

ONTARIO CAPTAIN AMONG MULE-EATING WARRIORS IN 90-DAY JUNGLE SAGA

Led by Lawrence Kin, Eight Columns of Commandos Travel 1,000 Miles, Blow Up Railways and Bridges—

Lofoten Veterans Form Nucleus

PENETRATE 200 MILES INTO BURMA
TIE UP JAPS 10 TIMES THEIR TOTAL

New Delhi, May 21—Eight columns of British and native troops, with a few Canadian and Australian volunteers, and a supply column of 1,000 mules, moved into Burma three months ago to smash at Japanese communications. This week the survivors fought their way back out of the jungle, with stories of chaos created among the Japs. They had travelled as much as 1,000 miles, wrecked railways and bridges, and tied up many more than their own number of Japs.

Led by Kin of Lawrence

Rivalling the exploits of Lawrence of Arabia, the forces were led by Brig. Charles Orde Wingate, 39, kin to legendary T. E. Lawrence. Burmese, Ghurkas and Indian troops were included, along with a regiment of city-bred Britons. The nucleus consisted of veterans of the commando raid in the Lofoten islands, off Norway.

(Included in this force, according to Reuters news agency, was a small number of Canadian and Australian volunteers, one being identified as in a London dispatch as Capt. Roy Mackenzie of Windsor, Ont. The Canadian captain said he helped blow up a railway line and once was swept nearly two miles down the Irrawaddy river.)

"Certain columns penetrated more than 200 miles into Burma," a communique said. "Early in March they put out of action the railway line running from Mandalay through Katha to Myitkyina. Demolition charges destroyed tracks and bridges in 75 places and rendered further operation of this vital line of communication impossible for many months."

Future Pattern Revealed

A Bombay dispatch said the three-month operations revealed the future pattern of Allied operations against Burma, including the use of wireless to guide bombers and supplying forces by plane. They made the enemy use 10 times their number and inflicted 1,000 casualties, including 300 dead. The operations, like the aerial attacks on Burma, presage a large-scale attempt to open the Burma road, it is believed.

Preston Grover, Associated Press correspondent in India, saw the first of the hardened jungle veterans at a British frontier post when they

completed their return march from the far shores of the Irrawaddy river, across half a dozen mountain chains. Operations of the force were a secret to the outside world while the British army in western Burma was making a slow withdrawal west from Buthedaung and north from Rathedaung.

Grover said that before Wingate's fighters came back they ate most of their mules and horses and had learned to live on tender bamboo shoots and banana and palm leaves. Some of the men ate snake meat and many used their mosquito head nets to catch fish. Convalescing soldiers told Grover one large force spent a week at a rendezvous east of the Irrawaddy living on mule meat and crackers.

Only Contact by Radio

Their only communication was radio, and during the operations many batteries went dead. Planes of the R.A.F. sought out parties as best they could. Dropping food, letters, spectacles—and snuff for killed Lieut. Jeffrey Lockett, whose Gurkhas used it instead of curry powder in their rice, Grover reported.

In some cases the forces had to fight off Japanese troops, who spotted the dropped supplies and engaged the British troops.

Grover said the success of the force was seven-fold:

They blew up 100 miles of railroad and several bridges.

They delayed a Japanese move against the Chindwin river barrier, near the India-Burma frontier.

They relieved Japanese pressure on the Chinese to the north.

They saved an encircled force of 5,000 loyal Burma natives by drawing off the Japanese army.

They riddled the Japanese feeling of security in Burma.

They gave the British forces invaluable training in jungle war.

They proved Wingate's contention that, with quick training, he could make Allied troops equal to jungle fighting with the Japanese.

Some Had Little Training

Some of the force had had six months' training. Others had trained for only a month before crossing the border into Burma, and then toiling up and down the north-south mountain ranges in their path.

The communique said superior forces of the enemy were engaged and beaten in numerous clashes east of the Irrawaddy and that when ordered to return the majority fought their way back, "although in many cases under conditions of incredible hardship."

Some humorous and exciting times were recalled by soldiers and officers. Lieut. G. C. Bruce of Glasgow took Tagaung with four men. He speaks Burmese.

"We walked into town and met about 30 Burmese who were fighting on the Japanese side," he said. "I told them they were foolish to fight for the Japanese. I pointed to the sky and said I would call our bombers in to destroy them if they continued to resist."

And Bombers Appear

"Just then 12 of our bombers came roaring over. They didn't know I was down there and I didn't

know they were coming. But those Burmese threw down their arms and pleaded for mercy. Six of my men had been left in the brush to support us. Eleven of us blocked traffic on the Irrawaddy for five days. We wouldn't let any supply boats move either way."

They told of seeing Japanese troops in complete panic, firing machine-guns in every direction and racing truckloads of troops up and down the highways, not knowing where or when they would meet the British forces.

For a short time the Japanese apparently thought the invasion of Burma had begun, for they pulled whole divisions into new positions and filled the woods with scouting parties.

Wingate won the D.S.O. before the outbreak of this war for combatting Palestinian oil pipeline raiders. At the beginning of the Ethiopian campaign three years ago he led 2,000 Sudanese and 1,000 Ethiopian warriors in operations that resulted in the capture or disposal of 40,000 Italians.

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