfactory technique for

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destroying bridges—so important in the crippling of transportation. Although the B-24's had more success in this field than the mediums, neither type achieved the desired results.

In aerial combat, the American fighters continued to display that well-earned mark of superiority which they had held over their adversaries since the beginning of the war. The extent of the enemy effort to disrupt the ferry to China was limited to several ineffectual bombings of the termini which proved very costly to the Japanese. As for interception of American bombers from India, the Japs had not during this period succeeded in shooting down even one.

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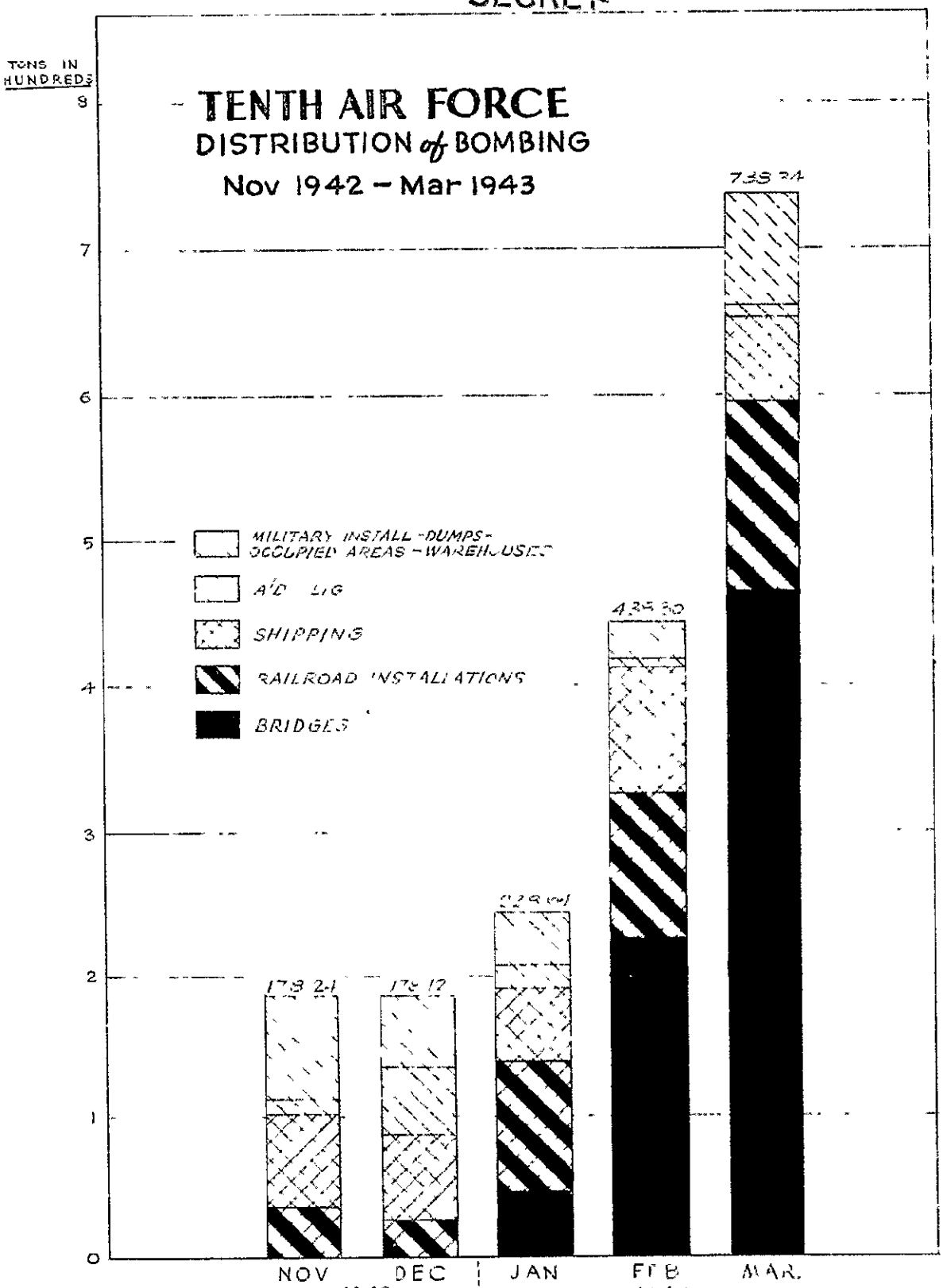

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Chapter III

ORIGINS OF THE FOURTEENTH AIR FORCE

From these operations during the first two and one third months of 1943, it would seem that the exclusive employment of the China Air Task Force in Burma had been made at the expense of its original mission in China. The neglect of areas formerly covered by the CATF may have encouraged the Japanese to launch their several raids on American bases and Chinese cities, for it was the first time in months that the enemy had been able to carry out raids unchallenged by American flyers. On several occasions General Chennault had warned of this growing danger in China. During the respite from American interference the enemy had begun to build up air strength, enlarge airdromes, and increase aerial activity. Had General Chennault been vested with complete authority over the deployment of his air strength it is reasonable to assume that he might have used at least a part of it in China rather than all of it in Burma. But under the organizational setup then in effect his hands were tied by the chain of command. This was probably one of the reasons for his desire to have his command separated from control of the Tenth Air Force.

It became evident early in 1943, as the American forces in Asia were gradually being expanded, and preparations were being made for more extensive operations, that the existing theater

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organization was, to say the least, inefficient. With the addition of new combat units it threatened to become entirely unworkable. Since the establishment of the China-Burma-India Theater of Operations under General Stilwell in February 1942 organizational changes had been made as exigencies arose, the result being a separation of headquarters and a pyramiding of commands which, in a theater of great distances and poor communications, was certain to lead to lost motion and delays.

Because of commitments made to China prior to the entry of the United States into the war and the subsequent emphasis placed on American aid to China, it was entirely logical that the headquarters of the theater commander should be located at Chungking. It was equally logical that the Tenth Air Force, activated in February 1942, should have its headquarters at New Delhi, near the headquarters of the RAF with which it cooperated. Thus, the two major American headquarters in the theater were separated by hundreds of miles and with no dependable means of communication.[1]

The Tenth Air Force was in turn separated into other commands with headquarters far from New Delhi, further complicating the matter of communications. In July 1942 when the Tenth Air Force took over operations in China at the discontinuation of the AVG, its units in China were formed into the China Air Task Force with headquarters at Kunming. Later, when major operations began over eastern India and Burma it was found almost impossible to direct them from New Delhi. Hence, in October, the remainder of the

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combat units of the Tenth were organized into the India Air Task Force with headquarters at Calcutta.

Late in 1942, in an effort to facilitate cooperation between the Tenth Air Force headquarters at New Delhi and the theater headquarters at Chungking, General Stilwell established a rear echelon theater headquarters at New Delhi under General Ferris. The addition of this intermediate headquarters probably made for closer coordination of the two major headquarters, while the formation of the two air task forces certainly gave the field commanders more tactical freedom. Both actions, however, elongated the chain of command, causing delays which to the commanders of the advance units seemed needless.[2] General Chennault, especially, felt that his force was being restricted in its action by the command arrangement.[3]

The awkwardness and unwieldiness of this chain of command was recognized in Washington as well as in the theater, but in view of the general situation no solution immediately presented itself. To have moved the headquarters of the theater commander to India would have been interpreted by the Chinese as a withdrawal of promises to China, and in addition to that objection, the position of General Stilwell as Chief of Staff of the Chinese Army would seem to have precluded such action. On the other hand, since all Americans based in China would have to be supplied by air transportation it was equally unfeasible to move the headquarters of

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the Tenth Air Force to Chungking. This transfer would also have prevented close cooperation between the Tenth and the RAF in the aerial campaign over Burma. The solution, when finally arrived at, must neither offend the Chinese nor break the close liaison with the British.

Other developments in China over the past few months had caused much anxiety among American officials, both in the theater and in Washington. Much time and thought had been given to the problem of taking fullest advantage of strategically situated bases in China as well as her great potential reserve of manpower. China had suffered a serious setback as a result of the closing of the Burma Road and her ability to resist the invader had been greatly reduced during the months thereafter. Apathy spread among the people and defeatism was growing. General Stilwell, however, was not convinced that the small amount of American goods reaching China by air transport was being used entirely for the prosecution of the war and repeatedly expressed the opinion that Chinese government officials were busily intriguing to keep themselves in power while leaving the burden of defeating the Japanese to the United States and Great Britain. Consequently he attempted to extract specific commitments from the Chinese in return for American aid.[4] The forthrightness with which he expressed his views and the persistence of his demands for commitments brought about strained relations with Chiang Kai-shek. The Generalissimo,

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desirous of being taken into Allied councils on an equal basis with the United States, Great Britain, and Russia, was persuaded to yield on several important points, but stood firm in his refusal to reorganize his army or air force along lines projected by General Stilwell.[5] Meanwhile, General Chennault, who enjoyed the complete confidence of Chiang Kai-shek, agreed that the Chinese Air Force should be reorganized. In his subordinate position, however, he could not deal directly with the Chinese or coordinate his activities with those of the Chinese Air Force, but must go through the headquarters of the Tenth Air Force and that of the theater commander.[6]

On 7 December 1942, Maj. Gen. Follett Bradley, in reporting to General Arnold about a conference at Chengtu on 17 November with General Mao, Chief of the Chinese Air Force, said that the Chinese were not pleased with the existing organization in the theater and considered the separation of headquarters impractical. General Mao had said that he had been badly treated with respect to aviation fuel stocks, loans of fuel to Americans never having been replaced. He expressed resentment also because of derogatory remarks which had been made about the skill of Chinese pilots, and implied dissatisfaction at the way in which General Bissell was handling his assignment.[7]

Probably as a result of General Mao's expressed resentment to remarks about the ineptitude of Chinese pilots, Col. R. A.

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Grussendorf, former American Military Attache in China, reported on 31 December upon the efficiency of the Chinese Air Force. In 1937, he said, the force was a well-trained, courageous, and hard-fighting organization, but in the unequal fight against the Japanese this particular group had finally disappeared. The existing Chinese Air Force was vastly inferior and could not even be considered an air force. He cited lack of training, insufficient numbers of aircraft, and political rather than military leadership as the chief causes of inefficiency, but believed that under American supervision and leadership, and equipped with a sufficient number of serviceable aircraft, the Chinese flyers could once more be molded into a first-class fighting unit. The succession of defeats suffered at the hands of the enemy had greatly lowered morale, but this, he thought, had been somewhat counteracted by the signal successes of the AVG and the CATF.[8]

On 8 January Brig. Gen. O. A. Anderson, in commenting on the report of the conference between Generals Bradley and Mao, said that General Mao's observations on the chain of command and the personalities of the various commanders were understandable, and from Mao's point of view, at least, were warranted. He remarked that because of the relative efforts of China and India, past and present, there was no question that the contribution of the Chinese would far exceed that of India. Yet General Bissell, who was located at New Delhi, and whose paramount interest apparently lay in India, was responsible for the determination of China's air

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requirements. By inference, China was thus placed in a role of secondary importance in the war in the Far East.[9]

Late in December President Roosevelt, through Admiral Leahy, and probably with the peculiar command situation in mind, suggested to Generals Marshall and Arnold the possibility of giving General Chennault a task force of 100 planes with which to operate north of the Yangtze River and near the seacoast, accomplishing a separation from General Stilwell's command, and placing him in a position to deal directly with the Chinese.[10] This would have satisfied in a measure a strong desire of General Chennault for tactical freedom, putting him at liberty to attack extremely remunerative targets which in the past had been almost untouched. The AVG and its successor, the CATF, had operated south of the Yangtze only, while the territory north of the river had been the sphere of operations of the now powerless Chinese Air Force. Since the Chinese Air Force had been almost entirely inactive for many months the Japanese had been able to continue their activities in that part of China without aerial interference.

Generals Marshall and Arnold readily concurred in the suggestion of the President, but instead of a mere task force they favored the establishment of an independent air force in China under the command of General Chennault. As General Marshall remarked, "Chennault [had] demonstrated great genius in his operations against the Japanese."[11] General Arnold, writing on 6 January 1943, recalled that General Chennault had been in China

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for five years and had the confidence and cooperation of the Chinese people and the Chinese government. The system of air bases in southeastern China had been built up by him, and the air warning system which he had organized was "without parallel for effectiveness." Through his intimate knowledge of the capabilities and limitations of his own forces as well as those of the enemy, he continued, General Chennault had been able with a very small force "to inflict casualties and damage to the enemy without equal in the present war." General Arnold believed, therefore, because of his demonstrated accomplishments, background of experience in China, and his "peculiar knowledge of enemy air tactics and techniques," that the addition of one medium bombardment squadron to his force* and the granting to him of full freedom of action to strike targets of opportunity would enable General Chennault with this comparatively small force "to cause the Japanese a vast amount of shipping and air attrition as well as a considerable disruption of vitally important coastwise shipping."[12]

Though wholly in accord with the plan to give General Chennault an independent air force, General Arnold foresaw certain difficulties which must be overcome before the action could be accomplished. First, the American air force in China would have to continue to support the current limited offensive in Burma. Second, while the India-China Wing of the Air Transport Command could continue to support the existing task force in China, a land supply route would have to be reopened before this force could be materially enlarged. He concluded, however, that:[13]

* The CATF was at the time comprised of the 23d Fighter Group, the 16th Fighter Squadron of the 51st Group, and the 11th Bombardment Squadron (M) of the 341st Group.

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> The maximum results obtainable from a minimum air force in China are not at present being obtained because of the complicated chain of command which limits operations against targets of opportunity and does not allow full freedom of action to the air commander who has demonstrated the most intimate knowledge of conditions in China which affect both his own and enemy actions.

He therefore recommended that no action be taken at that time, but that the principle of the establishment of the new air force be accepted, and that as soon as the supply problem could be overcome action should be initiated "to establish a separate air force in China, commanded by General Chennault." This force, he thought, should be composed of one fighter group and two medium bombardment squadrons, with the assigned mission of operating north and south of the Yangtze and on or near the Chinese seacoast.[14]

It is significant that while the President's suggestion mentioned an independent task force, General Arnold spoke in terms of a separate air force, and also that whereas the President seemed primarily concerned with a separation from General Stilwell's command, General Arnold thought it advisable to bring about a separation from the Tenth Air Force.

General Anderson, in commenting on the Bradley-Mao conference, had also expressed the opinion that the creation of a separate air force in China, under General Chennault, which would be responsible directly to the theater commander, would provide a more direct chain of command, elevate China to an equal status with India,

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and place General Chennault, "a battle-tried air commander in whom the Chinese have the greatest confidence" in a position to deal directly with the theater commander in Chinese affairs. He felt that this course would remove objections of the Chinese to the organizational setup while at the same time not materially affecting the status quo within the theater, since General Stilwell would continue to exercise whatever control he thought necessary. General Anderson, like General Arnold, therefore, seemed to think it more important to make the air force in China independent of the Tenth Air Force than independent of General Stilwell's command.[15]

Air officers in Washington had thus expressed concurrence in the suggestion that a separate air force should be placed in China and that it should be commanded by General Chennault. It was agreed that as soon as the barrier interposed by the lack of adequate lines of transportation could be removed, action to bring about the separation should be initiated. Commitments to support China were to be fully honored and the original plan for basing in China the entire U. S. air force in the Asiatic theater was not to be forgotten.

The growing crisis in the Far East was the subject of discussion when the President met Prime Minister Churchill at Casablanca in January 1943, and out of that conference came the announcement to Chiang Kai-shek of plans to increase the number of transport aircraft on the India-China flight to approximately 150 by the end of March.[16] President Roosevelt subsequently issued a statement to the effect that important decisions had been made

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relative to the war in the Far East, implying that interesting developments would soon take place in the China-Burma-India Theater.[17] The Prime Minister also made a conciliatory statement to salve the feelings of the Generalissimo who had not been invited to participate in the proceedings, saying that Chiang Kai-shek had been consulted and was in full agreement with the decisions reached.[18]

Immediately following the adjournment of the sessions at Casablanca, General Arnold, General Somervell, and Sir John Dill went to the Far East for a series of conferences with military leaders there. General Arnold made a complete tour of the theater which included visits with General Bissell at New Delhi, General Stilwell at Chungking, and General Chennault at Kunming. Observance of conditions in the field and talks with the various commanders apparently convinced him that in view of the projected increase in the hump tonnage the time was ripe to separate the Tenth Air Force and give an independent command to General Chennault in China.

On 7 February, after his trip to Chungking and while he was still at Kunming, General Arnold wrote a series of letters to General Stilwell, and on the same day Chiang Kai-shek dispatched a significant letter to President Roosevelt. The Generalissimo made a direct appeal to the President, saying that General Chennault should have his authority enhanced by conferring on him an independent air command since his current subordination to the Tenth Air

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Force was inherently unworkable. "Here is one man of genius in the Far East," he said, "whose talents should be given full play." He added that General Chennault was the only American airman who had the confidence of the Chinese Air Force and the Chinese Army, and "only with him is it possible to work with the necessary unquestioning cooperation."[19]

In his communications to General Stilwell, General Arnold suggested that everything possible should be done to increase Air Transport Command facilities in China so that a growing number of cargo planes could be accommodated.[20] In other plans broached by him at this time the influence of General Chennault is unmistakable. He repeated the axiomatic statement so often made by General Chennault that because of the lack of transportation facilities every effort should be made to keep down the number of Americans to be maintained in China. If this were done, the obvious way to increase air strength in China would be to make further use of the natives. Because of adverse criticisms of the Chinese Air Force, General Arnold did not favor sending them aircraft for independent operations, but believed that good use could be made of Chinese pilots and mechanics if they were trained under General Chennault and put into action along with Americans and under the leadership of American officers. Only under this condition would he recommend that American-made combat aircraft be turned over to the Chinese.[21]

He further informed General Stilwell that upon his return to Washington he would recommend the immediate creation of a Chinese

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fighter squadron, equipped with P-40's to be taken from whatever source the theater commander thought best. The squadron would train and operate with Americans under General Chennault. As soon as other pilots, leaders, and equipment were available, additional Chinese fighter squadrons would be formed. If these proved successful a light bombardment squadron would be created. To assure success of the experiment he added that it might be feasible to return to China American officers who had formerly served with the AVG and who were experienced in dealing with the Chinese. Should the venture not prove successful, however, General Stilwell was to recommend cancellation of the whole project.[22]

The excellence of this plan is manifest. The United States was committed to give aid to China in the form of combat aircraft. These planes, in the hands of poorly trained and poorly led Chinese pilots, could be a liability instead of an asset, since aviation fuel for the Chinese also had to be flown over the hump. On the other hand, under the tutelage of an experienced commander, and operating with competent American pilots, the Chinese flyers, of whom there were several hundred,[23] might be developed into a unit comparable to the air force which had fought the Japanese with success four years before. Chinese prestige and morale, both of which had suffered tremendously during the period of enforced inactivity, would be given a much-needed boost. In this way, too, General Chennault would receive reinforcements which were badly needed, without adding greatly to the supply problem, while the

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region north of the Yangtze River would immediately be brought under his operational control.

Another announcement by General Arnold at this time must have pleased General Stilwell, and surely gave General Chennault cause for elation. He informed them that the 308th Bombardment Group (H), equipped with B-24's, would leave the United States within a few days for duty in China.[24] During the latter months of 1942 the China Air Task Force had been able to harass Japanese shipping along a short stretch of the China coast with a skeleton squadron of B-25's, but the limited range of the mediums, and the great distances from operational bases to prospective targets had made it impossible to take full advantage of the opportunities offered by Japanese coastwise shipping. While B-24's had been used in only one mission from bases in China, the Linsi mines raid of October 1942, this one mission had revealed both to the Japanese and the Allies the enormous possibilities of long-range heavy bombers operating from advanced bases in China.[25]

From Hengyang and Kweilin, outlying bases of the China Air Task Force, the entire coast of China from the mouth of the Yellow River southward would be in easy range of the B-24's. North-south enemy shipping through the narrow Formosa Strait might be forced farther to the east where it would be more vulnerable to submarine attacks. The islands of Formosa and Hainan, important Japanese staging areas, could be reached without difficulty. Destruction of Japanese shipping and installations along the coast had long been a favorite objective of General Chennault and the arrival

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of the group of long-range bombers seemed to represent an important step toward the realization of a cherished ambition.

Generals Arnold and Chennault were fully cognizant of the logistical problems which would arise from the addition of long-range heavy bombers to the force in China. The Air Transport Command was not prepared to assume the added burden of supplying a heavy bombardment group, and so it was decided that the B-24's would transport their own gasoline and bombs over the hump, building up reserves at bases which they were to use in combat missions. The number of missions flown would of necessity be limited by this procedure but even infrequent forays could cause great destruction to the enemy.[26]

General Arnold, in making known the plans for the approaching arrival of the heavy bombardment group, stated that runways at Kunming and Kweilin should be lengthened, and an additional airdrome capable of accommodating the B-24's would have to be constructed, possibly at Hochi. Obviously the work would have to be done by Chinese labor and the suggestion implied that General Stilwell should contact the Generalissimo and make the necessary arrangements.[27] Later, on the occasion of Madame Chiang's visit to Washington, General Arnold again emphasized the urgency of preparing the fields, asking her to use her influence to speed up construction.[28]

Simultaneously with the promulgation of plans for a separate air force in China, American newspapers and periodicals began to

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publish reports of friction between Generals Bissell and Chennault, some broadly hinting that since General Bissell as Commanding General of the Tenth Air Force controlled the flow of aircraft to China, General Chennault's force was in danger of being strangled.[29] The facts do not bear out the implication with regard to aircraft, as General Chennault already had more planes than the aerial supply line would allow him to keep in operation. The chief complaint voiced by General Chennault was that not enough aviation fuel was reaching him to enable the aircraft already there to operate at maximum efficiency. This was not necessarily due to action on the part of General Bissell, and was believed by General Chennault to be the responsibility of the Air Transport Command. The acute shortage of spare parts, recreational equipment, and many other items could hardly be blamed on General Bissell, for conditions in China were little worse than those existing in India.

Friction undoubtedly did develop between the two commanders, but it probably was due more to a situation beyond the control of either of them than to petty disagreements and jealousies. The trouble in all likelihood had its inception in the unsatisfactory chain of command, and was accentuated by the natural desire of General Chennault to do his own administrative and operational planning and to control promotions, decorations, and individual assignments within his force.[30] There is no evidence to show that General Bissell ever interfered in any way with tactical operations

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in China, but his position at the head of the Tenth Air Force left that as a possibility for the future. At any rate, there seems to be little doubt that the general dissatisfaction over the cumbersome command setup, and the delays caused thereby, gave impetus to the plan for the separation of the air forces in India and China. On 22 February when plans for the new air force were well advanced, Brig. Gen. T. J. Hanley, Jr., Deputy Chief of the Air Staff, in reporting on conditions in the China-Burma-India Theater stated that requisitions for equipment, materiel, and personnel were needlessly delayed because of the necessity of processing such requisitions through the rear echelon of a higher command.[31]

When stories of friction between Generals Bissell and Chennault appeared in the American press there were also rumors of disputes between General Chennault and General Stilwell.[32] Undoubtedly, differences of opinion on the use of the meager air force in China existed. General Chennault was convinced that more damage could be done to the enemy by bombing and strafing forays over targets to the east and north of Kunming. General Stilwell, taking the long view, placed the reopening of the land supply line on highest priority and insisted that the fighter aircraft of the China Air Task Force be used in support of the offensive in northern Burma which was to open the way for the construction of the Ledo Road. General Chennault was never willing to send bombers on missions without fighter cover, and the use of fighters over Burma, in effect, had almost forced the cessation of bombardment activities

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in China. Much could be said for either opinion, but essentially their differences might well be traced to the fact that one commander was an infantryman and the other an airman.

Meanwhile, Chiang Kai-shek, recognizing the necessity of building the Ledo Road, felt that air support in Burma should come from combat units based in India, leaving those few elements in China free to carry on the air warfare in that country. Because of differences with General Stilwell and his great faith in the ability of General Chennault, the Generalissimo naturally tended to favor the views of the latter. He had already consented to place Chinese airmen under the operational direction of General Chennault.[33]

General Chennault, obviously desiring an independent command, voiced more objections to his relations with the Commanding General of the Tenth Air Force than with the Theater Commander. He had been in China long enough to look upon China as a theater of prime importance and agreed with Chinese military leaders that American operations there should not be under operational control of an air force which had its headquarters in India.

General Arnold, upon his return to Washington, declared in an R&R of 26 February to General Stratemeyer, that General Chennault felt his operations were being considerably handicapped by the fact that his command was subordinate to the Tenth Air Force, and consequently thought the China Air Task Force should be completely independent. General Arnold felt that Chennault was not fully aware of the problems attendant upon the supply and administration

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of an air force and did not realize the part played by the Tenth Air Force in the operations of the task force. Unfortunately, he said, the task force commander was inclined to see only those things the Tenth Air Force did which interfered with his own way of doing things. This attitude on the part of General Chennault is easily understood in view of the free hand his position had given him in China from 1937 until July 1942.[34]

General Arnold advised General Stratemeyer, further, that General Chennault would be forced to lean heavily on a strong chief of staff and a superior air service commander, and that competent G-1 and G-4 officers would have to be furnished to enable the new force to operate. Since General Chennault was his own G-2 and G-3, less capable officers would be required for those posts than for other key positions. It is to be noted that the time for the accomplishment of the separation of the task force from the parent organization was still indefinite, General Arnold giving no indication that the activation of the new air force would take place almost immediately.[35]

In the above-mentioned communication to General Stratemeyer, General Arnold also revealed that General Chennault had himself presented the plan for utilization of Chinese pilots in his force. He had told General Arnold that his air force should be assigned five American squadrons, divided into three- and two-squadron groups, with the latter group to be brought to full strength by using Chinese units. He had insisted that the Chinese units be integrated into American organizations or that they be led in

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combat by American pilots. General Chennault, he added, was preparing for submission to AAF Headquarters revised T/O's for units in China which were to make use of large numbers of Chinese.[36]

This plan was essentially the same as the one presented to General Stilwell by General Arnold while he was in Kunming,[37] and seems to leave little doubt that General Chennault was the author of the basic plan for a separate air force in China which was to make full use of Chinese pilots and ground personnel. Since General Chennault by 7 February, the date of General Arnold's letter to General Stilwell, was able to expound so thoroughly his ideas as to the composition and utilization of an independent air force, he obviously had been thinking along those lines for some time.

Subsequent developments in China possibly had some bearing on the speed with which the activation of the new air force was accomplished. In February word was received by Washington that British instructors would soon arrive in Chungking to aid in the training of the Chinese Air Force in compliance with a request made in September 1942, after a similar request for American instructors had been turned down.[38] The British having heretofore shown little active interest in military developments in China, both the Americans and the British had come to look upon China as an American sphere of influence.[39] And under the circumstances, the introduction of British instructors promised chiefly a further complication of an already complex problem.

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General Stilwell, accordingly, cabled the War Department on 17 February asking that the British mission be stopped and suggesting that American instructors be substituted for the British.[40] Two days later General Arnold asked General Stilwell to persuade Chiang to withdraw his request for British instructors, indicating that the mission could not otherwise be stopped.[41] On 21 February the Theater Commander replied that he had been unable to get the consent of the Generalissimo to withdraw the request, and again asked that action be taken in Washington.[42] The refusal of Chiang Kai-shek to withdraw his request blocked all efforts to stop the mission and on 2 March Secretary Stimson, in outlining the entire situation to Secretary Hull, expressed the hope that the presence of the British at Chungking would not prove embarrassing to General Chennault.[43]

Meanwhile, on 19 February General Arnold notified General Stilwell that the British had informed him that they could furnish the Chinese with six Albemarle two-engine medium bombers suitable for limited transport of personnel and cargo, and asked whether or not he would approve acceptance.[44] General Stilwell, in a rather pointed message, replied that he had no objection to the assignment of the six planes to the Chinese if the British would assume full responsibility for their supply and maintenance, but added that he did object if Americans had to supply the gasoline or any other services. General Stratemeyer's comments on the message read: "Kill this. Tell Stilwell. Get British to put six Albemarles in North Africa."[45]

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If the Generalissimo's refusal to withdraw his request for British instructors was designed to speed decisive action by the Americans, he was eminently successful. On 5 March a letter from The Adjutant General to the Theater Commander informed him that a Headquarters and Headquarters Squadron, Fourteenth Air Force, had been constituted and would be activated in China at the earliest practicable date.[46] In accordance therewith, the Fourteenth Air Force was activated on 10 March with General Chennault as Commanding General.[47] The Chinese were thereby assured of air reinforcements for China and of aircraft for Chinese pilots. Moreover, the action gave new recognition to the importance of the Chinese theater of operations. The immediate hope of rebuilding the Chinese Air Force as an independent organization had been surrendered, but a plan to train and use Chinese pilots in American units left open the ultimate possibility of an autonomous Chinese Air Force.

There were, then, many and varied contributing factors which led to the eventual establishment of a second American air force in the Far East; some were political, some military, and some merely matters of expediency. High on the list was the attempt to correct a faulty organization and at the same time to relieve a situation where there was a clash of personalities among high ranking officers. Hardly less important was the earnest effort of Americans to prove the sincerity of their desire to assist the hard-pressed Chinese and to boost their flagging morale. In the background, of course, was the matter of strategically situated air bases in China which

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the Americans hoped to use more fully than had heretofore been possible. Of less importance, perhaps, was the reinforcing of American units already in China by the addition of Chinese squadrons while at the same time extending their operational sphere to include territory north of the Yangtze River. Possibly there entered into the final decision the desire to reward General Chennault for his accomplishments and to give him fuller freedom to exercise his peculiar talents for fighting a stubborn and wily foe. In a broader sense the entire action might be interpreted to mean that the basic strategy in Asia was unchanged and that the United States was making a redeclaration of the ultimate mission of all American air units in Asia—to support China and to defeat Japan. The wisdom of the move can only be assessed in the light of operations and developments in the theater during the months to come.

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GLOSSARY

AAG	Air Adjutant General
AC/AS	Assistant Chief of Air Staff
AFAEP	AC/AS, Plans
AFIHI	Historical Division
AFMSC	Statistical Control Division
AFRAD	Air Defense
AG	Adjutant General
Agwar	Adjutant General, War Department
Amndel	American Military Mission in Delhi or General Stilwell's Hq., Rear Echelon
Amobsin	American Military Observer in India
Aquila	Hq., Tenth Air Force
ATC	Air Transport Command
CATF	China Air Task Force
CBI	China-Burma-India
GSC	General Staff Corps
IATF	India Air Task Force
ICATC	India-China Wing, Air Transport Command
Milid	Military Intelligence Service
M.I.S.	Military Intelligence Service
OC/S	Office Chief of Staff
OPD	Operations Division, WDGS
RAF	Royal Air Force
TAG	The Adjutant General
TBA	Table of Basic Allowances
T/O	Table of Organization
WDGS	War Department General Staff

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N O T E S

Chapter I

1. For an account of the development of the Tenth Air Force before 1943, see AAF Historical Studies No. 12, The Tenth Air Force, 1942, prepared by AFIHI, Combat Operational History Branch.

2. Ibid., 12.

3. Ibid., 111.

4. Ltr., Bissell to Arnold, 13 Oct. 1942, in AAG 312.1 A, Operations Letters.

5. CM-IN-2393, 5 Feb. 1943, Arnold to Stratemeyer, #Aquila F79A.

6. CM-IN-8965, 18 Feb. 1943, Bissell to Arnold, #Aquila F576C; CM-OUT-6012, 17 Feb. 1943, Stratemeyer to Bissell, #1571; CM-OUT-6672, 19 Feb. 1943, Arnold to Bissell, #2324; CM-OUT-8787, 25 Feb. 1943, Arnold to Bissell, #2345.

7. CM-IN-11590, 25 Jan. 1943, Bissell to Agwar, #Aquila J908XH.

8. CM-OUT-9809, 29 Jan. 1943, Marshall to Bissell, #484.

9. CM-OUT-8034, 21 Mar. 1943, Arnold to Bissell, #2436.

10. Ibid.

11. CM-IN-5577, 12 Jan. 1943, Bissell to Arnold, #Aquila J423D.

12. CM-OUT-5239, 15 Jan. 1943, Stratemeyer to Bissell, #2138.

13. CM-OUT-5739, 17 Jan. 1943, Stratemeyer to Bissell, #2148.

14. CM-OUT-10343, 30 Jan. 1943, Stratemeyer to Bissell, #2211.

15. CM-IN-11868, 22 Mar. 1943, Ferris to Agwar, #Ammdel AG 235.

16. The Tenth Air Force, 1942, 68-69.

17. CM-OUT-1963, 6 Jan. 1943, Marshall to Bissell, #2096.

18. CM-IN-11601, 25 Jan. 1943, Bissell to Agwar, #Aquila J949L.

19. CM-OUT-9717, 28 Jan. 1943, Marshall to Bissell, #2199.

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20. CM-IN-12578, 25 Feb. 1943, Bissell to Arnold, #Aquila F762B.

21. CM-OUT-4813, 14 Jan. 1943, Stratemeyer to Bissell, #2130.

22. CM-IN-8416, 19 Jan. 1943, Bissell to Stratemeyer, #Aquila J739A.

23. CM-OUT-7006, 21 Jan. 1943, Stratemeyer to Bissell, #2165.

24. CM-IN-14844, 31 Jan. 1943, Bissell to Stratemeyer, #Aquila J1280A.

25. Daily Tactical Report, Asiatic Theater, 25 Feb. 1943, in A-2 Library; CM-OUT-9277, 26 Feb. 1943, Marshall to Bissell, #2354; CM-IN-12578, 25 Feb. 1943, Bissell to Arnold, #Aquila F762B; History, Headquarters Tenth Air Force Service Command.

26. Ibid.

27. CM-IN-1088, 3 Mar. 1943, Ferris to Agwar, #Ammdel AG161.

28. CM-OUT-1802, 5 Mar. 1943, Marshall to Bissell, #2382.

29. CM-IN-3863, 8 Mar. 1943, Bissell to Marshall, #Aquila R293A.

30. Ltr., Brig. Gen. Gordon P. Saville, AFRAD, to Gen. Bissell, 17 Mar. 1943, in AAG 300-A, India-China.

31. CM-OUT-1802, 5 Mar. 1943, Marshall to Bissell, #2382.

32. Tenth Air Force, 1942, 64.

33. Daily Tactical Report, Asiatic Theater, 15 Feb. 1943.

34. Ibid., 5 Jan. 1943.

35. Ibid., 4 Jan. 1943.

36. CM-IN-6217, 12 Feb. 1943, Osmun to Milid, #Amobsin 49.

37. Daily Tactical Report, Asiatic Theater, 9 Jan. 1943; CM-IN-3662, 9 Jan. 1943, Amobsin to Milid, #Amobsin 17.

38. CM-IN-3363, 7 Feb. 1943, Ferris to Agwar, #Ammdel 1115; CM-IN-6623, 13 Feb. 1943, Ferris to Agwar, #Ammdel 1122; Daily Tactical Report, Asiatic Theater, 28 Jan., 10 and 15 Feb. 1943.

39. CM-IN-14000, 27 Feb. 1943, Osmun to Milid, #Amobsin 61.

40. Daily Tactical Report, Asiatic Theater, 15, 19, and 20 Feb. 1943.

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41. Ibid.

42. Ibid., 17 Feb. 1943.

43. Ibid., 20 Feb. and 3 Mar. 1943.

44. CM-IN-7949, 16 Feb. 1943, Ferris to Agwar, #Ammdel AG116.

45. CM-IN-1562, 4 Feb. 1943, Alexander to Agwar, #Aquila ICATC 3985; CM-IN-11161, 22 Feb. 1943, Ferris to Agwar, #Ammdel AG138.

46. CM-OUT-5948, 17 Feb. 1943, Marshall to Stilwell, #596; CM-IN-11161, 22 Feb. 1943, Ferris to Agwar, #Ammdel AG138; Daily Tactical Report, Asiatic Theater, 20 Feb. 1943.

47. On the message from General Ferris stating that the military police companies should be sent to the theater, General Stratemeyer commented: "I think we should send some dough boys out to Bissell."

48. Daily Tactical Report, Asiatic Theater, 21 Jan., 2, 5, 13, and 25 Feb. 1943; CM-IN-421, 1 Feb. 1943, DePass to Milid, #45; CM-IN-1696, 4 Feb. 1943 and CM-IN-5215, 10 Feb. 1943, Paraphrases of messages from American Embassy, Chungking; CM-IN-4881, 10 Feb. 1943, DePass to Milid, #51.

49. Lin Yutang, noted author, said: "Why should not General Hsuing leave? Of what use can his presence in Washington be to the Allied cause - since the leaders of the United Nations appear to be far from ready to share with China a unified strategy against Japan. The enormous reservoir of good will between China and American is being severely drawn upon. . . ." Time, 11 Jan. 1943.

50. Following the conferences in Chungking at which Arnold, Dill, Chiang Kai-shek, Stilwell and Chennault were present, Prime Minister Churchill stated: "The Generalissimo also concurs in the plans for future action in the Far East, which we have submitted to him as a result of our deliberations." Time, 22 Feb. 1943.

51. Tenth Air Force, 1942, 60.

52. Figures obtained from AFMSC.

53. Ltr., Bissell to Arnold, 12 Jan. 1943, in AAG 400 Misc., India-China.

54. Ibid.

55. Ltr., Bissell to Stratemeyer, 9 Jan. 1943, in WP-IV-D-4 India, Off. Services Div., AFAEP.

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56. CM-OUT-8610, 24 Feb. 1943, Marshall to Bissell, #2342.

57. CM-IN-1685, 4 Jan. 1943, Bissell to Agwar, #Aquila J112XH.

58. CM-IN-12652, 24 Mar. 1943, Bissell to Arnold, #Aquila R883A.

59. History, Headquarters Tenth Air Force Service Command.

60. CM-IN-6109, 14 Jan. 1943, Bissell to Agwar, #Aquila J532XH.

61. CM-OUT-5449, 16 Jan. 1943, Agwar to Bissell, #2140.

62. CM-IN-3589, 9 Jan. 1943, Bissell to Agwar, #Aquila J208A.

63. CM-OUT-4085, 12 Jan. 1943, Marshall to Bissell, #2117.

64. CM-IN-2671, 6 Feb. 1943, Arnold to Stratemeyer, #Aquila 31.

65. CM-IN-6559, 13 Feb. 1943, Bissell to Agwar, #Aquila F372E.

66. CM-IN-5262, 12 Jan. 1943, Bissell to Arnold, #Aquila J425A.

67. CM-OUT-4465, 13 Jan. 1943, Stratemeyer to Bissell, #2121.

68. CM-IN-5845, 12 Feb. 1943, Bissell to Agwar, #Aquila 367C.

69. CM-OUT-4585, 13 Feb. 1943, Stratemeyer to Bissell, #2278.

70. CM-IN-14811, 31 Jan. 1943, Bissell to Agwar, #Aquila J1311E.

71. CM-OUT-4471, 13 Feb. 1943, Stratemeyer to Bissell, #2277.

72. CM-IN-8450, 17 Feb. 1943, Bissell to Stratemeyer, #Aquila F567A.

73. CM-OUT-6410, 18 Feb. 1943, Arnold to Bissell, #2319.

74. Tenth Air Force, 1942, 62 ff.

75. CM-IN-14560, 31 Jan. 1943, Bissell to Agwar, #Aquila J1177; CM-OUT-395, 2 Feb. 1943, Stratemeyer to Bissell, #2222; CM-OUT-2041, 6 Feb. 1943, Stratemeyer to Bissell, #2246.

76. Ibid.

77. CM-OUT-0001, 1 Feb. 1943, Marshall to Bissell, #497.

78. CM-OUT-10802, 31 Jan. 1943, Stratemeyer to Arnold, #494.

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3. Report of Naval Attache at Chungking, 5 Oct. 1942, signed by Lt. Col. J. M. McHugh, U. S. Marine Corps, inclosure to letter from Secretary Knox to Secretary Stimson, 20 Oct. 1942, in Coordination and Record Sec., OC/S, 381 China. Interview with Wendell Willkie (undated), U. S. 9000, Interviews and Statements, in A-2 Library; interview with Constantine Leo Zakhartchenko, Air Adviser to Chinese government, 19 Apr. 1943, U. S. 9000, Interviews and Statements, in A-2 Library.

4. Ltr., Stilwell to Marshall, 9 Feb. 1943, in Coordination and Record Sec., OC/S, 381 China; Tenth Air Force, 1942, 76.

5. Memo, Roosevelt to Marshall, 3 Oct. 1942; memo, Marshall to Roosevelt, 5 Oct. 1942; ltr., Marshall to Stilwell, 6 Oct. 1942; memo, Marshall to Roosevelt, 10 Oct. 1942; msg., Stimson to Stilwell, 13 Oct. 1942; ltr., Dill to Marshall, 19 Oct. 1942; msg., Stilwell to Marshall, 4 Nov. 1942; memo, Marshall to Roosevelt, 5 Nov. 1942, in Coordination and Record Sec., OC/S, 381 China.

6. A Naval Attache at Chungking declared in October 1942: "I happen to know that he /Chennault/ has been given direct and explicit orders to have no further dealings with the Chinese." A former Air Adviser to the Chinese government in the following April said: "Now, under the present set up, when I left /late January 1943/ Chennault had definite orders not to have any dealings with the Chinese." When asked who issued the orders, he replied only, "His superior officers." Wendell Willkie reported that there were two factions in China and that the Stilwell faction did not think American equipment should be sent to China. Chennault felt, however, that given enough planes manned by American crews, the Japs could be run out of China in a few months. See n. 3 above.

7. Memo for Arnold from Maj. Gen. Follett Bradley, WDGS OPD, 7 Dec. 1942, in WP-IV-C-1 China.

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8. Memo for Col. Robert W. Harper, GSC, from Col. R. A. Grussendorf, 31 Dec. 1942, in WP-IV-C-1 China.

9. Comments on report of conference between Gen. Bradley and Gen. Mao, and on basic memo of 7 Dec. 1942 to Arnold, 8 Jan. 1943, signed by Brig. Gen. O. A. Anderson, in WP-IV-C-1 China.

10. Memo, Leahy to Marshall, 30 Dec. 1942, in AAG 300-A, CBI. See also n. 5 above.

11. Memo, Marshall to Leahy, 4 Jan. 1943, in Coordination and Record Sec., OC/S, 381 China.

12. Memo, Arnold to Marshall, 6 Jan. 1943, in AAG 300-A, CBI.

13. Ibid.

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15. See n. 9 above.

16. On 14 November the Generalissimo had asked that 150 transports be placed on the India-China flight by March. It was found impossible to meet that figure but the War Department committed itself to 137 planes by that date. Memo, Roosevelt to Marshall, 25 Nov. 1942; memo, Marshall to Roosevelt, 25 Nov. 1942, in Coordination and Record Sec., OC/S, 381 China.; ltr., Arnold to Stilwell, 7 Feb. 1943, ATC Operations India to China, in AAG 400 Misc., India-China.

17. Time, 22 Feb. 1943.

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19. Ltr., Chiang Kai-shek to Roosevelt, 7 Feb. 1943, in OPD Records Br., 320.2 China Theater of Operations.

20. Ltr., Arnold to Stilwell, 7 Feb. 1943, ATC Operations India to China, in AAG 400 Misc., India-China.

21. Ltr., Arnold to Stilwell, 7 Feb. 1943, Aid to Chinese Air Force, in AAG 400 Misc., India-China.

22. Ibid.

23. General Arnold stated that he was informed that there were 1,200 Chinese pilots. Ibid.

24. Ltr., Arnold to Stilwell, 7 Feb. 1943, Operations of Heavy Bombers in China, in AAG 400 Misc., India-China.

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25. Tenth Air Force, 1942, 114.

26. Ltr., Arnold to Stilwell, 7 Feb. 1943, Operations of Heavy Bombers in China, in AAG 400 Misc., India-China.

27. Ibid.

28. CM-OUT-7971, 22 Feb. 1943, Arnold to Stilwell for Chennault, #2184.

29. Time, 15 Feb. 1943, 64; 22 Mar. 1943, 52.

30. Col. M. C. Cooper who had served as Chief of Staff of the China Air Task Force complained that the command situation made it impossible for General Chennault to make any agreements with the Chinese regarding air policy. He said that General Stilwell was reluctant to give decorations to the airmen of General Chennault's force and that all requests for leave had to clear through Chungking. These difficulties, he said, could be cleared up by creating a separate air force in China, a recommendation which had recently been made by General Stilwell's air officers. Talk made by Colonel Cooper in General Johnson's Staff Meeting, 23 Dec. 1942, in AAG 337-A, Conferences.

31. See n. 2 above.

32. Time, 15 Feb. 1943, 64; 22 Mar. 1943, 52. See also interviews of Willkie and Zakhartchenko in n. 3 above.

33. In October President Roosevelt had suggested that Chinese squadrons using American planes be put under the operational control of General Chennault. On 14 November Chiang replied: "I have informed General Stilwell that any plans of operation of the 10th AF in China must have my prior approval and should be subject to direction and to my judgment as to necessary changes. . . . If the circumstances render it desirable I agree that the Chinese Air Force may be placed under General Chennault's operational control to participate in the proposed Burma offensive." Msg., Roosevelt to Chiang Kai-shek, 10 Oct. 1942; msg., Chiang Kai-shek to Roosevelt, 14 Nov. 1942, in Coordination and Record Sec., OC/S, 381 China.

34. R&R, Arnold to Stratemeyer, Additional Notes Made on Visit to Various Theaters, 26 Feb. 1943, in AAG 680.2-A, Visits.

35. Ibid.

36. Ibid.

37. See n. 21 above.

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38. War Department, M.I.S., Information from State Department Cables, 18 Feb. 1943 ff., in AAG.

39. On 5 March 1943 Viscount Cranborne was quoted as saying that the British recognized China as an American "strategic sphere." New York Times, 5 Mar. 1943.

40. See n. 38 above.

41. General Arnold had communicated with Sir John Dill and received a reply to the effect that British Chiefs of Staff felt that since the mission had no strategic or political significance whatever it should not in any way cut across or embarrass General Chennault's activities. He then requested that he be notified if the mission caused any embarrassment to American officers in China. Ltr., Dill to Arnold, 25 Feb. 1943, in WP-IV-C-1 China.

42. Telg., Sec. of State Hull to Sec. of War Stimson, 23 Feb. 1943, in WP-IV-C-1 China.

43. Ltr., Stimson to Hull, 2 Mar. 1943, in WP-IV-C-1 China.

44. CM-OUT-6864, 19 Feb. 1943, Arnold to Stilwell, #2168.

45. CM-IN-13146, 26 Feb. 1943, Stilwell to Arnold, #Ammdel AG 150.

46. Ltr., Stratemeyer to TAG, 2 Mar. 1943, in AG files 320.2; ltr., TAG to Stilwell, 5 Mar. 1943, in AAG 321 Special, Air Force Organization History, also in AG files 320.2.

47. CM-OUT-3643, 10 Mar. 1943, Arnold to Stilwell, #2290; GO #9, Headquarters U. S. Army Forces, Chungking, 10 Mar. 1943.

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Bibliographical Statement

The sources upon which this study has been based are well enough indicated in the notes. Principal reliance has been placed on message files, which may be consulted either in the AAF Message Center or in AFIHI files; on the materials in AAF Classified Files (cited AAG with decimals); on the records contained in the Offices Services Division of AC/AS, Plans (cited WP-IV-C-1 China, etc.); and those filed with the Reception Branch of the Collection Division, AC/AS, Intelligence (cited A-2 Library).

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